

**Tourism Walla Walla
Minutes
May 20, 2009
Chamber of Commerce Board Room**

Call to Order

Mark called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Board of Directors

Present: Kay Wessel, Skip Cundiff, Shane Laib, Tim McCarty, Jay Brodt, Dave Warkentin, Mark Hess, Michael Davidson, Michele Rennie, Elizabeth Martin Calder, James Payne, Ron Anderson, Jeffrey Townsend.

Absent: Rick Standard, Cory Hewitt, Nancy Mitchell, Leroy Cunningham

Staff: Chris Erickson

I. Approval of Minutes

Board minutes for April 16, 2009 were reviewed. With the correction that the correct reporting for the treasurer's report be that **the board accept as opposed to approve the report**. Another minor change a motion to accept the minutes was moved, seconded, and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

II. Tourism Indicators

Michael went over the tourism indicators which still showed Tourism Walla Walla's numbers to be trending down when compared to last year. The trend was less down though than previous months is positive as we move ahead. It was added that something to look at is that avg. room night has dropped from what it was last year.

III. Treasurers Report

Michele went over the financial statements for April and submitted them for acceptance of the board. One special note was that the CD for the WSAE convention that is happening in May was cashed. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made, seconded, and passed unanimously by a voice vote. Michael and Mark also spoke about the executive board's talks with the city about the contract. It is hoped that there can be a win-win situation reached that will allow Tourism Walla Walla to take a gradual step down of tax percentage, and the growth will offset to see revenues rise within a three year period. Trend still shows that there is consistent growth for all but one year in the past decade.

IV. Events and Promotions Committee

The events and promotions met and reported that they are close a decision that would take the remaining money left in the matching fund grant program and suspend it until further notice. The intent is two-fold. 1) To revamp the criteria, deadlines, and implementation of the program to ensure best practices. 2) Release the money back to the board in case of a budget shortfall. There is one final application that has come in and the committee will review it before making their final decision.

V. Funding & Sustainability

Ron reported on the Funding & Sustainability committee meeting. The committee worked on a mission statement that is ready for a vote. Also, they reviewed the car rental tax that would go to fund youth sports facilities. At first look it does not seem to impede or jeopardize the assessment fee that the Port currently has in place. Chris will be getting the committee more information so they can pursue this possible source of revenue.

VI. Local Transportation

The transportation committee did not meet.

IX. President's Report

a. Public Relations/Marketing Reports

Michael submitted the Maxwell PR and Gibson Media reports to the board.

b. Walla Walla VIP Card

Response for the VIP card program has been very positive and validating. There are currently close to 20 businesses signed up and the program is gaining positive traction. All cards except for one property out of town have been delivered. It was discussed that there needs to be a better template set up for the offers that looks a bit more finished.

c. Partnership Walla Walla

The partnership met with the Elks to go over their current status. Also they have been facilitating meetings for the business coalition to help look at the issue of recruiting a skilled work force. ***
[Shane, Jay, and Michele volunteered for a committee?***Please help](#)

d. National Travel & Tourism Week

Tourism Walla Walla planned and held several promotions the week of May 9 – 17 which were able to grab a few UB stories. An ad was run that focused on the fundraising and donation contributions that Tourism businesses give back to the community. There was also a launch of the initial Certified SuperHost® Businesses where presentations of certificates were awarded May 11. There was also a winery familiarization tour available for attendance by Hotel/Motel staff on May 12. Several hotels attended and it was well received by both lodging and winery properties.

e. At the suggestion of Rick Standard a subcommittee to look into a formation of a Sport Commission was formed. Along with Rick, Dave Warkentin, Ron Anderson and Jim Dumont from the city will serve on this committee.

f. Jeffery Townsend has agreed to lead a subcommittee that will look into that role Tourism Walla Walla might be able to play in increasing awareness of the arts and the art community in the Valley. Agreeing to serve on this committee will be Michele Rennie, Jay Brodt, Shane Laib and Leroy Cunningham. We will also look at adding community members to this effort.

NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Thursday June 18, 2009

3:30 p.m. – Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce Board Room

