

Visit McMinnville
Board of Director's Meeting
October 19, 2016

Board Attendees: Erin Stephenson, Emily Howard, Scott Hill, Courtney Cunningham, Ty Rollins, Maria Stuart, Jennifer Feero, Cindy Lorenzen

Absent: Ellen Brittan, Carmen Peirano

Staff Attendees: Jeff Knapp & Kitri McGuire

Guests: Steven Rupp, Sunny Miller, Candace Haines

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:35.

Minutes from the September 2016 meeting were reviewed. Feero motioned to approve. Cunningham seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Knapp gave a short update on the audit. He discussed the audit yesterday with Kyle from Bernards & Associates. Kyle stated everything looks positive; he will prepare a document with notes and suggestions within the next few weeks. Kyle will also join next month's meeting.

Greenstone was called into the meeting. Greenstone mentioned in approximately 1 month the board should know our revenues from Q1 of this fiscal year. He noted the personnel expenses appear higher than expected, but Greenstone is going to revise how we record. Nearly all other line items are close to budget. Sales and Marketing expenses are running slightly behind, but Greenstone believes that is due to timing and we can expect to see that come closer to budget in the coming months. Overhead expenses are nearly exact. Overall, we are very close to being on budget.

Greenstone mentioned that our cash reserves have declined; we are very close to receiving our next payment from the city so he is not concerned. Greenstone and Knapp will be reviewing how Visit McMinnville recognizes those payments, as VM needs to be adequately capitalized in the "in-between" periods, which span nearly 5 months. Hill noted two potential solutions: that we have the ability to build up reserves, or potentially have a revolving line of credit. Greenstone noted that it would be up to the board how VM covers these months with no payment, and that he and Knapp will be discussing all options to present to the board in the future. Hill stated he would check with Marcia at the City to see if they can finance Visit McMinnville in those in between times, and what the regulations are.

McGuire went over public relations efforts, social media efforts, and website stats. She also went over website design and navigation updates from the previous month, and in-progress website plans, which include more work to navigation, homepage design, and potentially migrating listing information to a new, more flexible database. Discussion was held on educating the community on Google Analytics, and applying for a Travel Oregon grant to do so.

Knapp discussed the wayfinding sub-committee progress. The committee meets twice a month and is building a strategic plan for wayfinding within tourism areas, city wide, and directional highway signage to direct visitors to town. Knapp discussed the history of Travel Oregon grants and the \$3.2 million available with the increase in lodging taxes passed this year. The wayfinding committee will be applying for a \$100,000 (50% matching) grant. Potential funding partners for the first phase, a ~\$20,000 strategic plan, include Visit McMinnville, MURAC, the City, and MIP. The committee has been working with Sea Reach (out of Sheridan) as a wayfinding partner. Sea Reach has submitted a proposal for the first strategic phase, and that proposal will be discussed at the next wayfinding committee meeting on October 24.

Knapp mentioned the board retreat, which will be held January 9, 2017. Knapp is bringing on a facilitator to help guide discussions during the retreat.

Knapp discussed the Visit McMinnville investment in photography during the summer. During August, Sionnie Lafollette stayed in our community for 3 weeks and executed 10+ styled shoots to increase our creative asset library. Knapp also played a new brand video from Blue Chalk. This :90s cut will live on our website

Knapp kicked off a discussion of changes at the city level. After the results of the November 8 election, the city will move forward with moving the mayor elect into position by November 22. Kevin Jefferies is the interim mayor; Candace LAST NAME will be stepping in as temporary City Manager until a manager is hired and on board (anticipated by February). Hill and Yoder will be stepping off the council. Adam Garvin (SP) will be joining the council, along with WENDY (CHECK!).

Stephenson noted there is a vacancy on the VM board after the resignation of Martha Meeker. The interim City Manager needs to appoint a new member. Candace will discuss this appointment at the next city council meeting, and the recommended appointment will be discussed at the next VM board meeting. A city council member will also be needed with Hill stepping off the council.

Knapp stated that VM is building policies on PTO for employees, FSA, and other benefits that will be available. The executive committee is recommending a direction for compensation packages for employees; that proposal will be reviewed at next month's meeting.

Knapp noted he is attending the MURAC committee meetings on a regular basis to learn about plans and potentially align VM's efforts with theirs, when appropriate.

Knapp noted VM is wrapping up collection of visitor data through surveys. VM will not quite hit the goal of 1200 surveys, but will have enough information to provide solid data for decision making purposes. VM hired a total of 4 survey ambassadors from May-October. Knapp is also purchasing STR data to help give the board a clearer picture of TLT, occupancy, rates, etc.

Knapp updated the board regarding efforts toward promoting cycling as a visitor activity. There is a lack of information on road cycling and mountain biking (maps, etc.) currently. Knapp has been meeting with community members and organizations to build a cycling infrastructure. To start, VM will ask locals to recommend favorite rides for blogs and social media. Knapp is also looking into bike sharing, map creation, etc.

Knapp mentioned that there is a need for transportation options in town. Discussion was had on allowing Uber in the city; Knapp and McGuire will look into licensing for Uber. Knapp encouraged board members to seek out potential entrepreneurs for transportation in our area.

Knapp mentioned Oregon Wine Country License Plate grants; there are funds available for projects that support food and wine tourism in the state, up to \$20,000 (50% matching). VM will be applying for a grant to create an itinerary planner.

Knapp mentioned Wine Walk winter reinvigoration. To drive this, VM is introducing the Umbrella Share program, new passports, table tents, a local front-line hospitality staff event/education experience, and more to come.

Knapp will be speaking at the State of the City breakfast on October 25th at Golden Valley Restaurant, run by the MDA. He will also be presenting our quarterly report to the city council on November 8th.

Knapp opened up the meeting to public comments. Miller praised Visit McMinnville's marketing and social media efforts. She asked about traffic to the city. Knapp mentioned our website traffic, as well as the survey program VM executed during the summer and that we'll have the results soon. Stephenson suggested a survey to the business community in McMinnville to determine how tourism stakeholders are affected by VM's efforts. McGuire will send that out in the next industry newsletter alongside the survey data and STR data.

Miller also mentioned reaching out to a bridal market. Miller updated the board on the expansion of Elizabeth Chambers Cellars. Capacity is 125 ppl with a catering kitchen. Knapp praised ECC on their foresight, as McMinnville is currently meeting space deficient.

Knapp and Hill gave updates on the progress of the hotel at Evergreen. Currently they do not plan on building an event space, and instead using the museum space.

Stephenson mentioned that Seaside passed an increased tax to expand their event center, and that an effort like that might be a topic for long term planning at the board retreat. Also discussed was a lack of live music venues in the community.

Knapp closed the meeting at 11:31am.

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Minutes respectfully submitted by Kitri McGuire, Marketing Manager for Visit McMinnville.