

VISIT McMINNVILLE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Date: May 18, 2016
Board Attendees: Erin Stephenson, Emily Howard, Maria Stuart, Ellen Brittan, Scott Hill, Martha Meeker, Ty Rollins, Cindy Lorenzen
Staff Attendees: Jeff Knapp, Kitri McGuire
Guests: Scott Greenstone via phone
Absent: Courtney Cunningham, Carmen Peirano

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:35.

Stuart moved to approve the minutes from April's meeting. Brittan seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Knapp reviewed the Business Plan, beginning with the Fiscal Year 2016 In Review. Additions requested include: hired Jeff Knapp, created monthly stakeholder newsletters, developed a plan with the Chamber for Visitor Center, improved continuing communication with Evergreen Museum.

Group reviewed Fiscal Year 2017 Goals & Objectives. Discussion was had to change our internal nomenclature on "shoulder season." Decision was made to name November & February-April Shoulder Season and to name December-January Low Season.

Hill mentioned we need to be focused on city capacity needs in conjunction with driving traffic to the city as we move forward, in order to prepare for those needs. This would involve awareness of upcoming grants and other opportunities. Stephenson suggested a retreat for the board for 3-year strategic planning every January. Hill suggested a facilitator. Knapp will suggest dates and review options for a facilitator in the next few weeks.

Stephenson suggested a discussion in next month's meeting on city signage, which would include reviewing current suggested signage design and timeline for installation.

Brittan moved to approve FY 2017 Goals & Objectives. Stuart seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Knapp discussed the Chamber's proposal for financial compensation and enhanced visitor experience at the Visitor's Center. The proposed budget is \$20,785.60 to maintain the current staffing level and \$24,305.60 for year-round weekday and weekend staffing. Postage costs would be additional and invoiced monthly. These costs include hiring someone at an estimated rate of \$12/hour. Brittan suggested a language change so that the pay rate was a minimum of \$12/hour. The total ask from the Chamber also includes administrative costs. Stephenson suggested including language in the agreement that includes our expectation that the Visitor's Center would promote all businesses, not just Chamber members. Brittan noted that to be in alignment with our stated goals for supporting shoulder and off season visitors, we should move forward with the higher total amount so that we have year-round staffing.

Discussion was held on the idea of a mobile visitor center that could be used as a unique information resource for visitors that could be placed at key tourist hubs around the city, as well as a travelling event booth space. Knapp shared some preliminary research on this idea; the board asked Knapp to let the Chamber know we would be exploring alternative options, and asked Knapp to continue to explore the mobile visitors center and present findings at June's meeting.

Scott Greenstone was called in to discuss budget. Knapp discussed a discrepancy discovered in the current year's expenses that affected the budget presented at last meeting. This discrepancy understated current year expenses and therefore artificially inflated funds to be carried over into next fiscal year. This discrepancy has been resolved and the numbers reflected in the budget presented in meeting are correct. In light of the discrepancy and the lower total amount of funds available for next fiscal year, Knapp and Greenstone made adjustments to the budget to lower expected expenses. Goals have been adjusted accordingly as well.

Discussion was had on adopting a more aggressive spending strategy in order to move the needle for VM in the next year. Knapp and Greenstone have done additional research on wind-down costs to ensure that VM would have enough in reserve to close up operations. Brittan noted that VM actually would not need to hold over that total amount because we'd have a quarter's worth of income in arrears. Meeker noted it's important to the council that VM should always have approximately \$75,000 in our budget for wind-down. There were no questions on the strategy or suggested budget. Greenstone left the meeting.

The Visitor Center discussion was reopened. The decision was made to put sharing costs for personnel with the Chamber on hold for now, but to offer to share costs for any printed materials.

Brittan, along with the nominating committee, provided an update on the nominating process for the current board opening. The application was posted in the *News-Register* and on the VM website. The committee will begin considering applicants beginning June 1.

Knapp reviewed Wine Walk materials, website, and other notes on the passport program. The newly printed Visitor's Guide was also reviewed.

Knapp reviewed occupancy data reports, which reveals a 30% occupancy growth in Q1 YOY based on reporting participants.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10.