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**VISIT MCMINNVILLE BOARD MEETING**

Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2016  
Location: Visit McMinnville Offices  
Present: Erin Stephenson, Ty Rollins, Emily Howard, Ellen Brittan, Cindy Lorenzen,  
Maria Stuart, Martha Meeker, Courtney Cunningham  
Absent: Scott Hill, Carmen Peirano, Cassie Sollars  
Staff: Jeff Knapp, Kitri McGuire  
Guests: Scott Greenstone & Doug LaPlaca via phone

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:36am.

Stephenson moved that we amend our contract with Greenstone to change the meeting requirements to include calling in monthly and visiting annually. Passed unanimously.

After review of the January minutes, Stephenson moved for approval. Passed unanimously.

Greenstone Financial Services principal, Scott Greenstone, joined the board on speaker phone to review financial statements. Key points covered:

- We do not yet have final TLT collection numbers yet for the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2015.
- We expect to receive a favorable revenue increase when we receive the collection numbers. Currently the statement is 3 months actual and 4 months estimated, blended.
- Actual expenses are trailing budgeted expenses currently in nearly all categories, and although we expect that to reverse slightly as the year closes, it won't do so completely. We expect currently to carry some cash into next year.
- We have a new bookkeeper, Michelle Senior. She will officially begin her duties beginning Monday, February 22, 2016. She has many years of experience in bookkeeping and compliance, most recently at Carlton Winemakers Studio.
- City business plan submission will take place along with budgeting. Final budget will be presented to the city on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at their second monthly meeting.

Knapp informed the board that VM will begin the budgeting process on Monday, February 22 and the process will likely continue through March. Greenstone expects budgeting to go smoothly, as VM is using previously created templates. The board did not have questions about the budgeting process.

Knapp informed the board that VM received a letter that an IRS clause regarding 501(c)6 classification information needs to be added to existing bylaws. Brittan moved that VM adopt the suggested clause. Passed unanimously.

Knapp recommended that VM not create and staff a new Visitor Center in FY17. Other opportunities include digital signage and kiosks. Stuart recommended that we leave room for other opportunities if they arise. Knapp is discussing materials and staffing for with Nathan Knottingham at the Chamber to improve the customer experience at the current Visitor Center. One area of concern is staffing the center on the weekends. Stephenson recommended we make a decision on funding from VM budget at this meeting as it will greatly affect the budgeting process for VM. Meeker mentioned the possibility of staffing the Visitor Center through a VM employee. Stephenson also mentioned that Chamber is not representative of all businesses that VM would represent. Howard mentioned that the Chamber is not conveniently located for visitors. Stephenson recommended a popup model to support the shoulder season and wine trail map. Potential locations, including the Downtown Association, were discussed. Brittan suggested that VM staff explore the Wine Trail promotion from the visitor experience outside the board meeting. Cunningham suggested the visitor center be at the current VM offices in the current sitting room. Brittan moved that the board not consider a full standalone brick and mortar Visitor Center for FY17. Cunningham seconded. Passed unanimously. Agreed that discussion and exploration of other options would continue in coming months.

Knapp brought up the TLT City Audit Process and plan. Doug LaPlaca joined us on the phone to provide insight on how Visit Bend operates. Meeker mentioned the clause in the ordinance that all TLT contributors could be audited. No audits were completed in 2014 or 2015. Options include auditing all contributors this year (cost = \$50,000 to audit all in 2016), or do one third of contributors each year to cover all contributors in each 3-year period (cost per year = \$17,500). Costs are paid from the 70% of TLT revenue. Meeker mentioned that the City will not be auditing online providers like Travelocity. LaPlaca noted that neither the City or VM included costs for auditing in their operating budgets. He recommended that because of that, we reduce unbudgeted costs by moving forward with the 3-year plan. He also suggested that we make it very clear who covers costs moving forward, and that the costs for this year are split similarly to how the tax dollars are split. Knapp mentioned that the auditing process is not included in the current contract or bylaws for VM. Brittan mentioned that moving forward the costs be pulled from the tax prior to the revenue hitting the VM books, with the goal being to keep VM out of the city ordinance enforcement process. Meeker said the City has funds allocated to audit 1/3 of the TLT providers in our existing 2015/16 budget. Meeker recommended that the bylaws and contract be amended to withhold a higher amount than 1% in the future to cover this plan, and Meeker will bring this to the next City Council meeting. Brittan suggested there should be a firewall of information to keep audit information completely with the City, not with VM. Stephenson moved that VM recommend the 3-year auditing plan. Passed unanimously.

From Jeff Knapp:

- Introduced Kitri McGuire as the new Visit McMinnville Marketing Manager.

- Mentioned the success of the first community launch with 150+ people in attendance. Also mentioned today's business outreach lunch.
- Mentioned advertising involvement with Evergreen. They will be showing :30s commercials prior to movies, as well as having our information and banners at a kiosk there.
- Mentioned placement of print ads in upcoming issues of print magazines and travel guides: 1859, Seattle Met, Portland Monthly and Northwest Travel and Life
- Mentioned increase of social media followers and engagement of all platforms. Paying \$500 monthly for photos and influence with Kari Young. Chelsey Nichol has been managing those influencers and social media accounts.
- Met with Wine Trail/Walk committee last week. VM has received bids on the creative for the Wine Trail/Walk from Nectar Graphics, Creative Company, and 237 Marketing. A logo, a printed piece to serve as map and passport, and a website page is included in those bids. Knapp met with the Art & Wine Walk Committee; they are comfortable with VM using the term Wine Walk if we choose to move forward with that name. Knapp offered to give the committee a complimentary ad in the printed piece. Meeker suggested that the Art & Wine Walk would benefit from a name change that associates their event with a date and time, i.e. First Friday. Knapp will speak with the Committee regarding the board's suggestions on name.
- Knapp mentioned website updates, including optimizing SEO over the next few months, linking from outside sites to VM.com, and categorization on the website so visitors can easily find what they're looking for. LaPlaca mentioned Google Ads were good, but focus currently is to drive organic search. The ultimate goal is that VM.com is such an awesome site that we don't need Google Ads; VM team will explore using ads as an option.
- VM will move forward with utilizing Cascade Employment Services for creation of employee handbook and other HR services.
- VM is moving forward with 401(k) services with assistance from Valerie Warren at Point B.
- Knapp mentioned city occupancy data from Q3 and noted that we are up slightly in occupancy rates (53.8% in 2014 v. 55.1% in 2015) and TLT collected tax (\$511,839 in 2014 v. \$598,580 in 2015). Meeker mentioned bringing up importance of reporting of tax and occupancy rates to lodging partners. Stephenson mentioned this is especially important due to these rates being tied to Knapp's incentive.

Cunningham was asked to serve on a steering committee for Yamhill Valley tourism regarding involvement in the Rural Tourism Studio, which includes promotions of agritourism, cycling, and other activities. Cunningham was concerned this was a conflict of interest. Stephenson expressed concern that this may be a conflict if Travel Yamhill Valley intends to ask for a percentage of our funds. LaPlaca mentioned it may be beneficial for Cunningham to represent VM on that committee.

Brittan mentioned Linfield is in the process of hiring an events manager, who would be a liaison between Linfield and VM. They have also begun a minor program for wine studies. There will also be a series of Saturday workshops, called the Enrichment Series, on a variety of topics that may

be of interest to tourists to the area. Brittan will advise VM staff when the series and class schedule is announced.

Knapp mentioned he will be visiting Greeters and other service organizations over the next few weeks.

Knapp mentioned VM is receiving an intern from MEDP through the McMinnville Works program for 6 weeks during the summer to help with marketing. This intern will be paid minimum wage. Knapp will be able to provide more information next month after meeting with the MEDP next week.

Knapp adjourned the meeting at 11:01am.

Minutes taken by Kitri McGuire, Marketing Manager, Visit McMinnville