**Visit McMinnville**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**September 16, 2020**

**Board Attendees:** Maria Stuart, Emily Howard, Ellen Brittan, Kellie Menke, Jen Feero, Jeff Towery, Courtney Cunningham, Ty Rollins

**Absent:** Erin Stephenson, Dani Chisholm, Cindy Lorenzen

**Staff Attendees:** Jeff Knapp, Kitri McGuire

**Guests:** Scott Hill

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:35 am. Note: August 2020 meeting was not held due to scheduling conflicts.

Minutes from the July Board of Directors meeting were reviewed. While a quorum of directors was present, not enough had been present at the July meeting to approve the minutes. A motion to approve was not made; topic was tabled for the October 2020 meeting.

Knapp reviewed financials from July and August. Visit McMinnville currently has $40k on the line of credit, and $75k in reserves. Income from this time frame was slightly above expectations, due to past TLT being collected and submitted by the city. Currently Visit McMinnville has an ending cash balance of $134k.

Cunningham moved to approve the financial documents as presented. Feero seconded. The motion to approve financial documents from July and August as presented was passed unanimously.

McGuire gave a marketing report and reviewed current projects. She noted Visit McMinnville is pivoting tactics to reach potential travelers. Marketing is the umbrella term for getting a message to the people you want to take an action; paid advertising (VM’s historical main method of marketing) is just one way to do it. Currently, VM staff are working on projects that improve the destination (a benefit to visitors AND locals) and have good storytelling value for use in media relations work.

Projects include: adding cannabis retailers and safe usage information to the website, undergoing a website accessibility audit, bike repair stations, the Foundations Mural Project (first mural was hung in late August in the Granary District), working with the City to develop a new brand, a collaboration beer project with Heater Allen, and others.

Knapp shared that he has been working with the new leadership at Evergreen, both on the for-profit and non-profit sides, and that he and the Stable Table members have been helping those leaders to navigate systems. He feels positive about the future direction there. Evergreen leadership is developing a 20 year master plan, and plans to build a hotel there within the next 2 years.

The Board discussed the current wildfire situation and the effects of smoke on grapes. Current messaging is that it’s just too early to tell. Stuart and Brittan weighed in on what their organizations are experiencing. Rollins mentioned that Comfort Inn had 1 busy week, but now their occupancy is back to “normal COVID” levels (approx. 50-60% occupancy).

Knapp updated the Board on the following:

* Knapp helped the County distribute 6,000 KN95 masks to Yamhill County vineyard workers.
* Knapp & McGuire volunteered with Ruddick/Wood to make meals for displaced families and firefighters.
* Statewide tourism industry is backing away from messaging encouraging visitors to plan a trip.
* Knapp will be stepping down from his seat on the Willamette Valley Visitor’s Association board next month, and Leslie Caldwell from Taste Newberg will be joining to represent Yamhill County.
* The Yamhill County Tourism Partnership asked the County Commissioners to be an official advisory committee to the county, but it looks as if the vote on that will be delayed and not pass. If that is the case, the YCTP will likely be paused or disbanded.
* McGuire is on the “MacPac” Parks & Recreation committee and advising members and city leadership on the visitor economy.
* The Stable Table has been working hard with the City to offer grants for COVID-affected businesses through a partnership with Business Oregon. The grant application window has been extended through the 3rd week in September.

Mayor Hill discussed the proposed truck re-routing plans out of downtown Carlton and down Westside Road. Hill, Towery, and Knapp are advising leaders working on that project on the effects it will have to McMinnville.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:50am.

The next meeting will be held on October 21, 2020 at 9:30am via Zoom.

Meeting minutes recorded and respectfully submitted by Kitri McGuire.

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