

Visit McMinnville
Board of Directors Meeting
February 19, 2020

Board Attendees: Erin Stephenson, Emily Howard, Ellen Brittan, Kellie Menke, Jen Feero, Jeff Towery, Cindy Lorenzen, Courtney Cunningham, Ty Rollins

Absent: Maria Stuart, Dani Chisholm

Staff Attendees: Jeff Knapp, Kitri McGuire

Guests: Joe Strunk, Scott Hill

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:44 am.

Minutes from the January Board of Directors meeting were reviewed. Cunningham moved to approve the minutes as presented. Feero seconded. Brittan noted an amendment – Towery was not present. Cunningham seconded the amendment. The minutes were approved as presented, with noted amendment, unanimously.

Knapp announced that Q4 2019 TLT saw a 12.8% growth year over year; VM received roughly \$16,000 additional revenue above budget. Knapp presented financial documents. Brittan noted that since revenue is ahead, marketing expenses will likewise grow slightly above budget due to that increased revenue. There was an increase in personnel expenses, partially due to a new hire and partially due to increased incentive pay (increased revenue).

Lorenzen moved to approve financial documents as presented; Feero seconded. Financials were approved unanimously as presented.

Knapp presented a timeline for VM's strategic plan and budget, presentations to the board and the City Council, and contract stages.

On April 14, Patty (chief council from the League of Oregon Cities) will present to the City Council on how TLT can legally be spent. Also in April, Towery is suggesting a work session with VM for review of the contract and aligning next steps for VM's business plan.

Knapp informed the City representatives in the room that their plan pushes the current contract section 4A out. City officials present all acknowledged this, and agreed that it was fine and that all were moving forward with strong communication and good faith.

In March, VM staff will present a draft budget and business plan to board. In April, Board members will need to vote on the proposed plan. All groups will need to be aware that dates of meetings and presentations may overlap.

Knapp presented a deck with results and findings from the Board of Directors' strategic planning session. On a slide that shared how work would be split between marketing and development, Towery suggested to add the word "expansion" in addition to business recruitment and retention. Stephenson noted that

the word “education” in the “diversify reasons” section means different things to different people and perhaps it should be removed (as the intention is covered in “connecting resources” above). Stephenson also suggested the addition of partnerships as a defining part of destination development.

Knapp presented a slide with VM’s long term strategic milestones. VM has completed the first 1-5 year “phase” as an organization (“planting”), and now plans to move into “fertilization” phase (years 5-10), which includes building destination awareness, opportunity analysis, and destination development.

Stephenson reviewed the results of the strategic planning session. She noted the executive committee reviewed VM’s bylaws to see if those needed to change to reflect the updated direction of the organization. Brittan read the first paragraph of the bylaws aloud to the Board. Board members were asked by Stephenson if anyone felt the bylaws needed amendments. All members agreed bylaws are appropriate as-is even with the new addition of destination development activities to VM operations.

Stephenson reviewed discussions the executive committee had with the City regarding contract length. They suggest a 5 year contract with two 2-year extensions. Joe Strunk suggested the contract also be revised to strike wording relating to the founding of the organization that no longer apply.

Stephenson noted that Council has power to provide direction and feedback to the VM Board and staff through the annual review of VM’s proposed budget and plan, and therefore the executive committee felt the contract section that outlines what revenue should be spent on did not need to be more specific, especially as those needs will change over time.

Towery noted the current contract outlines timing for presentation of the annual plan in the first two weeks in May. Towery suggested a two step process where VM has a work session with Council to make sure the plan is on a strong path in addition to a final, formal presentation in early May. Towery also noted a jointly funded project that would affect staffing and budget would benefit from an earlier meeting. Stephenson asked for clarification on what a jointly funded project means to Towery and the City. Hill suggested perhaps those project opportunities are more appropriate for 10-15 year section of the plan. Towery clarified that he’d like to see the contract be flexible enough to accommodate opportunities the Board and City can’t yet see.

Councilor Menke agreed that the next 5 years should be spent on analysis, and that moving too quickly would not be wise as other organizations, like the economic vitality committee, are similarly working on big picture analysis of large scale economic drivers for the city.

Stephenson, representing the executive committee, moved that VM move forward with a 5 year contract with two 2-year extensions, and that Strunck will draft a contract based on the Board’s direction. Board approved unanimously.

McGuire gave a marketing report. Paid advertising began in Seattle in January, and target consumers are responding well to it, especially radio ads. VM will be hosting a media happy hour in Seattle on March 3 to create relationships with writers in that area as well. Within a few weeks, a new section of the VM website will feature McMinnville event venue information that can be sorted/filtered.

Knapp noted:

- VM is investing in Dean Runyan visitor spending data for the city. That data will be delivered around April 15.

- Staff attended the Oregon Wine Symposium. Knapp noted that Oregon and New Zealand are the only wine regions seeing growth right now, which is good news for our destination. Knapp noted that he'll be working with the economic development vitality committee to see how McMinnville can attract supplier business to support the wine industry.
- Knapp noted that there's interest in holding the World Cycling Championships in 2026 in the Portland-McMinnville. VM will continue to network those individuals and support where appropriate.
- Knapp will be stepping down from the WVVA board soon.
- The MDA will be announcing a new hire for an executive director.
- The Taylor-Dale building will be a 9 room luxury hotel (7 in the building, 2 in next door building yet to be built). The restaurant will be a taphouse that will seat 290 with a basement cellar to be a Jackson Family Cellars tasting room. Ground floor of the new building next door will be very high end restaurant.

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The meeting was adjourned at 11:44am.

The next meeting will be held on March 18, 2020 at 9:30am at PLACE TBD.

Meeting minutes recorded and respectfully submitted by Kitri McGuire.

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