

Visit McMinnville
Board of Directors Meeting
March 18, 2020

Board Attendees: Erin Stephenson, Maria Stuart, Ellen Brittan, Kellie Menke, Jen Feero, Jeff Towery, Courtney Cunningham, Dani Chisholm,

Absent: Ty Collins, Emily Howard, Cindy Lorenzen

Staff Attendees: Jeff Knapp, Kitri McGuire

Guests: Dave Rucklos, Scott Hill

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:35 am. Meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Attendees reported on business openings/closings/changes due to COVID-19. The Atticus Hotel is open, reviewing weekly. Comfort Inn is open. McMenamins is closed for at least 30 days. Community Plate is closed; Pizza Capo is doing takeout only. Thistle is currently doing takeout only but reviewing daily.

Dave Rucklos, Executive Director of the McMinnville Downtown Association shared that it's a mixed bag with downtown businesses; some are closed, some have cut back hours, some are doing takeout. There are lots of layoffs. The MDA is sending daily messages to its members and Dave joins a downtown directors meeting every Tuesday.

Minutes from the February Board of Directors meeting were reviewed. Board did not have quorum of members who were also present at the February meeting to approve; motion to approve was tabled until the April 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

Financial documents were reviewed. Brittan shared that her review of the financials was satisfactory, that there was a question on some grant pass through dollars for the Yamhill County Tourism Partnership. Knapp is figuring that out currently with Michelle Senior. He is also working on updating cash flow forecasting for the end of the fiscal year, and he has cancelled plans for any big projects if they are not necessary.

Stephenson said she is experiencing not a lot of cancellations for May, and suggested that VM plan for only 1-2 weeks of TLT income for March, none for April, and potentially 2 weeks of May (4-8 weeks of no TLT income). Brittan noted that the *NY Times* is projecting a 31% downturn in hospitality revenue over the next 6 months.

Chisholm moved to approved financials as presented. Cunningham seconded. Financials were approved unanimously as presented.

Knapp updated the group on the current status of contract negotiations with the City of McMinnville. The Board's executive committee met with Joe Strunk last week to draft a contact requesting a five year contract with two, 2-year extensions. The final draft should be ready by next week. Stephenson asked the board if they supported the executive committee reviewing the draft and moving forward with negotiations with the City. The board was unanimously in support.

The work session with the City Council is still scheduled for April 14 at this time. The intention is still to have the council for the League of Oregon Cities present to advise the city on lodging tax law. Visit McMinnville will present the board's intentions for the next five years at that session.

Knapp stated VM's upcoming business plan for the next fiscal year, and the overarching five-year plan, is in alignment with the economic vitality committee. That group has reviewed possibilities for exogenous zones; there have been 10 potential projects planned for, including an equestrian facility, amphitheater, RV park, sporting complex, conference center, and others, to be completed in the next 20-30 years. VM is also open to investing in data to support the committee's direction. Education, utilities, and other important community voices are all at that table.

Knapp noted that normally in March, staff would have a detailed budget ready to review, but due to COVID-19, this year staff will present in April with revised income based on current industry decline projections. The revised plan and budget will continue to have a similar percentage of income dedicated to marketing, destination development, and research. Potential development projects could include city branding, arts & culture support like a mural project, cycling support. In these efforts, VM intends to be conveners, communicators, and supporters – not necessarily funders.

VM also intends to work towards solidifying a partnership with MEDP and work together on business recruitment, creating collateral, supporting SEDCOR efforts, and expanding group sales opportunities.

Stephenson noted that this direction is supported by the executive committee and feels it is consistent with what was discussed at the board retreat in January. Brittan noted that a 20% decline in income feels appropriate for the budget. Stephenson concurred. Knapp will work on several projection options over the next week and send them to the executive committee to review, and he reminded the board that their approved direction will have been reviewed by Council at the time of VM's next board meeting.

McGuire gave a marketing report on February efforts, including the Seattle media event held on March 3. She noted current efforts in light of COVID-19, including pulling Seattle-area paid advertising, pulling the majority of Portland-area paid advertising, creating a Yamhill County-specific social media ad campaign, and doing daily social media stories on the businesses that are choosing to stay open. VM is listening to Travel Oregon and U.S. Travel to determine industry best practices.

Knapp asked the board if ethically the staff should continue to ask locals to go to businesses that have chosen to stay open. The board unanimously agreed that right now, it's up to businesses and individuals what they feel comfortable doing, and it's VM's role to continue to support and amplify the efforts of local business in the best possible way. Stuart suggested not showing groups gathering in any of our photography. Stephenson also suggested referring to Oregon Health Authority for best practices.

Knapp is pulling back on some of Rachel Adam's hours, since group sales is not a priority, but is giving her some additional destination development tasks to keep her busy over the coming weeks.

Knapp has upcoming meetings with the County Commissioners. He will be recommending that the Yamhill County Tourism Partnership become an official advisory committee for the County. YCTP does not plan to ask for funding or a tax, just provide stakeholder driven information for the County for development.

Knapp will be stepping down from his board position at the Willamette Valley Visitor's Association, and Leslie Caldwell from Visit Newberg will take his place.

Mayor Hill noted that all Oregon mayors are in frequent communication with the Governor's office. Jody Christenson's role has changed to help Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties with business resources.

Knapp will meet with the Stable Table group this week. VM will be a clearinghouse of information moving forward and will send the final draft of the contract to the executive committee within a week. The City will figure out how to proceed with the April 14 council work session.

Towery noted that the City is putting up information daily on their website and social media accounts. The next Council meeting will be held online only. All public facing City desks have closed. They've added one new ambulance in rotation. There has not been an uptick in police activity. So far, no layoffs or furloughs are planned through March 31.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:45am.

The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2020 at 9:30am at PLACE TBD.

Meeting minutes recorded and respectfully submitted by Kitri McGuire.

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