

**VISIT COLORADO SPRINGS (VCOS)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, June 20, 2023**

**Minutes**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Pepper Dombroski, Chair  
Susan Davies, Past Chair  
Dave Harris, Treasurer  
Becky Leinweber, Secretary (via phone)  
Kristina Coggins Heck  
Gus Krimm  
Megan Leatham  
Scott Marble  
Wendy McHenry  
Lisa Neener  
Greg Phillips  
Jenny Sherman  
Michelle Talarico  
Brooke Mikulas

**Board Members Absent:**

Andie Doyle  
Herman Crawford  
Crystal LaTier

**VCOS Staff:**

Doug Price  
Amy Long  
Kathy Reak  
April Perez  
Bailey Ashida  
Dina Worthen  
Brian Werner – BRW Tax & Accounting

**Meeting called to order at 8:05 am**

**CHAIR'S WELCOME – Pepper Dombroski**

- Acceptance of Board Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2023. Motion made by Scott Marble and seconded by Wendy McHenry to accept the May minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- Pepper thanked all for their continuing work and support.

**President/CEO Update – Doug Price, President/CEO**

- The Governance Committee has recommended Ek Okvath, the GM at Springhill Suites and Element, to fill our vacant hotel position on the board. Ed served on the board before and was a dedicated and effective member. Motion made by Dave Harris and seconded by Jenny Sherman to add Ed Okvath to the vacant Board position. The motion passed unanimously.
- Doug introduced our fractional CFO, Brian Werner of BRW Tax & Accounting, to the group and everyone did a quick intro. Brian has access to Xledger and he, April, Dave and Brian will meet with Xledger this week.
- A farewell luncheon for Janet Suthers was held at The Broadmoor last month. A slide show was shown, and Janet was presented with the inaugural OCUSA Excellence in Community Service Award. She was touched, and it was a fun and meaningful salute to her. Going forward, the award will be presented annually starting in 2024 at our Tourism Awards Celebration.
- The OCUSA sculpture, titled Olympians and Paralympians Among Us, was dedicated on May 30. Apolo Ohno attended. The final touches for the sculpture are being done, to include lighting and

the names of the athletes who competed in the Olympics and Paralympics and attended UCCS for one semester or more. Kudos to Kristina Coggins Heck for a successful event.

#### **Finance Committee Update – Dave Harris, Board Treasurer**

- Update on FinComm meeting – The investment accounts are in good shape, and Integrity Wealth was at the most recent meeting. Doug explained that the investment funds were from when we hoped to buy this building, but the owner decided against selling. We are in year two of a 10-year lease. He also pointed out that the parking lot will be repaved June 29 and 30.

#### **Financial Update – April Perez, Senior Accountant**

- **Reports:** Performance, financial, cashflow and aging reports were sent in the board packet in advance of the meeting. All reports were reviewed by the finance committee. April asked if there were any questions - there were none. She said we are in good financial shape, and Doug added that the level payments from the City for LART are beneficial for accounting practices.

#### **Sales Update – Kathy Reak, Vice President of Sales**

- The team has interacted with more than 1,295 people at tradeshows so far this year. Some of those attended include the HelmsBriscoe annual meeting. The SMART Meetings show is next week, and CSAE is in Glenwood Springs at the end of this month.
- At Space Symposium, there were 608 companies represented, over 230 exhibitors, over 260 speakers, 300+ volunteers, 110 Space Foundation employees, six continents with media attendees and 13 shuttle buses. The event continues to grow and transport from overflow hotels is a growing issue. We are helping them look for some options to ease the problem.
- Kathy, Doug and other VCOS staff members met with CoralTree Hospitality, the management company for The Hotel at the U.S. Air Force Academy. They will be naming the hotel shortly, and it will not be chain affiliated. The hotel has 375 rooms, 26,000 square feet of meeting space, a casual bar in the lobby and a fancier one on the rooftop, 5,500 square feet of plaza space and 4,000 sq feet of gathering lawn space. They anticipate hosting many weddings. There is a bridge from the hotel to the Visitor Center, and they are pre-selling groups for meetings in Jan 2025 and beyond. [The Hotel at The United States Air Force Academy](#) is the link for more information and pictures.
- Cheryl attended Sports ETA. It was a great show with 35 appointments she is following up on. Cheryl attended Compete Sports Diversity and she will analyze the ROI to determine if she will attend their larger meeting in 2024.
- Other sport news includes the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo, July 11-15 and it will be the National Finals Rodeo again this year. It should sell out and will be broadcast on the Cowboy Network. The International Jump Rope Championships has booked 32,500 room nights thus far and again shuttles between hotels and the venue are a challenge. They currently have 14 buses. Colorado Springs is the final leg of the Great Race which starts in St Augustine, Florida and ends on July 2. 150-175 cars are expected. The Pikes Peak Marathon, formerly the Pikes Peak Ascent, has moved the date from August to mid-September.

#### **Marketing Update – Amy Long, Chief Financial Officer**

- **2022 Longwoods Travel Report** – Amy reviewed the top-level numbers. Dave Harris asked if this was the same data the CTO has, and Amy explained that we are part of the state data but that we pay for a report that is specific to Pikes Peak Region. Overall, our numbers are up over 2021. Day trippers account for 56% of our visitors and overnighters are 44%. We had 24 million visitors

with 2.8 billion in economic impact. Longwoods added a new question this year about travelers with a disabled person in the group, and data shows Colorado Springs had 35% of groups with a disabled member while the national average is 20%. Doug and Amy will follow-up with Longwoods on how the question was worded. The higher number could be attributed to Paralympic events and the military. Doug pointed out our contract with Wheel the World is progressing with hotels and attractions signing up. The next step is for local WTW contractors to visit and assess the partners that have signed up. Each partner, as well as the Colorado Springs Airport, will have a listing on Wheel the World's website ([www.WheelTheWorld.com](http://www.WheelTheWorld.com)).

- **Website Update** – The month over month total and organic traffic continues to improve. From June 1 through 15 total traffic is up 17% and organic traffic is up 21%. A discussion between Alex (Tempest) and Brenton (Orange142) is scheduled for next week. We switched on June 1 to a new way of displaying ads: fewer ad units (2 vs. 5) per page. This should improve the user experience and ad performance. Ashley with Destination Signals, the division of Tempest that sells these ads to our partners, contacted all advertisers with a conversion plan. That process went smoothly.
- **Committee Reports** – The last Marketing Committee meeting was on June 1, the same day as USAFA graduation – we will avoid this in the future since our committee chair, Lisa, works at USAFA. The meeting covered recent and current programs, campaigns and activities in marketing and communications with good discussions throughout. The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 3. The last Partnership Committee meeting was June 13, with Kristina Coggins Heck as chair. Topics covered include a sub-category for restaurant partnerships, benefits for Community Partners, the annual survey and DEI initiatives. The next Partnership Committee meeting is September 12. The Annual Tourism awards celebration will be on Wednesday, October 18 at Flying W.

#### Wrap Up – Doug Price

- All board members in attendance gave a brief update on what is going on in their world.
- Doug reminded the board we will not meet again until September 19. On behalf of all staff, he thanked all board members for serving. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 am.

Submitted:



Peggy Manter  
Executive Assistant

Verified:



Becky Leinweber  
Board Secretary