

VISIT COLORADO SPRINGS (VCOS)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Minutes

Board Members in Attendance:

Susan Davies, Chair
Dave Harris, Treasurer
Becky Leinweber, Secretary
Dr. Herman Crawford
Gus Krimm
Crystal LaTier
Megan Latham
Scott Marble
Brooke Mikulas
Abby Murtagh
Lisa Neener
Greg Phillips
Jenny Sherman
Michelle Talarico
Marisa Wigglesworth

Board Members Absent:

Kristina Coggins Heck (excused)
Wendy McHenry
Ed Okvath
Johnna Reeder Kleymeyer

VCOS Staff:

Doug Price
Amy Long
Kathy Reak
April Perez
Sheridan Powell
Peggy Manter
Brian Werner – BRW Tax & Accounting

Guest:

Todd Marts

Meeting called to order at 8:05 am

CHAIR'S WELCOME – Susan Davies

- Susan gave thanks to Peggy and the VCOS staff and Doug for getting through the events of the last week.
- Acceptance of Board Meeting Minutes from June 20, 2023. Motion made by Scott Marble and seconded by Dave Harris to accept the June minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Governance committee recommended Abby Murtagh, of the Broadmoor, and Marisa Wigglesworth, of the USOPM, as candidates to join the board. Marisa and Abby gave a brief self-introductions and Susan asked for a motion. Motion made by Dave Harris and seconded by Megan Latham to accept the recommendations and add them to the Board. The motion passed unanimously.
- Doug then said that Susan will serve as chair through 2023 and the recommendation was for Scott Marble to be voted on as the chair for 2024. He pointed out that a full slate of directors and nominees would be presented in January. Motion was made by Jenny Sherman and seconded by Gus Krimm to accept the recommendation to make Scott the chair in 2024. The motion passed unanimously.
- Doug handed out two cards - a congratulations card for Pepper on her new job and a get-well card for Kristina - and asked the members to sign them.

- Crystal LaTier introduced our guest, Todd Marts, the Executive Director of El Paso County Parks and Community Services. Todd presented information on the new nature center that will be built in Fox Run Regional Park in Black Forest.

President/CEO Update – Doug Price, President/CEO

- Through June, the tax revenue was up nearly 6% over 2022. Through July, LART is up almost 1% over 2022. VisitCOS and the Sports Corp, along with the CSCEDC and the Cultural Office all have contracts with the city for their share of LART. Megan Latham explained that as contracted entities, each organization reviews the requests related to their area and scores them on a predefined rubric. Those recommendations then go to the entire committee which makes recommendations to City Council. City Council reviews and makes the final allocations. For 2024, there is \$2million to award compared to requests of \$5million. Becky Leinweber said the PPORA is trying to become a contracted entity and that the outdoor recreation we provide is a big factor in getting “heads in beds.” The amount of the LART tax and the hope for an increase was discussed and while most of City Council supports the increase, we are a TABOR city and this issue must go to the voters to decide.
- The Tourism Awards Celebration is on October 18 and PPLA is the presenting sponsor.
- Doug was unable to attend the “DC Fly-In,” but Michelle Talarico went and said it was a great trip, well-attended trip with 95 elected officials and community leaders taking part.
- Doug and 5 staff members will attend the Governor’s Conference on Tourism this week in Fort Collins.
- Sheridan Powell gave a Wheel The World update. Wheel the World is a travel booking site, much like Expedia but designed specifically for travelers with mobility disabilities. The company thoroughly reviews the hotels, venues and attractions before listing them. VCOS received a grant from the CTO to make this happen. We have the potential for 30 venues or properties to participate. Thus far we have 20 participating with 3 already completed and listed on their site. They look at a multitude of factors and use the results not to grade accessibility but to let the traveler know ahead of time what to expect and what they will need to have with them to make it all work. The COS airport is participating, and the input from Wheel will help guide the renovations they are currently doing. PPORA is also working with Sheridan on trail accessibility. As noted in the Longwoods study, Colorado Springs has a high number of traveler groups with a disabled person or persons. The national average is 20% and ours is 35%.
- Kathy Reak gave a staff and department update. Dina Worthen has resigned effective October 13 and the Senior Sales Manager position will be filled by Brittany Hunt. Lindsey Pevey has moved over to the Partnership Department replacing Ana Mendoza who resigned effective Sept 8. Kathy is doing some restructuring and they still have one more position to fill.
- HR Branches has completed the employee survey, and the exec team will learn the results on October 5.

Finance Committee Update – Dave Harris, Board Treasurer

Update on FinComm meeting – they are researching more investment options to put excess cash to use. Dave, Brian and April had a learning session at Xledger. There were no contracts to review and Dave went over all bank statements and credit card statements with April in August.

Financial Update – April Perez, Senior Accountant

- **Reports:** Performance, financial, cashflow and aging reports were sent in the board packet in advance of the meeting. April asked if there were any questions - there were none. She said we

are in good financial shape. She also showed STR forecast data through 2024 specific to our region.

Sales Update – Kathy Reak, Vice President of Sales

- The team sold 58,3000 room nights in August. They had 136 leads, many are conventions. Overflow rooms for Space Symposium numbered 7,200. The rodeo created more room nights than in past years as it is now part of the NFR and broadcast on the Cowboy Channel. She pointed out those numbers do not include the Jump Rope event. On October 16 she and Brittany will travel to IMEX, the biggest meetings trade show of the year, and they have 21 appointments set up to date.

Marketing Update – Amy Long, Chief Financial Officer

- **Website Update** – The month over month total and organic traffic continues to improve. Total sessions are up 19% since April and 27% since July over 2022. Organic traffic is up 18% since April and 26% since July over 2022. Next steps include Tempest creating new content along with some from VCOS. New Brew Media has been hired to do an SEO analysis that should be completed by the end of October or early November, and those results will be shared with Tempest. We will update the board at the Dec 5 meeting and decide on the 2024 SEO contract.


Wrap Up – Doug Price and Susan Davies

- Board members in attendance gave a brief update on what is going on in their world.
- Doug spoke about a possible government shutdown and the effects on air travel and tourism. It is estimated it could cause \$140million in lost travel revenue per day.
- Susan thanked all for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 9:35am.

Submitted:


Peggy Manter
Executive Assistant

Verified:


Becky Leinweber
Board Secretary