

Custer County Tourism Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Kirkpatrick Bank Conference Room

Call to Order at 9:00 a.m.

Board Roll Call: Deb Adams, Karalin Alsdurf,
Wade Pettis, Jackie Shepherd

Guests: Shelly Larson (Jo Studio), Bryan
Jordan (Vista Works), Lisa Bivens,

Commissioner Lucas Epp, Jeff Bivens,
Matt Erickson

Public Comment: None

Amendments to Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes: July 2023 *Approved*

Guest Presentations:

- Frontier Pathways was scheduled.

REPORTS

Chair (Deb Adams):

- Getaway Giveaway – 1,930 entries received, many every day. Spend rate lower than budgeted - \$3,000/\$1,100 spent so far. Focus is bringing attention to Custer County especially in shoulder season. Two Giveaways will be awarded on 10/2 by random selection. Deb will acquire all certificates and products.
- County Concerns – An individual submitted a CORA request to review 2022 & 2023 finances. Personal concern with losing Dark Sky Community status because of local politics. Appreciate new commissioner Lucas Epp being present.
- Board Recruitment – Lisa Bivins and Vanessa Cruz may be prospective members. Deb's term needs to be renewed in January 2024 and approved by BOCC. Request support of board.
- Destination Stewardship Strategic Planning Initiative – CTO initiative focus on being a considerate visitor. Deb and Shelly will attend the workshop in Pueblo on October 25.
- Webinar Destination Stewardship: Reimagining the Purpose of Tourism in Outdoor Communities on Sept 7. Very interesting. A great place to live is a great place to visit!
- Tourism Conference, Fort Collins, September 27-29 – Deb and Shelly will attend.

Financial Review:

- Fund balance of \$81,312 with 86% of budget spent. Current revenue at \$54,426.58 as of August (on track with 2021). November payment is always largest revenue check.
- Proposed 2024 budget presented and reviewed.
 - o Annual Budget increased to \$80,000
 - o Partner Grants not offered for 2024 and use funds for CTO Grant Match
 - o 3rd Party Advertising \$15,000 for print and web
 - o VistaWorks and Jo Studio contract increased to \$16,500 (from \$15,400 in 2023).

Motion: Jackie/Wade 2nd to forward to Finance Director Lisa Bivins to present to BOCC.

- Royal Gorge Official Visitors Guide ad to be paid this year for 2024 advertising.

Professional Services:

Jo Studio

- Monthly report presented and reviewed.
- Will develop ad campaign for Colorado Life ads in 2024.
- Working on brochures for WCPA and Silver Cliff Museum to be completed this year.
- Consider merchandise swag for sale at Welcome Center.

VistaWorks

- Phone meeting with Lindsay on Monday with Deb, Shelly, and Karalin.
- Monthly report presented and reviewed. As a result of Google moving analytics to GA4, new reporting format can be accessed and will show 'live' data.
- \$1,100 has been spent on Getaway Giveaway; seen by approximately 200,000 people.
- Website users up 35%; new users up by 40%.
- Recommend using some funds for "influencers" with dark sky and stargazing focus.
- "How You Can Experience Ranch Life in CO" article published in 303 Magazine from July 2022 hosted visit. Also articles on Fox10 Phoenix, thrillist.com and World Atlas 9.
- CTO Marketing Grant 2023 - grant funds were used to develop a series of videos varying from 6-60 seconds in length; messaging on conservation and protection of night skies. Videos are accessible and to be used by CCTB and other entities
- CTO Marketing Grant 2024 – Did not submit for Colorado Stargazing now in the hands of Dark Skies Colorado.
- CTO Management Grant 2024 – Opens December 5. We have learned CTO prefers NEW projects. Discussion of projects such as wayfinding/signage and turn-out on CO 96.

Welcome Center:

- Annual lease renewed \$350 per month. Holding steady with annual budget of \$6000.
- Open for 90 days in 2023, increase to 100 days in 2024 to be \$60/per day.
- YTD Stats: 309 hours | 670 visitors | 494 locals. Open until November 11.
- Refresh will include a spruced up window display and exterior trim repainted.
- Have received permission to have mural painted in courtyard on north side of #105. Consider a "Paint the Town" mural project. Murals are engaging.
- Ambassadors – a few hiccups of a no show and early departure.
- All Aboard Westcliffe dropped off 12 boxes of 2006 San Isabel and 3 boxes of 1998 Frontier Pathways informational booklets to hand out. Great booklets!
- Donation of \$167 given to Trails for All for sale of stickers and walking sticks.
- Guidebook Distribution
 - Will review and update WMV Guidebook to reprint in 2024
 - Past and Present – 10,000 copies, pallet of 3,780 remaining. A well-received publication by locals and visitors.
 - Guidebook mailing, with glitch fixed, steady flow: July/30, Aug/60, Sept/30.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- Discussion to not issue Partner Marketing Grants for 2024 but have Tourism promote events. The time reserved in Library Community Room on Thursday, November 9 from 5-8pm will be used for a Tourism Community Conversation with stakeholders invited. Maximum capacity is 40.
- Strategic Planning Session will be scheduled in February 2024 to focus on re-evaluation and development of CCTB Marketing Plan for 2024-26; Gary Taylor as facilitator.

Next Tourism Board Meeting – October 10, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

*Respectively submitted,
Karalin Alsdurf, Vice Chair/Acting Secretary*