

**CARSON CITY VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Carson City Visitors Bureau was held Monday, February 10, 2014 at the Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William Street, Sierra Room, Carson City, Nevada beginning at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Jonathan Boulware, Chairman
Stephen Lincoln, Vice Chairman
Stan Jones
Karen Abowd

STAFF PRESENT: Joel Dunn, Executive Director
Linda Macauley, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Barnett
Miya MacKenzie, MacWest Marketing
Kat Hood, KKP Golden Connection
Kyle Horvath, Panacea Planning Group
Josie Martel, MacWest Marketing
Tara Burke, Computer Artistry

Call to Order.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. (Chairman Boulware joined the meeting later).

Mr. Lincoln led the pledge of allegiance

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (FIVE MINUTE TIME LIMIT):**

There were no public comments.

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 13, 2014 BOARD MEETING.**

Mr. Jones made a motion for approval of the minutes as presented (with small correction by Mr. Lincoln re: NCOT \$10,000 grant for mobile app. He stated that we couldn't apply those funds retroactively).

Second – **Ms. Abowd** Approved – Unanimously

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: ADOPTION OF AGENDA.**

Ms. Abowd made the motion to accept the 2/10/14 agenda.

Second – **Mr. Jones** Approved – Unanimously

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET REPORT.**

Mr. Dunn stated that he has included in the ‘Master Budget Report’ all of the current NCOT grant projects, the Visitor Center, Marketing and Administrative Budgets. He reviewed this information from the reports.

Mr. Lincoln asked about payments to the state, paying one time instead of three times? **Mr. Dunn** replied that the interim director Linda Ritter had an agreement with the City with the Interlocal Agreement. He met with Nancy Paulson (City Finance department) last week and her concern about only paying at the end of the year came up in their discussion. Mr. Dunn will bring this back to the board after finding out if there is benefit in holding on to the funds or if it is better to make a one-time payment. **Ms. Abowd** asked about the V&T discussion with Nancy Paulson? **Mr. Dunn** replied that City Finance is aware that with giving the \$70,000 bond payment in addition to the \$70,000 V&T depot project payment, the Bureau is projecting in the 2% capital projects fund a carry-over of \$66,000 and a little over \$150,000 in the 2% V&T Capital Bond. Mr. Dunn stated that they are aware that the Bureau is not going to have the money that we have put out in the past.

Ms. Abowd made the motion to approve the budget report for January 2014.

Second – **Mr. Jones**

Approved – Unanimously

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: RATIFICATION OF MONTHLY BILLS.**

Mr. Dunn explained the monthly bills to the board; he expanded a bit on Gravity Jack for the augmented reality for the mobile app. He did process the payment for \$20,000 for All World Sports for marketing. Also \$4,000 went to the newly-branded gift shop apparel and we have the NV 150 items in now. **Mr. Lincoln** asked about check number 18294 for All World Sports it has zero listed. **Mr. Dunn** replied that it was voided; there was an erroneous address and we needed to void the check and re-write it.

Mr. Jones made a motion to ratify the CCVB monthly bills for January 2014.

Second – **Ms. Abowd**

Approved – Unanimously

**MR. LINCOLN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –
NON-ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. **Marketing Team Update** - **Mr. Dunn** stated that the team here tonight is; Miya MacKenzie, Josie Martel, Kat Hood, Kyle Horvath, Tara Burke, Cat Allison, Elayna Shine and James Salanoa.

Ms. MacKenzie stated that the Website launched on January 12, 2014. Highlights are that we have integrated a second website with sporting events and tournaments; this is a wordpress website which allows us to make continual changes allowing us to see within a day if the changes are making a

positive impact. We will add photos and hone content as needed. We moved around the Eat/Play/Stay portion which is a popular part of the home page. We changed to have one large video in the middle.

Mr. Dunn stated that as of last night, we went live on the i-store. Mr. Dunn gave a few updates on the RV conference in Quartzite. He gave information on comparison of mobile apps from other visitor centers and promoting our app and invited folks to download the app and then 'like' it. We will begin tracking the number of downloads by geographical location and are hoping to "go live" with it in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Dunn will present information on this topic in more detail at next month's Board meeting. He also mentioned the ads that are out inviting others to download our app. He talked about and played the new video.

Ms. Hood stated that there has been an increase of 44% in mobile traffic to the website. The time spent on the site has increased 33%. The traffic from search using terms with 'Lake Tahoe' is up 14%.

Mr. Lincoln asked what mobile entails, just SmartPhones? **Mr. Boulware** asked about which phrases are being used to search. **Ms. Hood** stated that there is not enough data yet in this short amount of time. **Ms. Abowd** asked which age brackets are tuning in? **Ms. Hood** stated that the data is not what was originally done, but moving forward we can have those statistics.

Mr. Horvath stated that regarding the Social media; Facebook is continuing to grow with our 'likes.' The Visitor Center gift shop remodel with pictures of the new displays and new merchandise reached 434 people, 34 'likes,' 0 comments and 4 shares. Appliqué had a lot of sharing and commenting with 515 reached, 31 'likes,' 10 comments and a number of people stopped by the Visitor Center to get their free window sticker decals. Twitter has 1,263 followers, we have made 982 tweets and are being mentioned in other peoples' tweets. On You Tube we have 43 subscribers, 444 views on the sites, InstaGram has doubled our followers and more than doubled our posts. Regarding the Community Influencer Strategy; we have 3 of the 5 done. Mr. Horvath stated that at 'Winter Wine and All That Jazz' he was on Social media to increase community awareness of what the Brewery Arts Center is doing and with 350 attendees to the event. He also stated that he had a following on Social media from people not attending the event. **Mr. Dunn** stated that he and Mr. Horvath and Laura Robb who handles all of the Social media for the NCOT attended the weeklong conference in Huntsville, Alabama for a symposium on Social media for Tourism and Visitor Bureaus. This conference was so good that we came back and set up a conference for rural communities in our state.

Mr. Horvath stated that our Social media symposium will be at the end of March here in Carson City. The training event goals will be to show how to create a statewide community dedicated to advancing their tourism social media efforts for the rural communities. The NV 150 State Fair is the first statewide project to do that. One benefit to NCOT will be to identify grant opportunities and training needs for rural tourism partners. **Mr. Boulware** asked if we have started to invite people to this yet. Yes, but informally, no official invitations sent out yet. The agenda will include intro to social media (myths/facts), objectives and strategies, breakout sessions (computer lab for beginners or analyzing social media return on investment for more advanced attendees). Search Engine Optimization and social media's relationship with your website which is our very own. The Speed marketing event will be for attendees to get 5 minutes with each expert (graphics designers, web designers, SEO photographers, travel bloggers, etc). The Out on the town event for Friday night will be for attendees to get the "Carson City experience."

Day two opens with building new relationships with social media and networking, paid advertising, breakout sessions (content management/scheduling your posts, social media case studies including successes and failures), travel blogging with social media, then closing with a roundtable question/answer session. Ending with the unveiling of the NV 150 State Fair. There is follow-up and support after this training for attendees. **Mr. Boulware** asked about computers and the space to hold this symposium? **Mr. Dunn** replied that he is working on that. **Ms. Martel** stated that people can now sign up for the e-newsletter and we have been working on adding e-mails to the distribution list and cleaning up lists. The first week in March we expect to push out the e-mails. We are looking at a monthly newsletter and some special interest newsletters. They will be studying return on investment and studying what gets people to open an e-newsletter, what gets them to spend more time on it, what links are they clicking on, etc. **Mr. Dunn** then introduced audience member David Toll who is excited about seeing the e-blasts go out. Mr. Toll is the author of the Complete Nevada Traveler and runs the Nevada web, two different sites and blogging which drives a lot of interest to Carson City.

Ms. Burke stated that we are also working on printed pieces, one of which is a visitor's booklet which is an update on the current burgundy brochure. **Mr. Boulware** asked if this will replace the current visitors guide and how long will it take to use up the old guides? Yes, and we are distributing them at conferences, etc. right now. **Ms. Martel** also talked about public relations with an ongoing effort including press releases, media relations and familiarization Tours. We need to send out relevant/interesting press releases so the media is willing to publish them. We also rolled out the Visitors Bureau desktop calendar in the gift shop, screen cleaner for cell phone and rack cards.

Ms. Abowd commented her appreciation on the comprehensive approach; **Mr. Boulware** agreed.

Mr. Dunn thanked the marketing team for their hard work.

Ms. Barnett made the suggestion to use "Stay, Play, Dine" on the website since most folks are interested first in their hotel decision. **Mr. Dunn** thanked Ms. Barnett for this suggestion and replied that this was taken from the industry standard phrase "Eat, Play, Stay."

- b. **Executive Director's Report – Mr. Dunn** gave an overview of the Visitor Center activities and numbers. In January with the remodel of the Visitor Center Gift Shop we saw fewer numbers in conjunction with the winter season. The occupancy rate for December was 39.45% for the top 13 properties up 1.46 % from same time the year before. The Year-end average rate was 52.11%; 2012 had 46.85%. Average Room Rate for top 13 properties for December was \$54.46, slightly up less than a \$1 compared to 2012. The year to date average was \$59.33 and in 2012 it was \$60.18. The total revenue for all properties was a little under \$783,000 which is an increase of .89% from the same time last year and up 10% from the same time in 2011. The total revenue for the top 13 properties: \$747,213 which is an increase of nearly 2% from last year and just under 12% compared to 2011. The trailing 12 report is \$12,918,487 which is an increase of 6.7% from 2012 and increase of 6.9% compared to 2011 and will start tracking the spending trends of visitors. **Mr. Dunn** stated that he attended the 3-hour Guest Services Certification by the American Hotel and Lodging Association class that was brought in to Carson City by the Chamber of Commerce, the Hampton Inn and Western Nevada College. The class had 25-35 participants; Ms. Linda Barnett taught the class on customer service. He stressed the importance of communicating with the visitors what there is to do in the community.

- c. **Meeting/Event/Travel Update – Mr. Dunn** stated that Chris McQueary is not in attendance today because she has been attending the Long Beach Travel Show with the Reno-Tahoe Territory group, where she took the last box of visitors guides.

Mr. Dunn attended the Quartzite RV show with NCOT representatives; this is the largest RV Travelers Show in the world. Over 500,000 RV travelers come to this site annually.

- d. **March Meeting: 3/10/14**

MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION – PUBLIC COMMENT (five minute time limit)

There were no public comments.

MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION – BOARD COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS: TOPICS NOT RELATING TO CURRENT AGENDA.

Mr. Jones told the team they did a great job. He also stated that he’s heard a lot of nice comments about the Guest Services class.

MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: TO ADJOURN.

Ms. Abowd made a motion to adjourn at 5:50 p.m.

Second – **Mr. Jones** Approved – Unanimously

Approved: _____
Jonathan Boulware, Chairman

Attest: _____
Stephen Lincoln, Vice Chairman

Tapes of this meeting are available at the office of the Carson City Visitors Bureau, 1900 South Carson Street, Suite 100, Carson City, Nevada 89701.

/lkh

