

**CARSON CITY VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Carson City Visitors Bureau was held Monday, March 9, 2015 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
Stan Jones, Vice Chairman
Karen Abowd
Renee Plain

STAFF PRESENT: Joel Dunn, Executive Director
Chris McQueary, Executive Assistant
Linda Macauley, Administrative Assistant
Kyle Horvath, Social Media Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Shirk, Ward 4 Carson City Supervisor

Call to Order.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Mr. Boulware led the pledge of allegiance.

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

Mr. Jim Shirk (who was not speaking for the Carson City Board) pointed out that on the City website's calendar, today's CCVB March 9 meeting was not shown. Also not listed are the minutes or the events on the City website. Also it is not shown to be active Board, Committee, or Commission. Today's meeting or prior meetings and agendas are not listed. He would encourage this information be listed not only on the CCVB website, but Carson City's website and calendar. He also encouraged the (CCVB) Committee to start their meetings at 5:30 which would allow the working class citizen to attend should they desire to attend.

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

Mr. Jones made the motion to adopt/accept the agenda.

Second – **Ms. Abowd**

Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 12, 2015 BOARD MEETING**

Ms. Abowd made a motion for approval of the board meeting minutes for the January 12, 2015 board meeting as published.

Second – **Ms. Plain** Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE ADJUSTED FY15 BUDGET REPORT**

Mr. Dunn relayed the master budget report details to the Board for 67% of the fiscal year. The accounting period is as of February 2015. Room tax revenues are reported through January since they are always the month behind in reporting. The expenses are reported through February. **Mr. Boulware** asked about the \$71,000 carryover being listed as an 'adjustment'; later it will fall into the 'carryover account'. **Mr. Boulware** also asked about the Interlocal Agreement – if the MAC is a part of that, is there a breakout for the \$109,000? Can we see what we are paying for? **Mr. Dunn** stated that if we include the MAC in the Interlocal Agreement, the CCVB may want to make possible changes to the Interlocal Agreement to identify direct costs. This can then be taken back to the Board of Supervisors. **Mr. Boulware** wants stated on the record at a future CCVB Board meeting what the CCVB's role will be. **Mr. Dunn** said he will have this item on next month's agenda.

Ms. Abowd moved to approve the monthly FY15 budget report as presented through February 28, 2015.

Second – **Ms. Plain** Approved – Unanimously

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

Mr. Dunn reviewed the report and went over some of the larger payments. **Mr. Boulware** asked about investing in sports tournaments: how does All World Sports feel like they are being serviced (they will play a significant role in the MAC Center)? **Mr. Dunn** stated that the City Parks & Recreation Department will be at the April CCVB meeting for an update. We could also invite All World Sports to attend the CCVB meeting to enhance the relationship. Also included is a NCOT grant we received that will cover Kathleen Hood's contract expenses.

Ms. Abowd made a motion to approve the ratification of the CCVB monthly bills for both January and February 2015.

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

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL FOR THE CCVB TO REQUEST PROPOSALS FROM LICENSED CPA'S TO
CONDUCT QUARTERLY AUDITS OF CARSON CITY LODGING PROPERTIES FOR THE BUREAU**

Mr. Dunn explained that this is something that has been discussed about bringing back (FY05/06 – all but five properties received an audit from the Bureau - which contracted a local CPA to conduct the audits). Most of the findings were insignificant from FY05 through FY09, or ended up being a payment back to properties of \$945.22. He would like to begin in July and conduct two property audits per quarter. This cost from \$800 to \$1,000 to do years ago. So he would like to budget a line item of \$5,000-\$10,000 for eight audits per year. There is no concern with revenue reported, but the occupancy. **Mr. Jones** wanted to confirm that the last audit was 2009; yes, with five property audits then. **Mr. Boulware** asked the method of choosing the CPA; **Mr. Dunn** would like to put out a request for proposal. Mr. Dunn stated this will work independently and not through the City contracting.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the CCVB to solicit proposals from licensed CPA's to conduct quarterly audits of lodging properties.

Second – **Ms. Abowd**

Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: RESCHEDULE MONTHLY CCVB EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS TO 4TH
MONDAY OF EACH MONTH**

Mr. Dunn said staff has requested this for ease of obtaining accurate and up-to-date occupancy numbers and information to be included in the Board packets for the 2nd Monday meetings. **Mr. Jones** said that with a changed Board schedule he would miss the next three meetings. He also asked how important the occupancy reports to the Board are since there is no Board action taken in this information and asked if a one-month delay in accurate information hinders the operations; **Mr. Boulware** replied that the information is for viewing purposes and **Mr. Dunn** answered that it does not hinder staff's operations. Mr. Dunn said that they can show the occupancies like the revenue reports are shown for a month before.

Mr. Boulware also stated that the Board cannot have a Board member missing three meetings. **Mr. Dunn** suggested looking at this issue again in the future to see if a change would still be advantageous. The ultimate goal is to have payments handled through the Treasurer's office; so a Board meeting date change would then not be necessary. **Ms. Abowd** asked if one week would make a difference vs. a two-week setback. The meeting room is not available for those dates.

Ms. Abowd made a motion not to approve the CCVB move their monthly meetings to the 4th Monday of each month beginning 4/27/15 and to keep the current schedule.

Second – **Ms. Plain**

Approved – Unanimously

MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION – NON-ACTION ITEMS:

- a. **Executive Directors Report – Mr. Dunn** stated that the number of visitors to the visitor center (with the new door counter) for February 9 through March 9 was 1,768. He will give quarterly statistics of numbers in the future. We will now be open on Sundays again starting March 15, 2015, and will have a Monday staff person work on marketing instead of the giftshop.

Occupancy Rate

- ✓ Top 13: 40.34 (down .23% from 2014, up 8.33% from 2013)
- ✓ Top 5: 44.1% (up .81% from 2014, up 4.4% from 2013)

Average Room Rate

- ✓ Top 13: \$60.94 (up 16.05% from 2014, up 19.5% from 2013)
- ✓ Top 5: \$73.46 (up 4.69% from 2014, up 12.43% from 2013)

Total Revenue

- ✓ All properties: \$841,454.48 (up 10.86% from 2014, up 23.94% from 2013)
- ✓ Top 13: \$804,761.05 (up 11.81% from 2014, up 25.11% from 2013)
- ✓ Top 5: \$582,511.78 (up 5.55% from 2014, up 17.38% from 2013)

Trailing 12 report

- ✓ \$14,664,063.93 (up 6.46% from 2014, up 20.47% from 2013)

- b. **Marketing Report – Mr. Horvath** included below.
- c. **Travel Show Reports – Mr. Dunn** reported that the Santa Clara show provided over 600 marketing leads, which is not enough. But we met with press, media, bloggers/writers, etc. We need to change how we are working the trade shows and want to reach out to NCOT about changes to these shows. **Ms. McQueary** summed up the Long Beach (Feb. 20-21) show, which was similar to the Santa Clara show Mr. Dunn attended, by stating she worked with Reno Tahoe Territory in the marketing booth along with Reno, Carson Valley, and Virginia City. This booth was also shared by NCOT. This was apparently the biggest show (most attendance) that Travel Adventure has had in the U.S. We brought back about 600 names/leads, that were mostly consumers. **Mr. Boulware** asked if the attendees are looking to book events. **Ms. McQueary** stated that with mostly consumers (Long Beach residents) they are looking for booking their own travel that they might take over a weekend, for example. This show is starting to add world vendors, as well as booths that sell travel items.

Mr. Horvath reported on the Portland, Oregon golf show he attended with the Carson Valley Golf Course Head Pro. This is the second year of Mr. Horvath's attendance; with mostly rainy weather the (indoor) show usually has many attendees. With three sunny days, however, attendance was lower than last year. We still brought back about the same number of leads – just under 500. There will be a Divine Nine overview presented at next month's CCVB Board meeting.

Mr. Horvath then summarized marketing updates:

STRENGTHS:

- ✓ Public perception is at an all-time high for Carson City.
- ✓ We are operating within the budget with a slim surplus.
- ✓ Creativity goal is always to be/think “outside the box.”
- ✓ We are considered a driver of our economy now with 35% taxable sales coming from visitors.
- ✓ Geographic location is a strength
- ✓ The new MAC will also be a strength

CHALLENGES:

- ✓ Maintaining our Return on Investment (ROI) within inter-governmental relationships (state with NCOT, Interlocal with City, V&T, etc.)
- ✓ Lack of conference/meeting space here
- ✓ Have outgrown most of our fields for tournaments
- ✓ Within Carson City, we’d still like to have more brand penetration and more community awareness
- ✓ Upcoming downtown construction will put a damper on downtown while construction is going on

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS WITHIN CCVB:

- ✓ Like to continue to operate with a surplus budget
- ✓ Improve ROI relationships
- ✓ Continue to strengthen independent contract base of writers, photographers, and the like

MARKETING GOALS:

- ✓ Improve outreach and training of frontline staff and hospitality training (WNC’s Hospitality Course), in addition to our Social Media Symposium
- ✓ Other outreach we do with hotel, restaurant, etc. staff
- ✓ Implement new technology as it comes out for the visitors’ experiences, including interactive kiosks and mobility optimized interactive mapping
- ✓ Expand our brand recognition throughout the Midwest
- ✓ Improve relations and outreach within regional and local Hispanic community
- ✓ Encourage longer stays in Carson City; and increase spending while visitors are here
- ✓ Reach inbound international traveler more effectively. **Mr. Jones** asked about advertising at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.
- ✓ **Ms. Abowd** suggested the goal of celebrate the ‘pardon our dust during construction’ and also work with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association through Lumos Engineering on a consistent message the entire time of construction.

EVENTS GOALS:

- ✓ Fill the MAC facility
- ✓ Improve music scene by encouraging promoters and musicians to be involved in community events
- ✓ Professional video-gaming events
- ✓ Seek out multidisciplinary events like Tough-Mudder, Tri-Athalons
- ✓ Develop the overall mountain biking experience with different partnerships – example, Heavenly is opening up their lifts to some mountain biking, perhaps V&T Railway could have bike racks.

Ms. Abowd asked about the EPIC bike event; **Mr. Dunn** said we have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the City Manager’s desk involving permitting and fee structures for possible April ride.

TARGET MARKETS:

- ✓ Drive market – Sacramento; San Francisco; Los Angeles; Bishop, CA; Bend, Oregon; Boise; and towns along Highway 50 corridor in Nevada.
- ✓ Flight market – domestic flights going directly into Reno – Chicago, Dallas, Phoenix, Minneapolis, Portland, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City.
- ✓ International market – This is who TravelNevada markets to – Brazil, China, South Korea, Mexico, Canada, England, Australia, Germany, France, and India. **Ms. Abowd** said New Zealand as well.
- ✓ Additional markets – business/leisure traveler (now called the “bleisure traveler”), local/regional Hispanic traveler, and millennial travelers

DESIRED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Like to see continued increase in room tax revenue, as well as visitor spending
- ✓ Continue national recognition as a travel-worthy destination
- ✓ Increase brand awareness and community understanding of the role we play in the local economy.
Mr. Jones asked what ‘increase brand awareness’ means? We don’t want people to get a blank look when they are asked if they know about the Visit Carson City app.
- ✓ Increased attendance in the social media tourism symposium

OTHER:

- ✓ We had soft-release for the 2015 marketing campaign “Be Our Guest.” The goal is to open the most travel-worthy state capital in the country to visitors from all over the world by making them feel welcome before they even arrive. These ads are going to Southern California, Phoenix, and San Diego as a newspaper insert. Then, we have rack cards. TravelNevada will translate into various foreign languages.
- ✓ Our website will add a translation feature. **Ms. Plain** asked about having the translation on the app? We will have to ask Bluebridge Digital. She then wondered if we can “clone” the app; then translate into the specific language? **Mr. Dunn** said we have internal control of the content; we can check with TravelNevada to translate one language at a time. **Ms. Abowd** asked about increasing local awareness; **Mr. Dunn** said that correlates back to the hospitality training for frontline hotel staff, restaurants, etc. **Mr. Jones** suggested each business could use a decal that also says “Welcome to Carson City” on it.
- ✓ Kaitlin Godby (Social Media Coordinator with TravelNevada) and Mr. Horvath are doing a combined presentation in May to the rural communities.
- ✓ ‘The Sharing Economy’ will be integrated into our operations.
- ✓ We will continue to be a premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts.
- ✓ We will continue the promotion of art activities, and create Carson City as a recognizable destination for arts and culture.
- ✓ Be positioned as the top economic driver continuing to bring innovative events and things that have a major return on investment to the economy.

- ✓ **Mr. Dunn** relayed that he and Mr. Horvath were asked to be part of the Nevada Economic Conference to be held May 19-21 “for stronger economies together.” The venue is at the UNR campus.

d. April Meeting - 4/13/15

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

None.

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

Mr. Jones asked for Fuji Park updates. **Mr. Dunn** replied that this will have to be addressed as potential changes within the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City. He relayed details about challenges and timeframes and will bring this back to the CCVB at the May meeting. **Ms. Abowd** said that Carson City Supervisor Brad Bonkowski asked to look at what types of events we could have there and what gate prices we could charge for return on investment, and how much parking is needed? **Mr. Dunn** said he was only aware of the signage issue, but can gather the information and bring this to the next CCVB meeting and/or the Board of Supervisors meeting.

Mr. Jones also followed up on Supervisor Shirk’s comments at the start of this meeting. **Mr. Dunn** will look into the venue availability and time, but said that when checking into it for possibly moving the CCVB meetings to the 4th Monday the room gets used non-stop.

Mr. Boulware commented that he likes the suggestion of inviting All World Sports to a CCVB meeting; we need to take the lead on this. This ensures we get feedback on whether they are happy with the service. We need to make sure that when we say “Be Our Guest” and “The Experience Starts Here” that we live that.

Ms. Abowd announced that July 8 is when the Greenhouse Project Concert is scheduled. Performing will be *Pablo Cruise* and *Ambrosia*.

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

Ms. Abowd made a motion to adjourn at 5:25 p.m.

Second – **Ms. Plain**

Approved – Unanimously

Approved: _____
Jonathan Boulware, Chairman

Attest: _____
Stan Jones, Vice Chairman

Tapes of this meeting are available at the office of the Carson City Visitors Bureau,
716 North Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701.

/lkh