



Wyoming Tourism Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2020
Video Call – 3:00 p.m.

Tourism Board Members Present: C.J. Box (Chairman), Mike Keller (Vice Chairman), Budd Betts, Q. Blair, John Johnson, Larry Lloyd, Mandy Moody-Phillips, Tony O'Brien and Anna Olson.

Staff Members Present: Diane Shober, Anita Benton, Sara Borgerding, Jennifer Griswold, Michell Howard, Lexi Mitchell, Becky Oswald, Dionne Roccaforté, James Scoon, Kristy Simola, Piper Singer and Jim Wollenburg.

Guest Present: Kate Sollitt, Jackson Hole Travel & Tourism.

- I. Chairman, C.J. Box, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.
- II. The meeting minutes from April 28, 2020 were presented for approval. John Johnson motioned to approve the minutes; Budd Betts seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Year to Date Financials:** Anita Benton, Director of Business Operations, presented the year to date financials as of April 30, 2020. Mike Keller motioned to approve the financials as presented; John Johnson seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Executive Director's Report – COVID Management**
 - A. **Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) Team:** Director Shober highlighted WOT's phased return to working in the office beginning May 18th. Staff will be in office on a rotating basis through Labor Day, with a monthly team development event being planned for the sake of team cohesion. All recommended safety guidelines are being adhered to.
 - B. **Budget:** Following the board's approval of the \$140,000 Birdsall, Voss and Associates (BVK) Amendment Two to fund phased marketing, WOT submitted and received approval to proceed with the amendment through the state's budget review process. A request for that amount has now been submitted for CARES Act reimbursement and, if approved, it will be reverted to the state's general fund. WOT's COVID-related expenses will be continually tracked for additional CARES Act reimbursement requests.

Darren Rudloff, Rudloff Solutions, has been researching the Economic Development Administration's new, comprehensive Tourism Marketing Grant as a possible avenue to fund market recovery. This program, if it is a good fit for the current WOT marketing campaign, may warrant a cooperative effort among WOT, State Parks and the Wyoming Business Council (WBC).

At this point, the Budget Office has not handed down instructions detailing impending budget reductions for the next biennium which begins July 1, 2020. However, the Budget Office did

report to the legislature on a variety of upcoming tax scenarios. Director Shober presented WOT reduction scenarios to the board based on ten percent (10%), twenty percent (20%) and thirty percent (30%) cuts and WOT staff is working hard to be prepared as Budget Office instruction is forthcoming.

- C. **Stakeholder Outreach:** The weekly industry-wide call will continue through June 1, 2020. At that point, it will be assessed whether to continue weekly or start an every-other-week schedule. WOT desires to continue serving as a facilitator to assimilate information for the industry.

V. Director's Reports

A. **Brand Studio**

- i. **New Staff:** Michell Howard, Sr. Director of Brand Strategy, introduced two new Brand Studio staff members. Sara Borgerding is the new Brand Studio Sr. Coordinator and Lexi Mitchell is the new Communications Sr. Coordinator.
- ii. **Summer Campaign Update:** Ms. Howard shared rebounding In-State campaign efforts include Media Buy (TV, radio and social media) focusing on getting Wyoming residents out supporting the local economy (running May 20 – June 16, 2020). Chairman Box requested Michell Howard email the links to sample media presentations to the board.

Anna Olson asked for clarification on campaign safety behaviors messaging. Director Shober and Ms. Howard affirmed the “WY Responsibly” campaign umbrella enforces direction from local DMOs pertaining to individual needs. Piper Singer, PR & Media Manager, has revamped media talking points for consistent industry messaging and is drafting a press release.

Road trip marketing creative and social media partner opportunities will be presented to industry partners May 21, 2020. WOT will move forward with a \$100,000 investment in a shared marketing partnership with South Dakota which will likely launch early June and run through fall. The Rebound/Recovery creative is being reviewed and on track to launch early to mid-June based on how states are reopening and will take into account the general COVID situation.

- iii. **Reimagining Co-ops:** Initiatives set in motion pre-COVID have adjusted timelines for strategy development. Timeline includes 1) Competitive Audit, complete; 2) survey development and launch, complete; 3) coop vendor brainstorming, May 2020; 4) finalizing strategy and Task Force, June 2020; and 5) launching program updates, tentatively set for July 2020.

B. **Global Partnerships**

- i. **International Update:** Director of Global Partnerships, James Scoon, shared that the current messaging to international travel trade and through social pages is all inspirational encouraging the theme “Dream Now, Travel Later.” Tour operators are working to have clients delay rather than cancel travel. The challenges have been varied dependent on region. Many operators are financially stretched or in crisis.
- a. **Brand USA:** Global Partnerships submitted ten (10) themed Wyoming videos for the Go USA TV promotion. Industry partners have also been given the opportunity to share their qualifying videos. Global Partnerships participated in the Brand USA Discovery Program Travel Agent Training Modules and Virtual Tours/Itineraries.

- b. **Direct Outreach:** Direct outreach has included newsletters, hosting webinars and providing individualized videos for partnering tour operators. Wyoming partners are providing 2021 rates when possible to accommodate promotion for later travel dates. With the cancellation of International Roundup (IRU), a Virtual Buckle Club was hosted.
 - c. **Marketing Approach:** Until budget guidelines are set, all international marketing has been paused. In the meantime, Canadian opportunities are being explored as it is expected to be the first market to return. European markets of strong focus include the United Kingdom (UK), Germany and France. The Global Partnerships team will not attend any international missions or promote any Asian markets in 2020 or 2021.
 - d. **Tradeshows 2020:** IRU 2020 (Casper) and International Pow Wow (IPW) 2020 were cancelled. Brand USA Travel Week in September will potentially be held virtually and Go West Summit has been rescheduled for August 31, 2020.
 - e. **Projected International Openings:** U.S. borders are still closed but most countries are projecting June/July openings. Australia is projecting travel to open December 2020/January 2021.
 - f. **Tiered Marketing Approach:** Four phases will be worked over the next 12 months – 1) Empathy/Inspiration; 2) Maintenance (training trade professionals); 3) Awareness (social media and media stories); and 4) Performance phase projected for spring 2021 (push product and booking options).
 - g. **Opportunities & Challenges:** As soon as U.S. borders open, there are strong indicators international travelers are seeking wide open spaces, placing Wyoming in a great spot. There will, however, be a lot of competition among major destinations and competitors have expansive budgets. Limited flights, high unemployment and traveler uncertainty highlight the challenges.
- ii. **Board of Directors Industry Engagement Plan:** Jim Wollenburg, Sr. Manager of Global Partnerships, shared the initiative for a detailed engagement plan came from Chairman Box. The Industry Outreach plan assigns board district representatives and At-Large positions to specific county and association/entity contacts. WOT staff will connect WOT Board members with Global Partnerships route leaders and provide one-page county summaries. WOT Board members will attend, minimum, one Lodging Tax Board meeting or one annual association meeting per year. The Board will also hold two or three in-person board meetings per year, rotating among districts. Budd Betts requested to be added as liaison to the (national) Dude Ranchers Association based in Cody.

VI. **Old Business** – There was no old business.

VII. **New Business** – Chairman Box requested the board fill out the Executive Director evaluation questionnaire they received via email for discussion at the next board meeting.

VIII. **Public Comments** – There were no public comments.

IX. **Executive Session** – There was no need for an Executive Session this meeting.

X. Adjourn – Upon conclusion of the session, the board was informed there are rooms being held in Casper in hopes the next meeting, June 15, 2020, will be in person. Budd Betts motioned, and Q. Blair seconded to adjourn at 4:12 p.m.; motion passed unanimously.