



**Tourism Walla Walla Board Meeting
St. Mary's Hospital Board Room
August 21, 2014**

Present:

Ron Williams, Ron Peck, Chris Garratt, Terra Luthi, Dick Morgan, Scott Peters, Duane Wollmuth, Kyle Mussman, Zachary Fraser, David Woolson, Cindy Purcell, Ann Hooper, Tim McCarty, Jennifer Northam

Absent:

Andrae Bopp, Justin Wylie, Mindy Nelson, Jay Brodt

Guests: Tangent Media – Matt Bobbitt, Kurt DeWitt and Daniel Guzman

The meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm by Scott Peters, Chair.

A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Chris Garratt and seconded by Cindy Purcell.

A discussion ensued.

It was noted that on page 11 of the board meeting packet the page views number is incorrect, it should be -4.85 and not +4.85.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Marketing Report - Chris Garratt, Ron Peck

Ron showed the first three videos from the new Share Walla Walla marketing campaign. The videos have been posted on our YouTube page and were premiered in the August stakeholder and general e-newsletters and on Facebook and Twitter. Ron recognized both DVA and Tangent Media for their efforts in the development of the campaign.

It was decided that the September board meeting would be held on Monday, September 29th at 3:00pm and the Marketing Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 30th from 9:00am until 4:00pm. Location to be determined.



Ron reported that staff has already started working on the 2015 Matching Grant program. He proposed the committee be made up of Kay Wessel, James Payne, Chris Garratt, and Ron Peck. Chris Garratt asked for one additional person and Zachary Fraser volunteered.

A motion was made by Jennifer Northam for the Matching Grant committee to consist of Kay Wessel, James Payne, Chris Garratt, Ron Peck and Zachary Fraser.

The motion was seconded by Duane Wollmuth.

A discussion ensued. The board enquired as to whether or not any acknowledgment or priority is given to events that occur mid-week and off season. Both Ron and Chris commented that those aspects were part of the decision making process by the Matching Grant Committee in 2014 and will be taken into consideration again in 2015. Ron Peck will send the board an example of a follow up report that was already submitted this year by the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival.

Executive Directors Report – Ron Peck

Ron Peck gave a brief update on the Scoring Marketing Group's progress on the large group meeting sales project. Three focus groups were held with local business owners. Ron also noted that the Scoring team stayed at 8 different lodging properties when they were in town, they conducted secret shopper interviews, and they will be meeting with the Marriott Courtyard management team next week. Ron will participate as well.

Ron attended a Port of Seattle meeting last month and met with Visit Seattle. He reported that the Port continues to be willing to assist in marketing efforts in the state. TWW is presently working with the Port on a media FAM tour for three media from London who will be visiting Walla Walla in October.

Ron Peck and Barb Commare met with Walla Walla Community Council and learned about their upcoming research project which is focused on outdoor recreation activities in the valley and how it affects tourism. They will be looking for community volunteers to sign up for the committee that delves into this subject.

Ron reported that he recently attended the Walla Walla County Lodging Tax committee meeting. He specifically asked the committee if they had intentions to give Tourism another \$20K grant next year. The Committee indicated that they were open to participating and contributing in 2015. Ron will make a presentation to the



committee in October to report on marketing activities executed by TWW to promote tourism in the County in 2014.

Other Business Substantive Issues

Ron and Duane reported on the way-finding signage project. The steering committee has obtained commitments of \$115K to date for the actual signage implementation phase. They still have several meetings planned with interested parties to obtain more funding. It was reported that College Place and Dayton may be the first communities to actually put signs up. Duane reported that they hope to have the gateway signs on Hwy 12, welcoming people to the valley, up in early 2015.

Ron reminded the board that if the 2015 budget remains at the current rate of 840K and we hire an outside large group sales person, we will need to significantly alter where our marketing dollars are being spent in 2015.

A discussion ensued.

It was announced by Ron Williams that Terra Luthi was hired as the GM for the new Courtyard by Marriott.

Kyle Mussman presented a spreadsheet with data about the downward trend in hotel occupancy. The question was raised if the numbers were being skewed because the Red Lion was not selling all of their rooms because of construction. Ron agreed to look into this question.

Tim McCarty reported that Tourism staff is doing a great job with their monthly reporting and the City has been receiving everything they need with regards to reporting.

Scott Peters asked if the board wanted to consider starting the board meetings at 3:00pm instead of 3:30pm moving forward. No decision was made. This will be discussed at the next board meeting.

It was suggested that perhaps important discussions be put earlier on the agenda and leave lesser topics to the end.

At 5:16pm the board adjourned.

(See next page)



Email vote

As a follow up to the June board meeting, an approval vote was held via email concerning a revised budget allocation for the remainder of FY2014 that included identifying funding for a sales meeting function, a contribution to the signage way finding effort and maintaining some unallocated funds in reserve should expected revenues fall short.

The result of the vote follows:

Approved by:

Andrae Bopp, Jay Brodt, Ann Hooper, Terra Luthi, Mindy Nelson, Jennifer Northam, Scott Peters, Ron Williams, Duane Wollmuth and David Woolson.

There were no votes disapproving.

With no response from: Zachary Fraser, Chris Garratt, Kyle Mussman, Cindy Purcell and Justin Wylie.

The new proposed budget allocation was passed.