



## YOSEMITE MARIPOSA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2017 1:30pm

### **In Attendance:**

#### **Directors Present:**

Kevin Shelton – Yosemite Resorts  
Donna Nassar – Bed and Breakfast Inns Association  
Douglas Shaw – Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort  
Sarah Zhan – Hotel Jefferey  
Christian Mueller – The Redwoods in Yosemite  
Jeff Bray – Aramark – Yosemite Hospitality  
Maryann Huff – Northern Mariposa County  
Dane Carlson – Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce

#### **YMCTB Staff:**

Terry Selk – Executive Director  
Noel Morrison – Communications Manager  
Julie Hadzega – Travel Trade & Operations Manager  
Carrie Kidwell – Administrative Assistant

#### **Advisors Present:**

Scott Gediman – Yosemite National Park

#### **Board Liaisons Present:**

Merlin Jones – Board of Supervisors District II  
Kevin Cann – Board of Supervisors District IV

#### **Visitors:**

Aaron Smith – Noble Studios  
Jarrod Lopiccolo – Noble Studios  
Kim Brisack – Big Table Ranch (Event)  
Kathrin Poetter – Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite



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**CALL TO ORDER:**

- The meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm by Kevin Shelton.

**SELF-INTRODUCTION BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE**

- Introductions were made.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS BOARD**

Members of the audience may address the committee on matters not on the regular agenda. Brown Act regulations restrict the committee from taking action on any subject presented that is not on the agenda.

- MaryAnn Huff reminded everyone about the Coyote Fest coming up on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Bureau is a sponsor and the event had 2,000 people attend last year.
- Terry Selk announced that TOT is up 3.8% from last year and there was an increase between September and April of 2016/2017 of 1.3%.

**INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS**

- Yosemite National Park Update – Scott Gediman
  - Scott thanked the gateways with helping disseminate information during the fire crisis. Both the Empire and Southfork Fires are being continually controlled and air quality is improving.
  - Park visitation in 2017 visitation is less than 2016 at the same time, but above the YOY 2015 time period. Estimated visitor volume is 4.7 million for the year. Scott will provide an update at the October 12<sup>th</sup> Yosemite Gateway Partners Meeting.
  - On Tuesday, September 19, 2017, there will be the Annual Naturalization Ceremony at Glacier Point at 11 am. Fifty-one people will become citizens. In attendance will be several members of our region and industry including: Yuli Gotsev from The Redwoods, Adam Burns a local musician, Therese Williams from Madera Tourism and one of Kevin Shelton's assistant Managers.



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- Crisis Response Protocol Discussion:
  - Detwiler Fire - The Bureau sponsored a Detwiler Fire Fundraiser during the Music on the Green which brought in \$5000.00 in donations. The Bureau sent out thank you letters to all the first responder and service agencies (more than 350) involved in the fire fight.
  - Railroad Fire – The Bureau worked with Tenaya Lodge in providing updated lodging lists, also reached out to all the properties in the Fish Camp area to check in on their status. Augustine will use added value from our 17-18 media buys with selected platforms to help in post fire communications and promotion for the corridor and the properties.
  - Noel and Terry reminded the Board of its first response role during a crisis regardless of fire, road closure, other and is a leader in the gathering of and dispensing accurate real-time information to visitors and locals regarding accessibility and business operations in the area.
  
- Treasurers Report:
  - Doug reported on the financials for the Bureau for the past quarter. The Balance Report shows a 15% increase from the previous year.
  - Income is up 9.75% for the period and expenditures down 20%. Doug noted that an extra spend last year was due to a video project.
  - Registration Expenditures and Travel are up due to a few new trade shows/sales missions, conferences and other associated items in these categories.
  - Booths/Shipping line was up 78% due to a new display for the IPW tradeshow.
  - Local event donation support is down 8% due to fewer requests for assistance.
  - FAMS Trade and Media are up 20% over normal due to the absorbing of more costs previously hosted by the concessionaire.
  - Budget versus Actuals showed a slight increase of 2% overall.
  - Communications shows an increase of 8% as are result of the significance investment in the website conversion and upgrade along with the hiring of outside vendors to improve content and maximize SEO and SEM strategies.
  - International Offices were 8% out of the budget due to the bi-annual Germany invoiced being paid twice and the second invoice being voided.



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- Annual Report:
  - It is currently in the draft process and will take on a different approach per guidelines as outlined by Civitas and TBID reporting procedures.
  - This year's "report" will place more emphasis on the 17-18 marketing plan rather than the more traditional look back at the year completed.
  
- Grand Jury Report Status:
  - The Tourism Bureau was not aware that the Grand Jury was conducting an investigation.
  - The report revealed that The Bureau had failed to submit a compiled and reviewed financial statement per year for the past five years as outlined in the County contract, despite having submitted an annual in-depth report referencing every County dollar spent in the advertising execution. In addition, the GJ revealed that an important clause referencing the Tourism Bureau as the authorized agency managing the TBID was missing.
  - The County was also negligent in not having realized the proper documentation has not been submitted.
  - The Bureau is currently having Spinardi and Jones audit and collect the missing reports.
  - Kevin Cann noted that the County was not aware of the structured requirements within the contract and he is confident that we will all be back on track with a new way of documentation and reporting.
  - Merlin Jones noted that The Bureau is doing their job, this minor detail on reporting slipped through both entities.
  
- Marketing update:
  - Terry identified a few key achievements/projects in the Marketing Update presented that included that the largest Korean tour operator (Hana Tours) is introducing a new itinerary featuring an overnight stay in Mariposa. This is significant because Korea is expected to surpass Germany in 2018 as CA's fifth largest inbound market with over 545,000 annual visitors.
  - The "Dining" section of the website has received 45,000 visits, a 330% increase over the previous year.
  - The "Attractions" section of the website has received 64,000 visits, a 175% increase over last year.
  - More than 110,000 lodging referrals had been made in the course of the fiscal year.



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- Website Update – Noble Studios
  - Noble Studios has worked on optimizing the website content by changing keywords and functionality of the pages. For example changing “Places to Stay” to Lodging has helped better align search words by consumers with content pages on the site.
  - Year over year data from April to August, the previous “Places to Stay” page received 121,821 organic page views. With the five new lodging pages, this section on the site has received 573,497 organic page views, a 370% increase in traffic.
  - The website has recently won three new awards:
    - HSMIAI Adrian Award – Silver Digital Marketing Website
    - AAF District ADDY – Silver award for consumer website
    - The Communicator Award – Excellence in Marketing and Communications.
  - Kathrin Poetter with Tenaya Lodge gave kudos to Noble for taking the time to understand the Yosemite product.
- County Funding Status Report:
  - In February, The Bureau approached the BOS and proposed that the County funding model be changed from a flat rate to a percentage of TOT on a three year rolling average. This was approved by the BOS with the directive to County staff that an ROI study be conducted on the advertising which is largely funded by use of the annual County funding contribution. At the August budget hearing, where the CAO had included the calculated amount in the budget based on the formula, the Board of Supervisors changed their position and instead asked the Bureau to fund the study in exchange for the funding.
  - Merlin Jones noted that the county funding for the Bureau was not put on the whiteboard so that the ROI study can be done.
  - Kevin Cann noted that the County funding percentage was voted on in February in a 3/2 vote and anything on the whiteboard takes a 4/5 vote.



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**ACTION MATTERS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION, REGULAR AGENDA**

- Nominations for Marketing Committee and elections.
  - Terry Selk nominated Yuli Gotsev to join the Marketing Committee.
    - Jeff Bray motioned, and Dane Carlson seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.
  - Nominations for members of the YMCTB Board and election of members.
    - Jeff Bray motioned for Christian Mueller to take the open seat as a TBID Board member, and Donna Nassar seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.
  - Open nomination to replace Vice Chairman.
    - No nominations were received and it was noted that this position does not need to be filled.
- Nomination and Election of Officers for 2017-2018.
  - A slate of Officers was presented and included the current elected representatives to retain their leadership positions with the exception of Vice Chair which received no nominations.
    - Donna Nassar motioned to accept as the slate of officers as presented, Douglas Shaw seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.
- Nomination and Election of Advisors for 2017-2018.
  - Jeff Bray motioned to accept as standing, Donna Nassar second. All in favor, with none opposed.
- Approval of Standing Committees and their Members.
  - All Standing Committees and their members are planning to stay onboard.
    - Sara Zahn motioned for all members of the Marketing committee to stay on board, Jeff Bray second. All were in favor, with none opposed.
- Approval of 2017/2018 Budget.
  - The budget was reviewed via audio visual presentation.
    - Jeff Bray motioned to accept the 2017/2018 Budget, Sara Zahn seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.



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- Douglas Shaw, the Treasurer did state, that YMCTB needs to remove the Quickbooks fee to line item 820 ( Operations, Software). YMCTB will take action immediately.
- Approval of 2017/2018 media plan and fall creative.
  - Media plan and fall creative were reviewed by the board via audio visual presentation.
    - Douglas Shaw motioned to accept the 2017/2018 media plan and fall creative, Sara Zahn second. All were in favor, with none opposed.
    - MaryAnn Huff did indicate that she would like to see a photo of the North County included in the final version of the Augustine video recap of the media placement. Terry advised the Board that in fact that had already been identified and communicated to Augustine to source non-Park images in the final version.
- Consideration for approval of a joint bid submission between the YMCTB and the Tenaya Lodge to host the 2020 Adventure Travel Trade Association North America Conference.
  - Destination sponsorship/investment is \$35,000 while Tenaya estimates its in-kind and cash investment to be in the \$100,000 range. Terry verified that the Bureau commitment would not have to be made in one lump payment this far out but instead could be submitted on a 50/50 basis in 2017-18 and 2018-19 budget years. And the ATTA would have to first accept the final proposal before any dollars would be committed.
    - Dane Carlson motioned to approve that The Bureau allocate \$35,000 for the ATTA Conference in April 2020 in Mariposa County at the Tenaya Lodge. Sara Zahn seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.
- Approval of TBID draft – Management District Plan (MDP)
  - Terry provided an update on the process of the TBID renewal and a draft of the Management District Plan governance for the renewal.
    - To increase the duration of the MDP from 5 years to 10.
    - To eliminate the Placemaking & Special Events and Transportation development sections from the plan.
    - To keep the assessment rate at 1% with language that would allow the BOD to conduct a vote within the lodging constituency with an plan to raise the rate should circumstances warrant it. Any rate increase would be capped at .5% at any one time



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and a total increase of up to 4% over a 10 year period. Should the maximum rate increase be executed, it would make the assessment 5%. A rate increase could be considered every two years.

- MaryAnn Huff Motioned, Sara Zahn seconded. All in favor, with none opposed.
  
- Approval of meeting minutes for March 29, 2017, Board Meeting.
  - Board reviewed minutes.
    - Douglas Shaw motioned for approval of meeting minutes for March 29, 2017, Sara Zahn seconded. All in favor, with none opposed.
  
- Approval of meeting minutes for May 25, 2017, Board Meeting.
  - Board reviewed minutes.
    - Douglas shaw motioned for approval of meeting minutes for May 25, 2017, Sara Zahn seconded. All in favor, with none opposed.
  
- Consideration of ROI Proposal for County Funding.
  - Jeff Bray motioned that we move forward on paying for and securing an agency to conduct the ROI study, Sarah Zahn seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

- Personnel Matters were discussed.

### **COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF:**

- Thank you to Noel Morrison for her services. She will be moving forward as a Contractor of 20 hours a week for 6 months and working abroad. The Bureau will work on getting her replacement.
- Noel Morrison thanked the Board and the Bureau for the opportunities that she has had through her time with us. Cake was served!

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm