

Yosemite/Mariposa Tourism Bureau Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting
3-22-2012
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors Chambers
5100 Bullion St. Mariposa, CA 95338

Meeting called to order by Jensen at 1:35 P.M.

Board Members Present:

Donna Brownell (Art Council)
Brian Bullis (Fairgrounds)
Jonathan Farrington (Tenaya Lodge)
Donna Nassar (B&B's) –Secretary-Treasurer
Douglas Shaw (Yosemite Bug)
Kevin Shelton (Yosemite Resorts) Vice President
Dan Jensen (DNC) – Chairman
MaryAnn Huff (Chamber of Commerce)

Excused Board Members:

Sara Zahn (Hotel Jeffery)
Donna Davis (Redwoods)

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Roger Biery- EDC
Candy O'Donnell-Browne

Absent Ex-Officio Member

Marilyn Lidyoff
Donna Sisson, YNP

Staff:

Jeffrey Hentz – Executive Director
Julie Hadzega –Administrative Coordinator
Julie Guyton – Administrative Assistant

Visitors:

Kevin Cann
Jill Ballinger

Public Comments on items not on the agenda but within scope of this board:

Biery commented about the MRP (Merced River Plan). He stated that the MRP is online, and that the workbooks would not be available until next week. Jensen stated that starting next week there would be public meetings about the MRP workbooks. This public release of these options is not required by the Board and is not required by law. Jensen went on to say that this is a little bit of public outreach that the Park Service has elected to do. Jensen further stated he wants everyone to look at this range and see if anything is in your comfort level.

Cann stated that most everyone in the room at one time or another participated in the Yosemite Mariposa Forum that we had for ten years. We declared mission accomplished and we will be celebrating tonight at 5:00 pm at Savoury's. Everyone here is invited.

Huff stated that she is involved with the Master Gardeners and she just found out that they will be coming to Tenaya Lodge on October 14. They took all the rooms at Tenaya Lodge. She further went on to say that Gloria is locking it down. Huff further stated that the group will be looking for added tours.

Cann stated that the Regional Council of Rural Counties that represent 31 most rural counties of California and 50% of the land mass of California have committed to coming here in Spring of 2013. They will be staying somewhere between Yosemite Valley and Tenaya Lodge. Cann further stated that negotiations are in progress right now. Cann went on to say that he really wants to bring everyone at the meeting today in on this. This spans from Imperial County to Modoc and Siskiyou Counties, to the Sierras and Napa County. It is a very good group with a great understanding of tourism. He further stated that we can make a good show for Yosemite/Mariposa.

Brownell stated that she has retired from the Mariposa County Arts Council and the Tourism Board effective April 27, 2012.

ACTION MATTERS, REGULAR AGENDA

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Biery wants a correction made to page 4, Item 6, contribution was \$30,000.00 not \$50,000.00. Jenson asked for motion to approve minutes with correction. Bullis made motion, seconded by Farrington.
2. REPLACEMENT OF YMTCB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
 - A. Acceptance of resignation of current Executive Director – Hentz stated that last Friday he accepted the position in Daytona Florida. He further stated that he has enjoyed every minute of the last four years. Hentz said he will be leaving by April 25, 2012 at the latest, as April 30, 2012 is his new start date in Florida. His last day will depend on the transition for

replacement and the upcoming POWWOW. Hentz stated that 100% of the slots are filled for this POWWOW. Hentz went on to state that he is working on a SOP with Hadzega, which will create a turnkey for every element of the tourism bureau. It will show every bill that comes in, how it is processed for payment, marketing, sales, and partnerships in the industry. It will show how to run the tourism bureau. Hentz stated that he wants this in place before the new person starts. He stated that it will be done in fifteen days. Hentz went on to state that the core marketing for the bureau will be finished by May 1st. Ideally the new person won't have to rush in to get things done. This will be good and add no additional pressure. Hentz went on to state that April/May is the best time for me to leave. Hentz stated that the plan is for the SOP to be done by April 12th. Hentz stated that there are some things missing and he wants input from the board on these items. Hentz stated that there is a manual on employment for day to day business operations, but that we need a CEO handbook on how to run the bureau how it is now. Hentz went on to state that the POWWOW is April 20-25th. He stated that he wants to reserve that time to be available but he wants to make sure it's the right situation. Hentz went on to say that there will be plenty of staff working in the booth, including Gloria Paladini, DNC, and UK representative Sara Alvarez. Hentz stated that if he is needed at the POWWOW, he will be there, if not, then he won't attend.

- B. Approval of interim Plan of Action – Jensen stated that the Board will allocate a plan of action. Jensen stated that a committee is needed to search for a replacement. Jensen then passed out a handout that shows all the action items for discussion.
1. Check signator: Hentz stated that anything under \$1500.00 needs one signature. Anything over this requires two signatures. Brownell stated that since she and Hentz are leaving, one more person needs to be added to the signator list. Right now the signors are Brownell, Hentz, Bullis and Nassar. Jensen asked for a volunteer for an interim first signator. Doug Shaw volunteered and it was motioned by Brownell and seconded by Shelton. Motion passes.
 2. Payables – Maintain Continuity – Hentz stated that all payables are on-time and always have been. This is very important. Hentz

further stated that Hadzega is very aware of all payables and time schedule.

3. Monthly payables include: Rent, Payroll (Singlepoint), Utilities, Website Maintenance and PR/Social Media Agency. Hentz stated again that Hadzega is very familiar with these payables.
4. Marketing/Sales Activities – Hentz stated that marketing and sales activities have three critical areas where he suggests we put committees together. The first is the international office. Hentz stated that the marketing committee be responsible from a supervisory point of view to oversee our international offices management, which include UK, Australia and Germany. Hentz stated that UK needs the most hand holding. Hentz stated that we are putting more money into a dedicated representation firm. He stated that we are getting great results from then, but the bi-weekly conference calls must continue. Hentz stated that someone must oversee this. The second is Yosemite.com. Hentz stated that this has been a lot of work and continues to be a lot of work. Hentz stated that the marketing committee would be best fit to monitor this, to continue this process with the support of Hadzega. Biery inquired what our amount of work is since McClatchy is handling this. Hentz stated that it is the customer service, updating, making sure all the tweaking is done. Hentz further stated that it is the advertising that is the most work. There is a lot of digestion going on, challenging things with advertising. Some examples are foreign advertisers and our smaller lodging industry is still having a challenging time going through this transition. Hentz stated that we are working through this, but this also shows why we need a part time position. Hentz further stated that the bureau is fielding a lot of phone calls right now. The third is public relations/social media. Hentz stated that with Hadzega's expertise and Mark Gendren from Catalyst, we would just need to continue to maintain communication. We have a month by month contract.
5. Future Deliverables (2012 – 2013)
 - a. Y.M.C.T.B Budget 2013 – (May 2012) – Hentz stated that we can replicate. He stated that we can replicate this year's budget. Hentz went on to state that we anticipate the same amount of

money, if not more for next year. From a fiscal point of view, we are very healthy.

- b. TBID Renewal (May 2012 –March 2013) – Hentz stated that there has to be a renewal process. He further stated that Civitas approached him in February; this is the same company that carried out the TBID in 2007-2008. It is an eight month process, first ten years renewed every five years. After this renewal, we will be on automatic renewal.
- c. Travel Planner Update – (June 2012) – Hentz stated that the plan is to update the planner. The supply we currently have, which is 35,000, will last us until about October. He went on to state that we need new ads. The planner we have now is a year old. Hentz stated that the plan is to go into development in May and have the finished piece done completed in September.
- d. Amgen Race Host Finish/Start 2013 (July 2012) – Hentz stated that we were very close to locking down the end stage or start stage. Because it didn't work out, we were told we have first right of refusal to either have a close or a start for next year's race. Hentz stated that his preference would be a start, since it is a lower cost venture. To host a start, it would mean lower cost, not as much investment, and this would probably mean 20,000 people in downtown Mariposa. This year's race completes May 20th and the planning for next year's race on June 1st and will be completed by September 1st. Cann stated this is a big deal.
- e. Visitor Center Mariposa- RFP – (August 2012) – Hentz stated that this will be coming out in August. The time is now to run the visitor's center. Hentz went on to state that we need more control of the end product and surveys interactive activity with our consumers. Hentz stated that this is very important to continue. We have to be ready for it.
- f. Visitor Center Manteca (2012) – Hentz stated we are working closely with the Manteca CVB and Bass Pro Shops. We should be getting information on Friday, which will be the final proposal. Poag & McEwan, the parent company, runs the entire center which includes Bass Pro Shops and they see more than 3.1 million people a year.

g. Mariposa County Budget Hearings – (August 2012) – Hentz stated we need to be prepared for this. We haven't had any issues in the past in securing our \$500,000. The discussion is going to be about TOT being raised 1-2%. Hentz stated that we all support a flat percentage of revenue. These discussions will likely heat up again as we get into the summer. Hentz went on to state that he spoke to Rick Benson who stated that the TOT increase is on the front burner and that the tourism bureau is a big part of that discussion. Cann stated that the entrance sign on Highway 140 is on the April 3rd agenda for BOS to approve one of three designs. Hentz stated that there is \$1500.00 in our budget for this sign. Hentz further stated that he thought we had control over the message on the billboard, "stay play eat mariposa". Cann stated that the permit is very specific from Cal Trans, no advertising is permitted. Hentz stated that "stay play eat mariposa" is huge when visitors read the sign.

Jenson stated that the discussion regarding an interim person, group of people needs to be discussed. Shaw inquired who had enough time, especially with spring coming. Farrington suggested that specific tasks be focused on by certain people. Hentz stated that he has names for the interim position which he will discuss in the closed session. Farrington stated that Gloria Paladini oversees consumer and group trade shows and maybe Hadzega could maintain the paperwork for shows, deposits. Hentz stated that we have a good handle on this. Hentz further stated that except for the POWWOW coming up, we are not committing to any new shows right now. Jenson stated that we need a motion to authorize a committee to hire interim director. Farrington motion to approve formation of search committee for three individuals, 2 board members and 1 non board member and that interim position would last no more than six months. Mary Ann Huff Seconded. Motion passed. Brownell made motion for search committee to include Huff, Shelton, Nassar, O'Donnell-Brown, Shaw and Joe Ravon. Bullis seconded motion. Motion passed. There was also a vote for a committee to search for the permanent director, Shelton, Nassar, O'Donnell-Browne. Shaw and Rabon. Motioned by Brownell and seconded by Bullis.

C. Approval of Replacement Plan - Jensen stated that this will be handled confidentially during closed session. Biery stated that one option would

be to split Hertz's job into two positions. Jensen stated that we've had a number 2 on the table for some time. Shaw stated that this will be a good time to look at structure of the organization. Jensen stated that this will be discussed at the next meeting, and that the date for the next meeting may be accelerated.

3. STAFFING – Hentz stated that we need a part time office assistant/receptionist for 25 hours a week. He stated that Yosemite.com and the Mariposa Experience are taking a lot of time from Hadzega. Hentz further stated that the office is busy with phone calls and customer requests for information. Brownell asked Hadzega what she needed in an assistant. Hadzega stated she needs someone to answer phones, do payables and any other projects that needed to be done. This would give Hadzega more time for Yosemite.com and the Mariposa Experience. Hadzega stated she needs someone 5 hours a day, 5 days a week for a total of 25 hours a week. Shaw moves to hire a part time or temp to help cover this office assistant position, keeping it part time until a future date that we can look at this again. Bullis seconded. Motion passed.
4. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST – LAS MARIPOSAS CIVIL WAR REENACTMENT – Hentz stated that he received a request from Diane Fritz, the committee chair, for a donation of \$10,000 towards the event. Hentz further stated that the last two years, we have supported this event with marketing, press and PR support. What we donate comes to \$1500.00 in hard dollars. Jensen stated no to \$10,000 and yes to \$1500.00 media coverage. Shelton motions to support last year's contribution, direct marketing support and other support appropriate through staff. Bullis seconded. Motion passed.
5. TBID – RENEWAL PROPOSAL – Board Approval of renewal of Civitas Legal Advisors to lead project: Jensen stated that page two on the handout specifies \$32,250.00. Shelton and Biery both stated that they had read the proposal. Biery also stated that he thought the money was well spent in order to comply. Farrington stated that he thought it was fair and reasonable. Hentz stated that we spent a little more last time, but there was more work involved, this time it is more turnkey. Cann stated that he doesn't think it will be a problem for the BOS to approve. Brownell stated she had a concern who will be the point person will be once Hentz leaves.

Jensen stated that he will be the point person, with the assistance of Emily Summers, who works at DNC. Hentz went on to state that John, the owner of Civitas, will come up here on short notice or will do conference calls whenever needed. Hentz stated that the fee includes three trips. Jensen asked for a motion for fee and responsibility for coordination for the work to go to Civitas Legal Advisors. Brownell makes motion and Shaw seconded. Motion passed.

6. YOSEMITE.COM – We are wrapping up our final arrangement with MCAG. What this is going to mean is creating a domain name holding company. We will be doing this as an LLC. Biery further stated that we will be registering with the Secretary of State to make it formal and official. It will cost us \$800.00 a year to do this, which is the minimum fee that every corporation has to pay. There will be no taxes on this LLC but there will be no income. The income will come to the Bureau and MCAG in reference to this domain. Biery stated that we need to designate a member of the Tourism Bureau to be our representative, or officer, on this holding company. Biery stated that our member will be designated as administrative contact, and MCAG's member will be the registrant contact of the domain name. Biery stated that the LLC is incorporated as an LLC of the State of California and it has bi-laws. Yosemite.com will be a property of the LLC. We are joint members with MCAG in this LLC. We will share responsibilities. Hentz stated that one reason we did this is so they can't sell it and we can't sell it. It will be 50/50. Biery stated that the person we designate will be someone who will be around a while with a consistent email address. Shelton agreed to do this. Shelton stated that it would be wise to create an email address to be forwarded to whoever handles this. Shelton stated we should create a domain name at home of Yosemite.com and have that email forwarded to whoever is handling this. Biery stated that a credit card will be put on file with Network Solutions. We can put it on automatic renewal with them. Biery further stated that we can have a domain name protection package for \$9.99 a year. Biery stated that if something were to go wrong, they will notify the administrative contact. Jensen stated that buying this insurance is a good idea. Shelton agreed to this protection. Bullis made motion naming Kevin Shelton as contact and letting Kevin Shelton figure out the details with regards to email address. Brownell seconded. Motion passes.

Biery further stated that he wants to set up the accounting for Yosemite.com before Hentz leaves. Biery stated that we will have to pay the \$800.00 for the LLC. Hentz stated that he wants to work with Biery on this. Biery stated that we will need to set up quarterly accounting to MCAG and pay them a minimum of \$3000.00 quarterly. After this we will pay them \$3000 plus profit sharing, profit is gross revenues less expenses of operating the site. Biery further stated that he wants to work with Hentz and Hadzega to make sure this monitored and done correctly. Hentz stated that we need to work on our pay down of our investment of \$80,000. Biery stated this is a five year process.

INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS:

7. TREASURER'S REPORT – Jensen stated he invited questions for December and January. Hentz stated that February's report was just finished and will be included at the next meeting. Hentz further stated that we are spending within our budget. All our spending will come in the next few months. There are a lot of bills coming due. Catalyst is going to be \$100,000.00. Shelton inquired about the destination video. Hentz stated that we are ready, and we just have to give them the OK to produce the video based on the design. Everything is film ready and we budgeted \$10,000. - \$15,000.00 to design two three minute videos, one dedicated for leisure and the other dedicated to a combination of leisure and meetings. We just downloaded the data onto a terabyte. Anyone can come by the office and view what is on it so far. Hentz further stated that Catalyst is doing this. Hentz went on to state that he is meeting with Catalyst and will tell them to begin the general outline of the video, also known as the script. We will finish the script and then we can start producing it. It will take a 60 day process. Hentz stated that we have great footage of all our properties. Hentz stated that if you look at the financial sheets, we show a balance of \$1.1 million. Hentz stated that we are 5% ahead of where we were last year due to the success of TOT. Hentz further stated that because the County contract took a while, we just got the check from the County for \$375,000. This will all be spent down with marketing expenses.
8. TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Biery stated that we are doing a lot. First and foremost, the executive director of the Central Sierra Economic Development District has put together a strategy that the number one project for Mariposa

County will be the Conference and Performing Arts Center. This director is going up to Seattle to preview this five year CEDS and talk about more projects. He is going to represent our interest in that meeting, to explore the possibilities of infrastructure enhancements to improve the site and make it ready for developer. Biery further stated that DEA can help us out with sewer and water lines. This will help us attract a developer. Biery stated that we should find out before this Board meets again in May, whether we got the five million dollar grant for a gymnasium and community center. Biery stated that another item is the mineral and mining museum association is thinking about buying the old Masonic Hall on Sixth St. Biery stated that the Museum feels it is too far out of town to attract people. Bullis stated that if the Museum moves, the Fairgrounds will lose \$52,000.00. Cann stated that their board's goal for the past ten years was to purchase a building. This has been their long term mission. Cann further stated that he has worked with a lot of consultants and political consultants over the years, and he believes Townsend is one of the best. He further stated that he will be pushing the County to keep them.

9. **MARKETING UPDATES AND DISCUSSION** – Hentz stated that regarding TOT, there has been a change in personnel, Moretti has retired. We just got new personnel providing us with information. The numbers don't match up with what our check was. Hentz stated that one of the new reports that we are going to be giving out on a regular basis is how many requests we get for the vacation planner from all the different sources. The data will show requests from the home of Yosemite website, trip advisor requests, and Yosemite.com. The handout shows that we are averaging 150-230 requests a week for the vacation planner. Yosemite.com is producing great numbers. The DVPs are sent out from our office. We give the school or other non profits \$500.00 and they stuffed 10,000 envelopes. It took only 2 ½ hours. Hentz said ideally we would get a fulfillment house to do these big mailings. Hentz then discussed the handout on Yosemite.com. Hentz stated that the bounce rate was 53% and now it is 32%- 35%. The average page visits for Yosemite.com are 3-4 per visitor. The actual visits to the site are 6200 a week. Hentz stated that our goal is 10,000 a week. Hentz further stated that we are getting more than 20,000 page views a week, our goal is 1.1 million. Hentz stated that Internet Explorer is the number one browser, Safari is number two and Firefox is number three. Hentz stated that the site is mobile

friendly. Hentz went on to state that on the international visitation, U.S. is about 80%, UK, Germany, Australia, France and Brazil are the next top countries. The top states are California, Texas, New York and Illinois and Florida.

Hentz stated that as far as revenue goes, the first few weeks of sales have been fantastic. They have been primarily local. We have generated a total billing of \$22,465.00 worth of revenue contracts. If you have not been contacted, Jim Godwin is the person you need to speak with. This is gross revenue, 80% are standard listings and the rest are banner ads. Hentz stated that McClatchy was either slow in pushing our advertisers or unmotivated. The majority of the ads were filler ads. Hentz went on to state that he put a stop to this. This should all be corrected by Monday.

Hentz stated that we were successful with help from Donna Brownell, Kathy McCorry, Kevin Cann, Candy O'Donnell-Browne, Julie Hadzega; we were able to put together a grant funding application with the Park Service, to try and re-allocate the traffic in the Valley during the summer. Each corridor submitted applications for grant funding to use for some type of purpose to move traffic and keep it out of the Valley during the peak hours on the weekends. We proposed a \$31,000.00 grant application for the Mariposa Experience. Hentz stated that our grant application was accepted for late May through early September, every Saturday and Sunday from 9am-2pm. This will include different historical experiences about Mariposa, which will include a trolley to take people around town, free of charge. It also includes storytelling, and much more. Hentz further stated that Oakhurst received some money and the Hwy 120 corridor received money for transportation purposes. O'Donnell-Browne stated that each gateway has a specific avenue to receive the money.

Hentz stated that for the spring campaign, it will be a three part media campaign: Online, TV and Online TV. Comcast in the Bay Area and the Fox Network which will include the Central Coast to Santa Barbara and also the NBC affiliate that ran the ad before targeting the empty nesters. This will bring us in just under 1.1 million first impressions in the TV campaign. The online combine will bring it to 9.5 million. Hentz stated that we are bringing in Cold Stone Creamery, who will be our partner in the Bay Area for the Fox,

KTVU program. This will kickoff March 26 –May 1st. The Comcast program will be partnering with El Pollo Loco, and that will be in all their stores throughout the Bay Area. The newspaper campaign will start April 1st-April 29th in the Bay Area. This includes 14 newspapers including Contra Costa, Oakland and San Jose. We will be spending close to \$150,000.00 for the spring campaign. After May 1st, the political ads start and the rates triple, so we want to avoid this time frame. We will offer a coop component with these ads, with the ad saying, pack your bags, grab your camera and discover the beauty of Yosemite and Mariposa County. El Pollo Loco partnering with the Redwoods and Cold Stone is with Tenaya Lodge. The fall campaign generated 9000 quality leads, and I am expecting to match this with the spring campaign.

Hentz stated that the UK office is doing very well. He stated that we got in the back door with US Air Tours, a big tour operator in the UK. We took the back page and middle section to promote our destination and all our hotel properties. We are spending \$57,000 a year to Avia Circle. They have a great staff and 2 of them will be at the POWWOW.

Hentz showed the room savers coupons. We got a front and back page of the March/April issue. We are hoping to get a middle section for the Nov-March issues. We are already seeing a high number of calls from this. It will cost \$20,000.00 for six month window to take 2 full pages, and then sell these spots back to our hotels. Miners Inn, Best Western and Comfort Inn are already on board. A lot of destinations are using these coupon books, even the high end destination spots.

10.COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF – Jensen stated that anyone who wants to stay for the closed session may do so.

11.ADJOURNMENT - Jensen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Brownell, seconded by Shelton. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. (location to be determined)