

Yosemite/Mariposa Tourism Bureau Minutes
General Meeting
May 18, 2011
Mariposa County Fairgrounds - Redbud Room
Highway 49 S., Mariposa, CA 95338

Meeting was called to order by Dan Jansen @ 1:30 p.m.

Board Members Present:

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

Excused Board Members:

Donna Davis, The Redwoods

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Roger Biery
Candy O'Donnell-Browne
Donna Sisson, YNP

Absent Ex-Officio Members:

Theresa Castaldi (Coyote Springs Ranch)
Marilyn Lidyoff (EDC)

Staff:

Jeffery Hentz – Executive Director
Kristine Showalter – Administrative Assistant

Visitors:

Kevin Cann, Mariposa County Supervisor
Darci Moore –CA State Mining\Museum
Connie Nelson- Upper Merced River
Watershed Council
John Chua - Digital Gear
Daniel Robles – Digital Gear
Suzanne Pruitt - ?

➤ Public Comments –

Darci Moore - California State Mineral & Mining Museum: Moore presented information about the status of the closure Museum due to the states deep cutbacks. Moore indicated that they will try to keep it open for school projects as long as they possibly could, and they are looking into other types of funding to keep the museum from closing. Moore indicated much of the museum's budget comes from non-state sources. Mariposa County pays close to \$52,000 annually in rent for the facility. State Parks and the association participate in funding about \$200k. Moore shared that for Mariposa County and many thousands of visitors each year, the closure will leave a huge void. Thousands of school children visit the museum each year and are educated about the California Gold Rush and experience interpretative programs that cannot be found anywhere else. Moore shared that she would keep us updated as information becomes available.

Connie Nelson - Upper Merced River Watershed Council: Nelson presented information about the Upper Merced River Watershed Council and passed out a brochure about the organization. Nelson explained that a new bill has been introduced for the MID (Merced Irrigation District), HR 869, which as Nelson explained, could have negative impacts on the Upper Merced River Watershed. Nelson explained that this bill, sponsored by Congressman Denham and co-

sponsored by Congressmen Devin Nunes, Jim Costa, Kevin McCarthy and Dennis Cardoza will allow MID to raise the level of the New Exchequer Dam on the Merced River. A press release from Congressman Denham's office states that the bill "will increase water storage in the Valley while maintaining floods control and creating jobs." According to Representative Costa, "This legislation is a no-brainer for the Central Valley. Increasing our water storage capacity will mean more water, more jobs, and a stronger Valley economy." What the press release and the bill itself fail to mention is that this bill will amend the definition of flood control operations which would allow MID to flood a section of the river between Bagby and the North Fork. This action is currently blocked by National Wild and Scenic River protection. If passed, it would be the first time in history that Congress would allow a reservoir to flood a stretch of the National Wild and Scenic River system. Nelson explained that the wild and scenic status of the Merced River was hard-won and protects remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, and cultural values, all of great importance to Mariposa County. Our river and watershed are central to the tourism-driven economy of the area. The existing law already allows for flood control operations by MID. Nelson further explained that the goal of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve the character of a river. This first encroachment on the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act has the potential to destroy 5 miles of existing trail (from Bagby to Sherlock Creek), Inundate Bagby Campground, Flood habitat of the Limestone Salamander (the species occurs nowhere else in the world), and remove $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of whitewater during the rafting season Nelson urged everyone to get all the facts, make an informed decision, and then contact your Representative, Senators and local County Supervisor to express your opinion.

Brian Bullis – Mariposa County Fairgrounds: Bullis presented updates on the current situation of the closure of Mariposa County Fairgrounds. Bullis commented we are facing tough and challenging times and we need community support to withdraw from the state's clutches. Bullis commented that the fairgrounds have been operating for 73 years. Local fair and attendee's spending snapshot by the dollar. The Mariposa County Fair is an economic engine generating tangible benefits beyond the educational, cultural and agricultural tradition. The Mariposa County Fair generated approximately \$2,864,000 in spending activity alone in 2009 – benefiting the local economy and creating a ripple effect of economic benefit for the state. The network of California fairs generates upwards of \$2.5 billion dollars in economic activity benefiting the local, state and global economy. The Mariposa County Fair creates California jobs through an economic ripple effect of fair patron spending and the business activity required in support of the fair's traditional agricultural educational activities. The equivalent of 38 jobs is created as a result of spending by the Mariposa County Fair, its support businesses and its attendees. The labor income generated by these additional jobs is projected to be approximately \$883,000 annually. The Mariposa County Fair generates business tax revenue through the collection of state and local sales taxes, transient occupancy taxes, possessory interest taxes and other taxes and fees. These revenues further generate economic activity by providing for programs to benefit the local community. An estimated \$22,600 annually in additional business taxes will be created from the increased business activity caused by the fair, its attendees and "interim" events or event shield on the fairgrounds occurring throughout the year. Bullis indicated that he was in the process of setting up a nonprofit organization to help privatize the fairgrounds. Cann suggested the name for the non-profit organization should be "Friends of the Fairgrounds".

MaryAnn Huff- Huff Announced that the Hotel Jeffery has been purchased and the new owners are Forrest and Sara Monk. Huff indicated that they have been doing a lot of repairs and anticipate that they will open by June 15th. Huff also announced that the Chamber Mixer will be held in Coulterville at the Granite Dell on Tuesday, May 24th at 5:30 pm. and the John Muir Highway Festival is in the works.

➤ Action Matters

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

Jensen asked for a motion to approve the minutes from 1-19-2011 a motion was made by Farrington and seconded by Bullis, motion passed.

2. TREASURER REPORT –

Jensen asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report, a motion was made by Farrington, and seconded by Bullis, motion passed.

3. YMCTB BYLAWS ELIGIBILITY CLAIRFICATION SPECIFIC TO ARITCLE II, SECTION

2- A review of the current bylaws was discussed. Jensen asked for a motion to approve the YMCTB Bylaws eligibility clarification specific to Article II, Section 2, to read: "Eligibility: Voting Directors shall be owners, managers, or decision-makers of tourist organizations as defined by the California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC). The Board shall take appropriate action should the eligibility of any voting Director change during his/her term". A motion was made by Huff and seconded by Brownell, motion passed.

4. SINGLE POINT HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES –

A discussion was held regarding what services would be implemented by Single Point Services. Hentz described that Single Point Services provides payroll, access to healthcare plans, brings any legal compliance issues up to date, makes updates to employee handbooks, workman's compensation insurance, and training. Jensen asked what the savings would be by utilizing Single Point. Hentz indicated that the total costs would be approximately \$6k per year. Farrington asked what are the savings on workman's compensation, Hentz said that the Bureau would save about 15%-20%, and that payroll would basically be a wash by transferring the payroll from Eric Oster's services. Additionally, Hentz said an adjustment to the current pay period also needs to be completed as the current payroll is paid ahead instead of in arrears. Jensen asked what other services does Single Point offer above and beyond the above mentioned services. Hentz explained that Single Point writes job descriptions, performs job matches, reviews, employment forms and will free up the Director's time. Jensen stated that the YMCTB Executive Director will still remain responsible for the employees. Nassar asked if this contract is fair to the employees, Jensen indicated it doesn't change, hinder or effect the current employee's situation or pay, but rather it sets a standard for new employees. Further discussion of the details will be held in the closed session.

Approval of Human Resource Services Agreement - Jensen asked for a motion to approve the appointment of the Single Point Human Resources Agreement, a motion was made by Huff, and seconded by Brownell, motion passed.

DONATION REQUESTS – Mariposa County Regional 9-11 Memorial: A short discussion was held regarding the benefits of approving the donation request, as the donation committee had a reached a split decision to approve the donation request. Brownell requested to recuse herself as she is on the 9/11 committee. The Board decided to approve it was good community support and approved a donation of \$500.00 for the Mariposa County Regional 9-11 Memorial Jensen asked for a motion to approve

the \$500.00 donation amount, a motion was made by Shelton, and seconded by Huff, motion passed.

Jensen asked for a motion to approve the above donation requests. A motion was made by Bullis, and seconded by Shaw, motion passed.

5. MARIPOSA 20/20 PROJECT: Hentz stated that several meetings had been held to determine how to protect our “turf” in Mariposa County, and what projects should be identified for the growth of Mariposa County. The projects discussed included a sports complex, gym, and a convention center. Hentz explained that a group called “The Townsend Group”, was introduced who’s business is to assist in writing grants for these types of projects. Cann indicated that there is a lot of grant money available and with the assistance of The Townsend Group lobbying for us that it could be very beneficial for Mariposa County. Hentz indicated that gathering information and putting together a proposal for a gym could lead us to grow in addition to being a year-round destination as well. Cann urged to get started right away as the deadline for the gym project is scheduled to be due on July 11, 2011. Cann commented that the Board should at least give the Townsend Group a trial run as he believes that their track record is impressive. Brownell cautioned that a six (6) month trial period may not get us very far. Biery said the EDC will be involved and Cann indicated that he is getting the County involved as well. Hentz indicated that it would be known in the first 3 months if it will succeed. Hentz urged that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Shaw expressed concern of the stability given the economic times and that there are many questions that need to be answered. Jensen asked for a motion to approve a maximum of \$10,000.00 for a 6 month agreement contingent upon other partner’s participate to extend past the 6 month agreement. A motion was made by Shaw, and seconded by Bullis, motion passed.
6. YMCTB BUDGET: A budget was presented to the members of the board. Jensen, Farrington, and Shaw asked Hentz to provide a narrative or written plan that supported the presented budget. Jensen asked if the finance committee had reviewed it and stated that he thought that last year the board requested the budget cover through September. Jensen requested written support of the proposed budget line items that breaks down the specifics of how the budget will be spent to be reviewed at the next meeting. Jensen asked if we had already approved a working budget for 10/1/2010 to 9/1/2011, and there was some discussion. Jensen asked for a motion to approve the budget as a conditional budget pending confirmation of the dates of current budget. Jensen also asked if a marketing committee meeting had been scheduled to go over the marketing budget. Hentz indicated there would be a meeting in late July. A motion was made by Jensen to approve (by an email) a conditional budget as frame of reference for operating the first quarter operating budget – excluding long term contracts, since it was thought that a budget was already approved. The next meeting will review more details about the budget. Jensen asked for a motion to approve the conditional budget, a motion was made by Brownell, and seconded by Huff, motion passed.

INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS

7. MARKETING UPDATES & DISCUSSION – Digital Gear Management team will present new web enhancements and Jeff Hentz will present information and lead a discussion on current marketing updates:

Digital Gear – The Digital Gear Management Team presented information about the new web enhancements for the YMCTB HomeofYosemite.com website. Some of the enhancements that will be done are new content, new tools, and interactive maps which will provide a visual by geographical location, and will default to Mariposa County, and landmarks. Additionally, it will provide more travel tools, and interactive links with custom icons. Robles indicated that the site will be “Google” and “Bing” friendly which makes it the search engines friendlier and optimizes the number of hits. Booking engines will also be added.

Yosemite.com: – Hentz indicated he had a meeting on the 10th with the RF’s coming in to obtain the two (2) companies that would like to join yosemite.com. Hentz stated that the presentations came in electronically and he would forward to everyone. Hentz said that the project is still on target and the lead generation will begin over the next ninety (90) days.

Marketing – Hentz presented the following updates on marketing for YMCTB

- a. John Muir Highway Festival - marketing support through consulting, press releases, radio, website advertising and public relations.
- b. Media – Bader Pass FAM – Clayton From Fox came up and held a broadcast with Randy Bolt from the California State Mining & Mineral Museum.
- c. New York Media FAM – met with several writers from Fromers, Ladies Home Journal, etc.
- d. Hosted numerous Writers from various locations such as Australia
- e. Downtown Mariposa Visitor’s Map – participated in supporting the map project
- f. VIA Magazine – Produced a co-op ad with Yosemite’s Scenic Wonders, Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite and The Redwoods in Yosemite.
- g. Selling Long Haul Publication - Tour Ops. Hentz passed around a copy.
- h. LA Travel Show – 3/18/2011 – 3/20/2011 Aired on Fox, CBS, CW Networks
- i. In Market Events – Held in Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose
- j. Papa Murphy’s Campaign – Had over 12 million impressions with Astone’s assistance and FOX.
- k. Destination Videos – B-role from Mark Findley’s Production
- l. Powwow Event\FAM – San Francisco Trade Show

- m. New Trade show booth – Passed out a photo of the finished booth
- n. Social Media – Hentz indicated we had just under 40,000 participants

COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF

Farrington commented that the Billboard sign on Highway 41 is creating a “negative feeling” in the Oakhurst community, and that it was not necessarily a positive impact. Farrington commented that this is something to consider.

Brownell asked what the Tourism Bureau is contributing to the John Muir Highway Festival. Hentz commented that the Tourism Bureau will be giving marketing support through consulting, press releases, radio, website advertising and public relations. Brownell asked about who was taking over the Butterfly Festival, in addition to the Merry Mountain Christmas event. Hentz indicated that he did not commit to taking over the Butterfly Festival, however he could take it over or another event. Huff commented that Romero, (?) was hired by Dell Knell to take over the Butterfly Festival. Hentz commented that companies could be hired to outsource the management of the Butterfly Festival, and the Merry Mountain Christmas event. Brownell commented that social media helped a lot with the Story Telling event.

ADJOURNMENT: Public meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 pm

CLOSED SESSION: - Human Resource Matters

Closed session adjourned at 6:30, "action was taken".