

**Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2013
2:00 pm**

Directors Present:

Dan Jensen – (DNC) –Chairman
Kevin Shelton – (Yosemite Resorts) - Vice President
Brian Bullis – (Fairgrounds)
Jonathan Farrington – (DNC Parks and Resorts)
Douglas Shaw- (Yosemite Bug)
Mary Ann Huff – (North County/John Muir Geo Tourism)
Barbara Robinson – (Indian Peak Ranch)
Donna Davis – (The Redwoods)
Sara Zahn – (Jeffery Hotel)

YMCTB Staff Members Present:

Terry Selk – Executive Director
Julie Hadzega – Marketing Coordinator
Windy Gonzalez – Administrative Assistant

Advisors Present:

Roger Biery
Kevin Cann
Candy O’Donnell-Browne
Scott Gediman

Visitors Present:

Kathy McCorry – Executive Director – Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce
Mary Bass – President – Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce
UK Representation-Black Diamond: Maddy Morgan, PR Director
Emma Westman, PR Manager
Bethany Schuh, Travel Trade Director
Andrea Sim, Travel Trade Manager

Jim Stellmack – DNC
Marc Gendron – Catalyst
Scott Gediman – Yosemite National Park

➤ **CALL TO ORDER FOR OPEN SESSION**

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm

➤ **SELF INTRODUCTION BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE**

All in attendance introduced themselves.

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➤ **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS BOARD** – Members of the audience may address the Board on matters not on the regular agenda. Brown Act regulations restrict the Board from taking action on any subject presented that is not on the agenda.

1. Jonathan Farrington passed out an activity piece that Tenaya Lodge created called “101 Things To Do in the Southern Sierra Region”.
2. Scott Gediman spoke of the sequestration as of March 1st, 2013 for all National Parks. A 5% cut in funding resulted in only the hiring of 10 less seasonal employees this year. Yosemite National Park is at approximately 95% of their budget with all funding sources intact. General message out there is that Yosemite is open so please come and visit. Plowing for Tioga Pass is estimated for May 15th, 2013.
3. Dan Jensen discussed the replacement of the Signature Tents now known as the Tent Cabins. The first 50 tents will be available on Friday, March 29th, 2013 and the remainder of the 91 tents to be up and running by May 15th, 2013. NatureBridge will start using tents on Monday, April 1st, 2013. The LA Times came to the park to write a story on the tent cabins last week and he is hoping to see the story this following week in the LA Times. Dan is very positive in his outlook on the story to set the tone for this coming season and visitation.
4. Kevin Cann announced his hosting of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) on April 17th and 18th, 2013. There will be 32 County Supervisors representing the RCRC and touring Mariposa and Yosemite Valley.

➤ **INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS**

1. UK Representation-Black Diamond, YMCTB’s new representation office, presented an activity plan for March 1, 2012-June, 2013.
2. Treasurer’s Report: Jonathan Farrington inquired about the surplus of the budget. Terry Selk explained that we are approximately 45 days behind with the TOT /TBID funds from the County. We are in the process of aligning the working budget and budget to show true figures and where the budget stands to date. Kevin Skelton questioned the SKAL line item and asked if the Bureau was participating. Terry Selk confirmed his

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active participation as the President of the Sacramento Chapter and the amount of contact the Bureau could receive from this event by participating.

3. Yosemite.com Update: Terry Selk explained that a new person had put in the sales role by McClatchy per our request and is being trained by Catalyst. The reassignment of the Content Management has been assigned to Digital Gear, with same monthly service fees as AviaTech. Over last 60 days, the Bureau has been compiling a long list of necessary content updates, functionality changes and such with contractor hired to go thru Yosemite.com. This list of suggestions is now in the hands of Digital Gear to make changes to Yosemite.com, along with a redesign plan to make site much more user friendly. Contractor for the Bureau was able to locate individual contracts and has forwarded them on to Digital Gear to proceed with future advertising. Per Julie, only immediate changes like errors will be changed without verifying contacts. Barbara Robinson expressed concern for boundaries to be placed on Yosemite.com for advertising. Terry Selk commented that boundaries of advertising have not yet been discussed or decided upon.

Dan Jensen again explained why and how the Bureau came to own Yosemite.com. This was to generate TOT tax to Mariposa County with no intent on making a profit. Jonathan Farrington also commented as to that fact as well. Roger Biery stated that he has finalized the operating agreement with MCAAG and they have approved it "as is". The signing of the operating agreement is to come and once it does, the accounting portion of Yosemite.com will have to take place. Two bank accounts will need to be opened; one for financial revenues/expenses and the other for maintenance of the domain name.

4. TBID Renewal Update: On March 3rd, 2013, Civitas presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) the results of the petition renewal which garnered an 89.6% support base from the lodging partners. Public comments were accepted on March 19th, 2013. Several lodging partners and non-lodging partners testified in support of the TBID renewal. On April 23rd, 2013, a public hearing will be held for the BOS to vote to adopt the resolution to continue the TBID at the current rate. Bureau has sent out letters to all lodging partners summarizing the results of the petition renewal, providing evidence of programs the Bureau is now partaking in to assist all lodging partners and a profile form for the lodging partners to complete and send back to the Bureau for our use in updating our records for the revised vacation planner. Kevin Cann complemented Terry Selk on his commitment in reaching all corners of the county and all levels of lodging partners.
5. YMCTB Bylaws: Terry Selk and Roger Biery explained the process of the update of the bylaws and how a lawsuit in San Diego can possibly change the outcome of our bylaws and others statewide due to language. (i.e. - The Agreement or An Agreement) The original "legalese" in the initial revision has been made more user friendly as well.

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6. YMCTB Update on Back Up Storage: The Bureau has now installed 2 external hard drives for back up support in case of emergency. Every Monday, the drives will be swapped out and kept off site.

7. YMCTB Financial Accounts Update: Roger Biery explained the new financial regulations for funds deposited into banking institutions. The two new types of accounts are called: Certificate Deposit Account Registry Service (CDARS) and Insured Cash Sweep. This allows the bank(s) to exchange monies in increments of \$100,000.00 among one another to insure funds over the \$250,000.00 normally covered by FDIC Insurance. (Allows unlimited funds in one banking institution.) These funds are kept in Certificate of Deposits (CD) or Money Market Accounts (MMA). Roger Biery made the suggestion that the Bureau could safely move all funds into one bank in Mariposa County by using this new program. He further went into detail about how funds were transferred to Wells Fargo due to insuring funds above \$250,000.00. Roger also stated he felt the MMA account would be the way to invest these funds above the \$250,000.00 due to the ease of accessing monies when needed and the percentage rate between the CD and MMA is only about ½ percent. Dan Jensen further commented on the closing of any accounts needs to be brought back to the next BOD Meeting as an Action Matter.

8. Marketing Updates & Discussion: Terry Selk addressed the Marketing Activity Update Report included in the BOD Packet. A few key items were noted:
 - the Northern California Itinerary with dmo partners San Francisco Travel and Sonoma County Tourism, which has already been picked up by two tour operators despite having just been released March 1 in the UK;

 - fam tour involving 45 travel counselors from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Switzerland and Germany in cooperation with DNC and Top Deck/PEAK Adventure Travel, a receptive tour operator;

 - several trade and press fams scheduled in the next few months;

 - new partnership with Dogtrekker.com;

 - Strategic Planning Retreat with Marketing Committee, Digital Gear, Catalyst and National Park Service which will result in an 18 month long marketing and advertising plan;

 - MC's approval to change Bureau's logo;

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-Marc Gendron's attendance at the Visit California Media event in New York to meet with travel writers who do not have the budgets to travel to the west. Publications represented included Family Circle, Every day with Rachel Ray, Food and Wine, Travel Leisure, Ladies Home Journal and others significant publications. The Sequester and the Park's operations were the questions most received while there was only one inquiry about the Hantavirus.

9. New Catalyst Account Director Introduction: Lee Goddard has replaced the retired Bud Barnes.

ACTION MATTERS, REGULAR AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting January 17th, 2013: Roger Biery commented on item #4 on page 5 within the action items as potentially being incorrect and would like to review the tapes to see if any corrections might need to be made before the minutes are resubmitted to the board for approval on the next meeting scheduled for May 16th, 2013.
2. Nomination of Scott Gediman as replacement Board Advisor for Donna Sisson: was tabled until next BOD Meeting to confirm title to be held. Actual title to be held was under question due to whether this position was an elected position or to be filled as an Advisor or Liaison capacity not as an Ex-Officio. Kevin Shelton explained why the Ex-Officio position came to be. Due to the Bylaws being under revision, this matter will be addressed and revisited at the next board meeting on May 16th, 2013.

The nomination of Kathy McCorry as Board Member was motioned by Barbara Robinson and Brian Bullis seconded the motion, with all in favor and none opposed.

3. Townsend Public Affairs Retainer Funding: Kevin Cann explained the benefits of Townsend Public Affairs for Mariposa County and how they are a "Municipal Grant Getting Organization". Townsend keeps abreast of items of possible opportunities that we may not be aware of and lobbies to get available assistance directed our way. County is asking for the bureau to increase the previous \$10,000 contribution to \$30,000 to cover a full half of the annual retainer. Townsend works on individual projects as needed not by hourly for the entire contract year. The county and the bureau would be equal partners in obtaining these services as needed throughout the contract year. Roger Biery nominated Terry Selk to be the Townsend Liaison; however, Dan Jensen suggested himself, Terry Selk and Kevin Skelton as the Townsend Liaisons. Townsend will be scheduled to do a presentation at the next meeting on May 16th, 2013. Brian Bullis motioned for the bureau to pay the \$30,000 for the annual contract with Townsend Public Affairs and re-evaluate

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the contract in 6 months, Douglas Shaw seconds the motion, with all in favor and none opposed.

4. Authorization for Bureau Response to NPS regarding Draft Merced River Plan: The Bureau identified a committee to create an official response to the Merced River Plan and how it will affect the county economically. Jonathan Farrington motioned for the Bureau to form a committee to officially respond on or before the deadline of April 18, 2013 to the Merced River Plan consisting of Dan Jensen, Doug Shaw, Marc Gendron from Catalyst Public Relations, and Terry Selk as the authorized signer of this letter. Donna Davis seconds the motion, with all in favor and none opposed.

5. Possible Authorization for the Bureau response to Proposed TOT Increase: Kevin Shelton spoke in regards to the TOT report Rick Benson gave to the board of Supervisors the day before. It was referenced that the TOT was started in 1963, with Mariposa County being the first county to institute this process and how the TOT has progressed thru the years until today. Kevin Shelton continued to express his concern for the possible increase of the TOT and how it will impact his facility personally and other facilities as well, whether the county believes so or not.

Barbara Robinson commented that negative visitor comments via online portals are deterring visitors from staying in Mariposa County and efforts should be made to shore up those properties/diminish those comments. Improving our existing infrastructure and improving comments will result in higher TOT generation.

Doug Shaw concurred with Barbara as did Kevin Shelton. Kevin S. indicated that the general public and Supervisors need to be made aware of how important the lodging partners are to the county. Kevin Cann stated that he feels it is a little early for the Bureau to comment or make a stance of this issue at this time. Kevin Cann does feel strongly about “presence” in the Board of Supervisors Meetings, it does make a difference because you can change minds. Jonathan Farrington suggests forming a committee in preparation of preparing the response to the possible TOT increase by the Board of Supervisors. Doug Shaw motioned for Terry Selk, Jonathan Farrington, Roger Biery and Kevin Shelton from the Bureau to form a committee to make recommendations to the board on how to respond to the Board of Supervisors possible TOT increase, MaryAnn Huff seconds the motion, with all in favor and none opposed to the motion.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF

Windy Gonzalez stated the next Board Meeting is on May 16, 2013 not August 15, 2013.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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Meeting adjourned at 3:34 pm by Dan Jensen. Douglas Shaw motioned adjournment and Kevin Shelton seconds, with all in favor and none opposed to the motion.