

# **Gold West Country General Board Meeting – Butte Five Mile Grille January 28, 2010**

Participants: Board Members: Judy Westfall, Richard Krott, Kerri Kumasaka, Fay Najjar, Dale Carlson, Ellen Baumler, Sara Rowe, Pat Hansen, Barb Reiter, Paul Marsh, Mike Mergenthaler, Patty Cowan, Amber-Wood Jensen, Executive Director Sarah Bannon

General: Dorea Wilmoth, Trina Peterson, Callie Secoa, George Everett, Josh Peck, Chris Town, Rhea Armstrong, Tom Lowe, Lynette Kemp, Tammy Fetty, Bethany Ihle, Gerald Gray, Scott Sylvester, Adam Vauthier, Casey Ferguson, Meredith

President Mike Mergenthaler called the meeting to order. We went around the room and did a self-introduction.

Amber moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Patty seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Sarah had the financial information on a handout. We have \$82,737.30 in state funds with \$19031.41 in the money market. The membership funds have \$38,117.60 in the checkbook and \$5181.47 and \$57119.96 in CD's. The CD's will all be cashed out by the end of January to cover printing of the travel guide and other bills coming up. Paul moved that the minutes be approved as submitted and Amber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The audit for Gold West country showed that we had \$32,072.80 in uncommitted funds. \$29,355.27 of the amount went to the Butte Visitor Center for final reimbursement for money that went to Gold West Country over the last five years. The Department of Revenue has since corrected the system and this should no longer be a problem.

Rebecca Schmitz from MARS STOUT sent in a report on inquiry activity from the telemarketing center. We had 20,156 inquiries for 2009. Most people were interested in history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, rock hounding, family activities and regional lodging. The inquiries primarily came from Illinois, California, Texas, Minnesota, and Washington.

Shawn from Tempest Technologies was unable to attend the meeting. Sarah reported that Shawn gave almost \$40,000 worth of free website work for this fiscal year alone. Mike recognized Shawn and we all gave him a round of applause.

George Everett gave an update on the National Folk Festival. He introduced Josh Beck who is a major component is the organizing of the event. The festival is July 9 – 11 this summer. The festival is focusing on the Industrial Revolution this year including mining and the railroad. Brighter Planet.com is going to do a sponsor booth at a major festival this year. We can go online and vote for the National Folk Festival. If we win it would mean \$5000 more for the festival and they will have a booth at the festival. George will get more information to Sarah to get to the membership

The Rocky Mountain International will be in Great Falls in April. Gold West Country will be participating. Sara Rowe has offered to help. Mike Mergenthaler is checking to see if the Helena CVB is going to go.

Paul Marsh said that there are no changes at this point since our last report. He reminded members that the Sage and Stone was a book for places of interest, artisans, rural routes, art, etc in rural southwestern Montana. To put information in the book it cost \$50 and included a picture and 100 words. The book included a nice map, explained lots about the area and off the beaten pan. Another book will be printed in 2011 and will include many more people who have expressed an interest.

Mike Strang, chairman of the Montana Mountain Bike Alliance asked for volunteers for a committee to share the information and the importance of cycling. A bike trail book is coming out on the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) It costs \$1250 and will be 5000 brochures and 2500 posters focused on trail etiquette between

user groups (hikers, stockmen and women, and mountain bikers.) Richard, a nephew hiked the trail and said we would get more then \$1250 worth by supporting the brochure. Barb moved that we spend \$1250 from private funds for the Continental Divide Trail information and to have Mike Strang keep us informed on the proceedings. Amber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The bike committee consists of Chairman Mike Strang, Amber, Paul, Tammy Fetty, a person from Deer Lodge, and someone encouraged to participate by George Everett.

Sara Rowe reported on the Billings Travel Expo. The Butte CVB has said that they will go in on a booth with Gold West Country. Mike Mergenthaler is going to check on Helena going in on a booth as well. Fay moved that we spend \$500 on expenses to have Gold West go to the show. This is in addition to the booth fee of \$650. Patty seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Gerald, from G&G Advertising, presented ad creative handouts for the media plan. The ads were placed in various magazines and were of various sizes set up in the media plan.

At the last region / convention and visitor bureau meeting, a topic on conflict of interest came up. Is it a conflict of interest to have someone who receives and oversees bed tax funds be on the overseeing Tourism Advisory Council meeting? The other regions and several CVB's have written letters feeling that if you are directly overseeing the bed tax funds you should not be on the governing board. Much discussion ensued over this topic and it was determined by unanimous vote that we would write a letter to the TAC much along the lines of what Yellowstone Country did. They said it was a violation of the TAC's own operating policies for any employee, officer, or any contracted service provider, of organizations receiving accommodations tax (bed tax) funding, to serve on the council.

Cooperative applications were discussed in the executive board meeting. Barb moved that we approve the cooperative applications for the Anaconda VIC travel advisor for \$4029.60, the Greater Valley Ruby Chamber for \$1471.17 for printing and distribution of their brochure, Anaconda VIC for brochure distribution, and the Copper Village and Arts Museum for marketing Art in Washoe Park for \$900, and the Ennis VIC for a travel advisor for \$4000. Paul seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Amber said that Tourism Infrastructure Improvement Program (TIIP) Grants are available for tourism facilities. The deadline is August 4<sup>th</sup> and information is available on [www.travelmontana.org](http://www.travelmontana.org) under programs under Tourism Development and Education.

We moved on to the election of officers. Vice President Amber elected to step down from her position to avoid putting Gold West Country in a possible conflict situation regarding the TAC's operating policies. She will still serve as a Silver Bow County board member. Patty moved that Mike be President and Amber seconded the motion. Since there were no further nominations Pat closed the nominations. The vote took place and Mike was elected president unanimously. Fay moved that Mike Strang be nominated for Vice President and Sara seconded the motion. After nominations were close Mike was voted vice president unanimously. Amber moved that Patty be nominated for Treasurer and Barb seconded the motion. After nominations were closed Patty was elected for treasurer unanimously. Pat moved and Fay seconded the motion that Paul be nominated for secretary. After nominations were closed Paul was elected secretary unanimously.

Under public comment Mike Strang said that the census fortune cookies were in an effort to help spread the word about filling out the surveys. They will be mailed March 22 and due back April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Kerri from Boulder Hot Springs said they will have a buffet and live music for Valentine's Day.

Patty Cowan said that a part time position is open at the Deer Lodge Chamber of Commerce.

Mike adjourned the meeting at 1:08 p.m.