

Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting – Helena, Montana Historical Society
April 4, 2013 Minutes

Board Members: Julie Shelton, Paul Marsh, Pat Hansen, David Williams, Dale Carlson, Lynette Kemp, Mike Mergenthaler, Paul Marsh, Dale Siegford, Casey Ferguson, Richard Krott, Dan Thyer, Carol Eichler, Ellen Baumler, Jason Wood, Julia Brewer, Becky Henne, Kerri Kumasaka, Pamela Kimmey, Employee Sarah Bannon, Partners Creative – Suzanne Elfstrom

Members and Guests: Carrie Smith, Leona Rodreick, Brandi Jensen, Brenda Thyer, Yule Thyer, Bruce Anfinson, Stephanie Monk, Roger Day, Bruce Whittenberg, Pat Doyle,

President Julie Shelton called the meeting to order. We went around the room and each of us did a self-introduction.

Bruce Whittenberg, Montana Historical Society Director, gave us a summary of all the programs the Historical Society has. He also talked about the potential for an expansion and all the materials and exhibits they have. We are welcome to be their guest and tour the facility after our meeting.

Dale Siegford moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Becky seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Since there was no public comment we went into the financial report. Sarah had a handout and reported as of February 28, 2013 we had \$113,713 in our state checking account but we have had major expenses in March. We had not received the bank statements at this point but the balance in the checkbook as of 4/1/13 is \$7,331. We had \$135,300 in our money market as of 2/28/13 but really had only \$65,330 as of 4/1/13 after payment made in March. Our membership account had \$25,932 in the checkbook as of 2/28/13 but only had \$6,422 as of the end of March. Mike Mergenthaler moved that the financial report be approved as submitted. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Rebecca Schmitz from MARS Stout submitted a call center report. We have had 897 inquiries through March and 1,485 guides mailed out. We have had the most requests from "Audubon," our website, "Better Homes and Gardens," and MTOT referrals. The most interests were in history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, Lewis & Clark and rock hounding. Most inquiries came from California, Florida, Montana and Washington.

We talked briefly on legislative issues. We have not had to go up and testify so far this year. Pat Doyle, Helena Tourism Business Improvement District, said that Montana Main Street funding is in jeopardy. As of now, it didn't make it out of committee.

The Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation was in Helena last month. Suzanne though the conference had good information. Social Media was the main focus of several of the speakers. Becky said it flowed well. Dale said that there were about 100 first timers there. The governor addressed us very well. The conference is in Billings next year.

Suzanne Elfstrom, Partners Creative went through our proposed budget for the next fiscal year. Barb Sanem from the Montana Office of Tourism gave us a revenue projection of \$359,604 for fiscal year 13/14. We went through the present year's budget and the proposed next year's budget. Most projects are similar. Administration is up by \$7,721, consumer advertising is up by 9,000, Internet is up by 9,400 for search engine optimization, Facebook promotion, video acquisition and production, and social media campaign. We put \$3,500 in brand identity to work with a new logo, colors, and font for our new name.

Travel guide is up \$4000 to account for the increase in production to match our increase for last year. Public relations dropped \$3000, since our press room was created last year. In-state and out-of-state travel guide delivery went up by \$900. We had much discussion on the budget and know we have wiggle room with administration and a little with Rocky Mountain International (RMI) which will be in-state next year. We talked about the Dillon VIC and the Lima Rest Area but at this time there is uncertainty with how these places will run a VIC or if a Kiosk will be set up. We will leave it open in the marketing plan. Paul moved to approve the budget as presented. Becky seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Julie Shelton talked about the ski joring video on our website. The video went viral with 474 comments, 1,374 likes, 5,233 shares and 582,289 people who saw the video. Bruce Anfinson has video on National Geo and is wondering how to share it with Southwest Montana. It is on the "Where's Andrew" site. Sarah will talk to Shawn regarding this information.

Richard Krott from Tizer Gardens has a full time gardener from Ireland coming who has worked at the Blarney Castle. There will be a photo opportunity on April 27th having to do with a celebration for planting a tree that coincides with the major tree planting in Dublin. Mike Moylan from Ireland arrives in June and we are encouraged to be friends on Facebook and invite him to Southwest Montana.

Phillipsburg had a 30 second segment on the Today Show. Sarah is to talk to Shawn regarding Phillipsburg – Heidi Hesser already did get permission and has it on their website.

Becky Henne talked about the Big Foot Hunt that took place at the Lawdog Saloon. They posted the event on Facebook and ended up with many a few hundred more hunters that came from out of town. Carol Eichler said that the Best Western Great Northern Hotel is having their 10 year anniversary on June 12th.

Montana Quarterly has information on Lincoln, Montana. It is their 150th year for Lincoln.

Phillipsburg is celebrating their 150th year either 1865 or 1867. This is still being determined.

Bruce Anfinson said that the tipi dinners are now in at the Moose Mountain Cabin. People can scan the QR code from his brochure.

Becky Henne talked about Superhost and how they are focusing again on customer service. The seminars are free in some communities based on who has had seminars in the past. The seminars are in **Dillon--April 10th Wed 5-8pm** Location: Chamber Building Contact: Jamie Cottom Beaverhead Chamber Director #406-683-5511 (Call to reserve spot to attend)

Helena--May 13th Mon 1:30-4:30pm Location: Chamber Building Contact: Rhonda Retz rretz@helenachamber.com (email to reserve spot to attend)

Phillipsburg--May 15th 6-9pm Location: Granite County Museum Contact: Shirley Beck Sweet Palace/Sapphire Gallery #406-859-3236 (Call to reserve spot to attend)

Potential locations:

Virginia City Contact: Rebecca at the Chamber Hopefully will have one scheduled on May 14th or 16th--Still waiting to hear back from Rebecca.

Boulder hoping to get another free seminar for this community for Tizer, Boulder Hot Springs and the surrounding communities

Anaconda might be considered also for a seminar.

Sandy Shull from Birds and Beasleys has moved their store across the street and tripled its size.

Our next meeting is June 27th, in Dillon.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.