

**Southwest Montana  
General Board Meeting – Butte La Quinta  
Minutes - February 22, 2018**

Participants: Julie Schroder, Jan Thorne, Kerri Kumasaka, Pay Conway, Dale Siegford, Mary Johnston, Julie Shelton, Maria Pochervina, Lydia Janosko, Brenda Baker, Crystal Thorpe, Ross Johnson, Diane Johnson, Jacque LaVelle, Gay Rossow, Becky DiGiovanna, Anna Strange, Mike Strang, , Anna Fabatz, Brandi Jensen-Campbell, Becky Henne, Bruce Binkowski, Melanie Sanchez, Jocelyn Dodge; contractors: Megan Richter, Erika McGowan, Jim McGowan, Taylar Robbins, Linda Brown, Katya Peterson, Rebecca Schmitz; employee Sarah Bannon; speaker Chris Fisk – Butte Spooks and Spirits

At 10:30 a.m. President Becky Henne called the meeting to order. She welcomed everyone, and we went around the room and each person did a self-introduction.

Sarah had emailed the minutes out to the membership previously. Jocelyn Dodge moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Julie Shelton seconded the message and it passed unanimously.

Sarah had a handout for the financial report. As of January 31, 20018, we have \$22,458 in our checkbook and \$296,335 in our money market accounts. We have \$26,509 in our membership account. Mike Strange moved to approve the financial report. Melanie Sanchez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For the executive report Sarah said the Crown of the Continent is doing another map guide reprint. We were asked to support this for \$1000. After some discussion, (we had already given \$500 earlier in the fiscal year). Dale Siegford moved that we approve \$500 toward the reprint of the Crown of the Continent Map Guide Reprint. Melanie Sanchez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Sarah also received a bill for the Yellowstone National Park Map and the Glacier National Park Map that we did last year in the two national parks. They also are distributed in selected brochure racks around the area. We had lots of discussion on the map and on Certified Folder. Becky moved that we go with the \$1230 for an ad in each of the two National Park Maps by Certified Folder. Maria Pochervina seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Rebecca Schmitz from MARS Stout gave the inquiry report from our call center. So far in 2018, MARS Stout has received 3580 inquiries at the call center and has mailed out 3672 Southwest Montana Travel Guides. 3400 inquires were reader service leads mostly from Yellowstone Journal. Others came from Northwest Travel Magazine, sosouthwestmt.com website and in-house Office of Tourism referrals. Most inquiries came from California, Texas, Florida, and Pennsylvania. The interests were in regional history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, rock hounding and area lodging and camping. A question was asked on what we normally have by this time of year. The answer was somewhere between one and two hundred, so our inquiries are way ahead of previous years.

Sarah and Jim McGowan had been to the Tourism Research Summit the day before put on by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development. Research information was given out from the Institute on Tourism and Recreation and Research and the MOTBD to help us understand the different concentrations. We broke out into round tables and discussed our research needs. We were interested in research on the gaming industry, research on nondigital marketing, Visitor Information Center research, return visitation and many more topics.

Taylor Robbins from Windfall Inc. gave us a marketing update. She showed several of our ads on the screen. She also had information on the Far Cry 5 Video Game Montana's Hope County. She had a slide of the home page for the micro-website and the different activities. The video game loosely takes place in fictional Hope County Montana. It includes many activities in the game including Fishing, ATVing, Wildlife, Ghost Towns, etc. We talked about hunting and whether we should include it on the website as there was discussion beforehand in emails on this subject. After much discussion it was decided to include information on hunting as it is a part of Montana, the heritage of Montana, and is a very viable tourist activity. Windfall will work on adding this back in to the website.

Taylor also had a list of projects they are working on for us. This includes reprint of the birding brochure, redesign of the Southwest Montana Map, designing a booth for travel shows, and other projects.

Chris Fisk, Butte High School History Teacher, gave us information on the Butte Spooks and Spirits Tours. Many travelers are interested in this and the haunted tours always end up having way more people than expected. They go

around either by walking or by trolley and report on the stories and the spirits of the past. They also do cemetery tours. On June 15-16, they will have Haunted History Days in Butte. We had lots of discussion on this and other ghost tours.

Melanie Sanchez reported that someone is having a “Paranormal Wedding” at the Old Montana Prison. She also said that there are Paracons which are like travel shows for the paranormal phenomena. They will be presented by someone at the Eureka, Nevada Paracon in June. It was decided to look further into the hauntings and ghosts for some of our target marketing.

Chris also talked about “Pints from the Past” brewery tour that they do in Butte. It is beginning to draw more attendees as well.

Jocelyn Dodge said that there will be an Outdoor Sector Summit on March 8<sup>th</sup>. She also said that it is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Forest Service Trail System. The Deer Lodge National Forest has over 3000 miles of trails and the Helena National Forest has under 2000 miles of trails.

We went into our cooperative marketing and community / corridor projects. The executive board had previewed and discussed the applications in an earlier meeting. The cooperative marketing projects were:

Whitehall Chamber	Regional Advertising	\$ 1,982.50
Twin Bridges Community Assoc.	Seasonal Promotional Events	\$ 500.00
Boulder Chamber of Commerce	Website Upgrade	\$ 1,000.00
Virginia Chamber of Commerce	Weekend Community Event Banners	\$ 637.50
Virginia Chamber of Commerce	Vigilante Trail Placemats	\$ 718.60
Anaconda Chamber	Brochure Distribution	\$ 1,372.63
Anaconda Chamber	Anaconda Trails & Tourism Maps	\$ 969.21
Deer Lodge Chamber	Brochure print & delivery, Billboard, Ad in Yellowstone Map	\$ 2,958.00
Blackfoot Pathways	Sculpture in the Wild Events Brochure	\$ 1,151.00
Powell County Museum and Arts	Print Brochure	\$ 1,140.00
	Total	\$ 12,429.44

The Twin Bridges original application was for \$1000 but two of the events were ineligible for funds per the state regulations. Their amount was adjusted to \$500. We originally had \$10,000 set aside for cooperative marketing. Fay Najjar moved that all cooperative marketing applications be approved. Mike Strang seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. We will move the extra \$2429 into this line item.

The Community / Corridor Projects consisted of four applications for the \$8000: Virginia City, Anaconda, Deer Lodge, and Jefferson County. This was originally supposed to be a pilot program and one application was to be awarded. Much discussion was held on this and it was a huge struggle to determine how to choose one. Windfall Inc. stepped forward and offered to do them all. We will now add the \$24,000 to this line item in our budget from joint ventures to cover all the costs. A motion was made that all the corridor grants be approved; Melanie Sanchez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Katya Peterson from Tempest Technologies gave the report on our video project, website, and social media. We will have ten different itineraries and we will have twelve locations for the ultra - high definition monitors around the region. She had a handout of sample itineraries for Southwest Montana and of the Southwest Montana Social Media Overview. The sample itineraries were for a trip between the national parks. It included a variety of attractions and towns along the way. Also, on the back was a day trip from Helena to Lincoln that included several places of interest. Katya also had a handout with a social media overview. We had an average tweet of 4,146 impression per month in 2017. For 2018 we have had 18,050 impressions per month. She had samples of photos and tweets that we had done. She also had a layout from the last newsletter featuring “Mining for Montana History.” Our newsletter now has 15,000 subscribers. People are encouraged to give us their events and photos.

We are considering doing a workshop in May to work on state grants that will be do July 1<sup>st</sup>. Virginia City offered to host this meeting. Our next meeting will be on March 22 at Boulder Hot Springs.