

Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting – Butte Serbian Trinity Orthodox Christian Church
Minutes - February 28, 2013

Board members – David Williams, Paul Marsh, Shirley Beck, Dale Siegford, Fay Najjar, Amber Wood-Jensen, George Everett, Carol Eichler, Richard Krott, Pamela Kimmey, Dan Thyer, Ellen Baumler, Dale Carlson, Lynette Kemp, Julie Shelton, Marlene Holayter, Jason Wood, Mike Strang, Desiree Shogren, Maria Pochervina, Employee Sarah Bannon Members and guests: Shawn Peterson, Josh Peck, Pat Doyle, Suzanne Elfstrom, Barb Reiter, Leona Rodreck, Trina Peterson, John Hamilton, Linda Hamilton, Brandi Jensen-Campbell, Cathy Burwell, Kim DeLong, Christine Brown

At 10:30 Father Russell Radoicich gave us a tour of the Serbian Trinity Orthodox Christian Church. Regular tours are given and some take up to two hours.

President Mike Strang called the meeting to order at 11:07. We went around the room and each person did a self-introduction.

Dale Siegford moved and Amber seconded the motion that the minutes be approved as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah gave the financial and audit report. We have \$25,862 in the membership checkbook, \$7,246 in the state checkbook and \$135,190 in the money market account. Dale Siegford moved to approve the financial report. Dale Carlson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Sarah reported that we had an invoice for our membership to the Montana Economic Development Association (MEDA.) After discussion, it was decided that this membership is not worthwhile for us at this time.

Mike Strang reported of the executive board meeting. We will cover the cooperative marketing applications later on the agenda. It was decided to keep the same format and days and times for our meetings.

MARS Stout turned in a report that gave our call statistics for the last four years. History, rock hounding and wildlife viewing are the top three categories of interest.

Cathy Burwell from the Helena Chamber of Commerce gave a legislative report. So far, the session is not as contentious as it has been in the past. She said there is a fair amount of spirit at the capitol and lots of bills transmitted now. They will break until Tuesday. There are lots of bills on employment, university, Historical Society, and job bills.

The Tourism Advisory Council meeting was held in February in Helena. Work is being done on updating and streamlining the rules and regulations. The goal is to make it so the regions and visitor bureaus can spend their money more easily yet still be accountable. The Montana Office of Tourism has a new promotion campaign: "Stay out of Bounds." Meg O'Leary who used to be with the Big Sky Resort is now with the Department of Commerce.

Suzanne Elfstrom from Partners Creative gave the marketing report. We have now completed two years with Trip Advisor and Suzanne went through the results of the entire click through rates and interaction rate for us. Our click through rates for fourth quarter are up 125% over 2011. Our total interaction rate is up 60% for the same time period. Our numbers are way up since Butte came on board in December.

Suzanne also handed out our public relations earned media report. For print Partners were able to increase circulation by 2,800,657 which is now the best way to report. The Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) no longer tracks dollar amounts to the media. Our internet circulation had a total of 13,459,418 weekly average visitors. When we add in other earned media we have 11,585,230 circulations of printed media and 82,583,409 weekly average visits on the internet.

Our media plan was presented as well. Our plan for this year is to do co-ops with the MTOT with *iExplore*, *Trip Advisor*, *Audubon*, and *History*. We will also do online with *tubemogul.com*, and *sunset.com*. Our magazines advertisements will be in *Readers Digest*, *AAA Living*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, and *Sunset Magazine*. Total cost of placement is \$65,294.13.

Shawn Peterson, from Tempest Technologies, talked about the internet and website. He thanked the website committee for input and information at the last meeting. One focus is going to be on itineraries and day trips. Shawn handed out a basic form for people to fill out so they can start putting the information up on the site. This will happen on a first come first serve basis.

Shawn talked about the problem with the longitude and latitude lines on google and the state site. They are working on a way to get it more accurate. This might take help from the communities but may be as simple as taking an icon on a map and moving it in to the correct position. We went over extra costs for more projects: for creation of additional itineraries and day trips for \$3,800, Creation of a location mapping

system \$2,375, additional video footage/presentations \$3,000, Community page enhancements for \$1,520 for a total of \$10,695. George moved that we do all projects. There was a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Maria Pochervina welcomed us to Butte and thanked all the people that helped to host the meeting. She then talked about participating in the American Bus Association. The appointments were fast and they wanted detailed information. Several from the Go West Summit wanted to do bookings on the spot. It was the same with the National Tour Association. They all could benefit from the itineraries. Maria also said that work is being done to get a tram that will go up to Our Lady of the Rockies.

Christina Brown from the Montana Preservation Alliance talked about the "Of Sage and Stone" website and mobile site. They were awarded \$31,000 grant to update the website and do a companion mobile site. Contacts need to be updated and she is going to have a steering committee. She said there would be a few meetings and lots of phone contact back and forth. She said they are looking for \$10,000 to do walking tours. They want to put QR codes in windows. She is working with a guy out of Helena. She is looking at charging \$25 to be included and wants to also include West Yellowstone.

We went through the marketing cooperative applications: Powell County Chamber for brochure distribution for \$1405.14, Old Prison Museum Complex for brochure distribution for \$1463.51, Anaconda Chamber for brochure distribution for \$1136.20, and Copper Village for Art in Washoe Park for \$1857.22. The Copper Village is for an event that has received funding three times in the past. It is our policy to wean off events by funding at 60% the second year and 30% the third year. After some discussion, Dale Siegford voted to approve co-ops at 100% with the exception of the Art in Washoe Park which is voted to be approved at 60%. Paul seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

George Everett talked about the Montana Folk Festival and its success and asked Southwest Montana to continue sponsoring the event at the current level. We have given them \$10,000 and an ad worth \$2,400 in the travel guide. Pamela talked about the Folk Festival being ongoing and hopefully will become self-sustaining.

Kim DeLong from the Shakespeare Company talked about the theatre at the Civic Center in Helena. They built a stage and added air conditioning to an area in the Civic Center. They will be doing shows from July 14th to August 14th. They would like \$5000 to help with the advertising.

Much discussion took place on funding for the events. Dale Siegford moved that we sponsor \$7500 for the Folk Festival and \$4800 for the Shakespeare Company. Paul seconded the motion and much more discussion ensued. Seven people voted yes and 8 voted no; motion denied. Barb Reiter, who was a proxy for Kerri Kumasaka, voted to fund both events at \$10,000 plus the ad and \$5000 respectfully. A second was made and the motion carried.

Dale Siegford from the nominating committee presented the slate of officers: President – Julie Shelton, Vice President – Pamela Kimmey, Secretary – Paul Marsh, and Treasurer – Julie Brewer. Since there were no other nominations George voted that the slate be accepted as presented. Carol seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Julie Shelton took over presiding the meeting. She thanked Mike Strang for his great leadership and presented him with a gift certificate for Fairmont Hot Springs from Southwest Montana.

Under new business we talked about Yellowstone and the sequester put on by the government. The loss of funds will cause the parks to open two weeks later and with fewer staff. We don't know the real effects at this point.

Under old business Dale Siegford made a request to add brewery and distillery icons on our map in the travel guide. This would be in addition to the ghost towns, hot springs etc. Many agreed with this request.

Mike Strang spoke about Dillon and how the chamber building has sold and they aren't sure where they will move. The rest area in Lima had over 300,000 people last year. He talked about taking advantage of the rest area for the good of the whole region. Dale Siegford agreed and said that it is a very meaningful location to get information to travelers. Mike talked about have different communities sponsor a weekend.

Richard Krott had the Horticulture Magazine. The Tizer gardens got an impressive six page spread in the January / February issue of national botanical gardens. They are now an International Accredited Arboretum.

Dan Thyer said that the travel guide has Virginia City as 100 years old instead of 150 years. It is correct on the back cover. Under other business Dan Thyer talked about the Association of Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums holding the Mountain Plains, Western, and Western Canada Tri-Regional Conference. It takes place in Virginia City and Nevada City on September 19 – 22, 2013.

Our next meeting has been moved to April 4th in Helena. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.