

**Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting – Via Zoom
November 19, 2020**

Participants: Sarah Bannon (SW Montana Executive Director), Julie Schroeder, Rebecca Schmitz, Victor Sample, Mary Johnston, Linda Brown, Andrea Opitz, Neala Siegle, Erinn Donnell, Jeanette Kopf, Jocelyn Dodge, Maria Pochervina, Mike Mergenthaler, Debbie Carlstrom, Shawn Peterson, Katya Peterson, Chantelle McDuffie, Jan Thorne, Eve Byron, Gay Rossow, Bruce Binkowski, Dale Carlson, Lisa Bracco and Kerri Kumasaka

Minutes – The minutes from the October meeting were approved as submitted.

Public Comment – Events and activities in various communities were announced.

Financial Report – Sarah gave a financial report. In the State Account, there is \$108,978.66 as of 9/30/20 and \$176,140.34 in the money market account as of 9/30/20. The expenses were -8,162.67 (this is due to the ads that were sold for the travel guides). In the Membership Account, there is \$378,011.99 in checking account as of 10/31/20. SW Montana received \$474,781 for the safety grant deposit. The actual membership account (not including the CARES grant money) is \$25,559.39 as of 10/31/20. Of the CARES grant money (\$474,781), \$122,512.15 was spent and Sarah has invoices totaling over \$100,000 that need to be paid. All of the CARES grant money needs to be spent by December 30, 2020. Kerri made a motion to approve the financial report, Jeanette seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Executive Director Report

1. The new posters and water bottles are in and these will be sent out.
2. Lewis and Clark Partnership Tourism brochure would cost \$2,500. The Lewis and Clark inquiries were bumped up to one of the top interests after we did this last time. Jocelyn made a motion to approve spending the \$2,500 for these brochures. Julie Schroeder seconded the motion and the motion passed.
3. Sarah is working on the membership board rotation.

COVID-Update

1. The Governor made some additional mandates. Maria said the people in Butte have been good about wearing masks.
2. Rebecca said there is some filming going on in Missoula for the Kevin Cosner series, “Yellowstone.” The Missoula County Courthouse and U of M campus are being featured. The film crews are being very careful re: COVID procedures.

Inquiry Report

1. Rebecca from Corporate Cost Control gave a report on the call center. So far in 2020, there have been 2,769 inquiries and 4,446 guides have gone out. The top states for inquiries were Montana, California, Texas and Washington. The main sources for the inquiries were the Southwestmt.com website, the Glacier Country partnership and the Yellowstone Journal. There were also some referrals from the Montana Office of Tourism. The main interests were history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, Lewis and Clark Trail and regional lodging.
2. Rebecca announced that the 2021 Mansfield Lecturer at the U of M will be Dr. Anthony Fauci. He will be speaking on Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

Marketing Update – Neala Siegle from Windfall Studio gave a marketing update.

1. There were two media buys Neala presented:
 - a. One was for the *Yellowstone Journal*. The cost for this would be \$13,000. Last year we did this and the estimate on impressions was 300,000. There were actually 822,000 impressions.
 - b. The other option is for the Oh, Ranger Guides for Yellowstone and Glacier. They produce 400,000 copies and the cost would be \$7,000 or \$11,000 depending on the whether the ads would be half or full page.
 - c. Kerri made a motion that we pursue these media buys. Vic seconded the motion and the motion passed.
2. CARES Grant Update
 - a. The following media has been placed:
 1. Billboards in Clancy, Whitehall, Racetrack, Helena and Butte.
 2. Gas Station video ads
 3. Destination Missoula safety ad
 4. Local radio ads
 5. Social media paid ads
 6. Digital ads across Advanced Audience and Sojern networks.
 7. Drive market digital campaign
 8. Glacier Country website banner ad and listing.
 9. Print ads in the Bozeman Chronicle and the Missoulian.
 - b. There was a call for photographers. Fifteen photographers submitted their work.
3. Travel Guides – Neala showed five options for possible covers. The group voted for the fifth option with the East Pioneer Mountains.

Website and Social Media Update – Katya Peterson from Tempest Technologies gave a report.

1. Katya showed the latest video Tempest has been working on. This video was entitled, “Our Backyard” and will be used with a different voice over for the drive markets.
2. Tempest is working on the airport display in Butte. There is a 85” monitor there. They are also working on the Helena airport display.
3. Next month there will be a photo contest on the website. They will ask participants to send in 6 images with at least one being about social distancing in Montana. Prizes will include motel rooms, restaurants, ski passes, etc.
4. The area pages on the website will be done within the next couple of weeks. These pages will have the MT Aware logo and information on them.

Other Business

1. Mary announced that Backroads of Montana filmed in Anaconda and this will air on December 5 at 5:45 pm.
2. The Big Sky TV show included some great shots of Helena.

Next meeting – The next meeting will be on January 21, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 am.

Meeting minutes submitted by Kerri Kumasaka.