

**Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting – Anaconda Pintler’s Portal Hostel
November 18, 2021**

Participants: Jocelyn Dodge, Fay Najjar, Ross Johnson, Vic Sample, Jan Thorne, Mary Johnston, Adam Vauthier, Lydia Janasko, Tammy Mattson, Andrea Opitz, Brandon Pendergast, Mark Lundberg, Jacque Lavelle, Jeanette Kopf, Isabelle Bonney, Becky DiGiovanna, Susan Ovitt, Steve Hill, Marsha Hill, Andre Graa, and Executive Director Sarah Bannon, Windfall Studios - Leah Hathaway, Lynne Foland, Tia Metzger, Tempest Technologies - Debbie Carlstrom, Experian Call Center - Rebecca Schmitz

Welcome: Vice President Jocelyn Dodge opened the meeting. We went around the room and everyone did a self-introduction. Marsha Hill gave us a warm welcome and an introduction to the Pintler’s Portal Hostel.

Minutes- Becky DiGiovanna moved to approve. Andrea Opitz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public comment – none

Financial Reports – Sarah had handouts for the report. The state account had funds from advertising for the travel guide, so expenses were minimal for this fiscal year at this point. The checking account has \$137,683 and the money market had \$241,325.82 in the accounts. The private membership account had mostly activity for the Recreate Responsibly Grant. The checkbook had \$17,642 in it. Ross Johnson moved to approve the report and Vic Sample seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report – Sarah reported that most work is on the travel guide right now. Calendar of events are due for tourism events. We have completion reports due. Board elections will take place in December by mail where appropriate.

Call Center and Inquiry Report – Rebecca Schmitz, Experian Call Center gave a quick power point on the activity at the call center. She also had a list of questions that they receive at the call center. Through October of 2021, we had 5,673 inquiries and 9,583 travel guides mailed. The inquiries came from Glacier Country Partnership, southwestmt.com, Yellowstone Journal, and in-house MOTBD referrals. Most inquiries came from California, Texas, Florida, and Washington. The greatest interest was in area history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, Lewis and Clark Trail, and regional lodging. Rebecca also had a list of interesting questions from callers. A report will be sent to Sarah to get out to the membership.

Travel Guide Update – we are finalizing changes and updates. We need those who have tourism events to fill out the form and return.

Website Updates – Debbie Carlstrom gave us a summary of activities. The Montana Aware information on the website has been changed to Recreate Responsibly. Lots of filming has been

done for the “Taste of Montana” tourism grant. This still needs to be edited and proofed before going live. They have been working with Rick Graetz on integrating his information into the website. Photos are stored on Crowdriff. When people post photos, it helps if they put #Southwest Montana. Rebecca updated us on the state website. They are in upgrade mode and have a bit of a glitch in the short run. An update error was showing but should be fixed now.

Tia Metzger from Windfall presented a media plan for the fiscal year. We will do two joint ventures with MOTBD – Sojern digital ads and Parents Magazine Inspiration Guide, including advertorial. We will have placements in the *Glacier Country Travel Guide and Partnership*, *Destination Missoula Guide*, *Southeast Montana Guide*, *Yellowstone Journal*, *Oh Ranger*, *True West Magazine*, *Bird Watcher’s Digest* and also do Facebook and Instagram Ads. Fay Najjar moved to approve, Mark Lundberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Travel Guide Covers – Leah Hathaway and Lynne Foland from Windfall presented four different front cover options with an explanation of each photo. We went through a couple of rounds of voting before finalizing the front cover. Much discussion went on through the process.

Montana Ziplines – Andrea Graa gave us a presentation including a map of the several ziplines based out of Anaconda. They have several ziplines going through extraordinary backdrops. They have had many visitors from all over the state with great reviews. Group rates are available. Much discussion and fun ensued over this new attraction to the region.

Other Business: Rick Graetz, University of Montana, This is Montana Community Vitality Program, turned in a report. He has ongoing projects – adding photographs to the website; continue adding community profiles for every Southwest Montana community; continue adding to the website finish “This is Montana” essay, a major piece of writing. He has several projects to consider including a new map of the region with topography and significant points of interest and history; a workshop on ways to adapt to the changing climate; develop and E-magazine for “This is Southwest Montana. Future funding will be discussed next spring.

Brandon Pendergast from the Helena Tourism Alliance talked about an opportunity with Matador. He has been in contact with them, and they are interested in doing an itinerary on ghosts and history tours. They plan to bring six journalists in June or September. He will keep us updated. Butte and Mark Lundberg have also been in touch with Matador on another project and photoshoot this winter.

Next meeting will be February 17, 2021 in Butte.

Jocelyn Dodge adjourned the meeting.