

**Southwest Montana  
General Board Meeting – Whitehall  
Minutes April 28, 2022**

The Southwest Montana general board meeting took place at the Borden's Conference Center in Whitehall. We had a great welcome by the Whitehall crew.

Participants: Maria Pochervina, Mike Strang, Becky DiGiovanna, Gay Rossow, Kay Rossow, Melanie Sanchez, Lisa Garcia, Dan Haggerty, Bruce Binkowski, Lynne Foland, Liz Pullman, Chiara Schober, Pamela Polachi, Vic Sample, Ross Johnson, Katya Peterson, Jan Thorne, Teah Fuller, Jim Buterbaugh, and employee Sarah Bannon

President Jocelyn Dodge called the meeting to order.

**Public Comment:** Jocelyn gave accolades to Maria Pochervina who served as past president for the last two years and continues to serve on the board. Jocelyn presented gifts to Maria from Southwest Montana in honor of her service and continuing leadership.

**Marketing Plan and Budget:** Sarah Bannon had handouts for the proposed FY 22/23 marketing plan and budget. We went through this in detail. Some discussion points included: adding I-90 and I-15 and the airports to the strengths; the older population draw in the region, adding ghosts to the target market, adding star gazing to the emerging markets. Windfall will be adding a film promotion and response sheet. We discussed other information as well. It was of great interest to hear from Katya Peterson from Tempest Technologies that Southwest Montana has already had 16,400 views to the Gunslinger Gulch blog in less than two months.

We went through the budget in detail. The budget from the state was \$836,659 and we added \$15,175 of rollover for a total budget of \$851,834. After discussion and review, Maria moved that we approve the marketing plan and budget for fiscal year 22/23 as presented. Vic Sample seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Financial Report** -Sarah then had a handout for the current financial report. It was noted that the travel guide expenses were in the negative because of the deposits from ad revenue. That will change in a week due to print and shipping invoices. Printing costs were substantially higher than planned. The expenses through March were \$258,455.57. For the membership funds, we have had a total of \$1,136.25 expenses through March of 2022. Becky DiGiovanna moved that the report be approved as submitted. Maria seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Executive Report** – Sarah gave the executive report which consisted mostly of working on the proposed marketing plan and budget and itinerary planning.

**Governor's Conference** – It was announced that Butte won the Film Community of the Year award at the Governor's Conference. Butte has hosted several movies over the last couple of years and was a great asset to the film crews around the area.

Pamela Polachi is a new contact from Whitehall who can help with the filming in the region. We will be looking for more contacts and places that will be willing to have film crews in their communities.

We discussed highlights from the Governor's Conference on Tourism. Maria had notes and reminded us of many of the main points from key speakers. One is that we have just 2.7 seconds to hold our readers attention. We need to have a hook for the audience within that brief timespan.

**Call Center and Inquiry Report** – Rebecca Schmitz from Experian submitted a report on the activity for Southwest Montana. Most inquiries came from Texas, Florida, California, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Interests were history and ghost towns, wildlife watching, Lewis and Clark Trail, regional lodging, and area hot springs. Sources of inquiries came from Yellowstone Journal.com, southwestmt.com, True West, Brand MT guides, maps, websites, calls, and previous Southwest Montana guides.

**Marketing Updates** – Lynne Foland from Windfall, gave us some updates on the marketingside of things. We have lots of activity coming in May with ads and digital media. They have started working on the Ghost map and outlining a promotion. They will soon start the Continental Divide Trail Map and outline for promotions.

**Website updates and videos** – Katya Peterson from Tempest Technologies walked us through the new redesign of the Southwest Montana website. Everyone is encouraged to go through the site and become familiar with it. We now have experiences for highlighted activities, Blogs are now throughout the site; video and photos are also throughout the website. Katya played the new breweries and distilleries videos.

Our next meeting is May 19<sup>th</sup>, and it is our brochure exchange. Sarah will see put out a call to see who would like to host.

We went around the room, and everyone did a self-introduction and talked about the activities in the area. It was interesting to note that Wheat Montana is in our region and we will look at including them next year in some of the promotions.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.