

**Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting
January 25, 2024
The Forge - Anaconda**

Attendees: Sarah Bannon, Bruce Binkowski, Rachael Brug, Becky DiGiovanna, Jocelyn Dodge, Lynn Foland, Mary Johnston, Rebecca Jones, Jeanette Kopf, Melissa Mielde, Andrea Opitz, Katya Petersen, Shawn Petersen, Maria Pochervina, Gay Rossow, Vic Sample, Melanie Sanchez, Chiara Schober, Julie Schroder, Jan Thorne

1. **Meeting Minutes Nov 29, 2023** – Rebecca Jones moved to accept the minutes; Maria Pochervina seconded. Motion passed.

2. **Public Comment** – No Public Comment

3. **Financial Report** - Executive Director Sarah Bannon presented the financial report.

Investments: Sarah is continuing to investigate where to put our funds to gain the best return. Sarah reported that SWMT cannot participate in the same program that Racene at Glacier is looking into because we are a PRIVATE non-profit organization. The program is for PUBLIC non-profits.

Additional Budget Funds: Sarah reported that she has received notice of an additional \$334,344. The budget increase has not yet been officially approved; but Sarah believes it will be. Sarah presented her proposed changes to the budget based on the additional funds. They include \$15,000 for cooperative marketing, \$40,000 for joint-ventures and an increase in Admin budget since there will be an additional employee.

Jeanette Kopf moved to accept the financial report; Gay Rossow seconded the motion. Motion passed.

4. **Executive Director Report**

- a. BrandMT is being renamed to DestinationMT. DestinationMT will be providing a number of different grants.
- b. Cohort Program (being renamed to Pilot Program) is a huge program. The program was to open in February but will now open on March 9. Maria Pochervina directed people to the Department of Commerce website under the TAC section and look for Meeting Book to get more details of the program.
- c. Resiliency Plan: Sarah received the SWMT resiliency plan and sent it out to the members for response. However, Sarah doesn't believe the report is correct and has asked for the raw data. To date she has not received a response to her request.
- d. The Chocolate Trail did not perform as well as expected and was hard to monitor. SWMT will drop the Chocolate Trail going forward.
- e. Sarah mentioned that Lilly Gladstone of Montana has been nominated for an Oscar for her performance in "Killers of the Flower Moon". Rachael Brug stated that Lilly had already won a Golden Globe.

5. **Call Center Report** - Elaine Schnell was not feeling well and did not attend the meeting. Maria Pochervina reported for Elaine. The International mailing went out Friday – 190 guides were sent out internationally. The shipping costs are considerably cheaper using the mailing service. Calls are sporadic.

6. **Rachael Brug Received Grant:** Rachael Brug of Reading Leaves Bookstore in Townsend received a James Pattersen grant. Six Montana bookstore owners received the grant.

7. **Windfall Update** – Lynn Foland reported for Windfall

- Haunted History maps are being printed in two forms: a pad and a folded map. Sarah reported that at the industry shows people preferred the pad version. Several other board members reported the same. However some people do like the folded version. The decision was made to print 75% as a pad and 25% as the folded map
- In Progress:
 - Finalizing the Travel Guides
 - Ad campaigns
 - Glaciers to Geysers: motorcycles, hot springs and museums
 - Trade Show Materials: Windfall has created SWMT stickers that are in the shape of Montana

8. Tempest Update – Katya Petersen presented for Tempest

- Windfall has created a Beer and Spirits Tour site: www.drinkitinmontana.com Any brewery or distillery can add listings. Videos that Tempest produced of the SWMT breweries and distilleries are available on the site.
- Tempest will be posting articles and photos by Rick and Suzie Graetz
- Katya also indicated Tempest is considering a “Meanwhile in Montana” site. She showed 3 videos that would be posted.
- Tempest is looking at doing a Stargazing site of SWMT stargazing
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9. Election of Officers – SWMT officers are elected for 1 year terms at the January meeting. Maria Pochervina presented the current slate of offices for the election:

- President: Jocelyn Dodge
- Vice President: Andrea Opitz
- Secretary: Vic Sample
- Treasurer: Julie Schroeder

Maria then called (3 times) for nominations. None were offered.

Jeanette Kopf moved to accept the current slate of officers for another term; Rebecca Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed.

10. Book Trail Update: Rachael Brug reported on the Book Trail status.

- A board has been formed and the Book Trail has been incorporated. Rachael is gathering funds to apply for an IRS 501C3 status.
- A number of new bookstores throughout the state have been added to the Book Store Trail
- The Book Store Trail board is reaching out to the authors to contact their publishers about becoming sponsors
- Rachael asked Sarah if they could again contact the various regions about helping to sponsor the Book Store Trail
- Several of the book store owners have offered to attend their regional tourism organization meetings to ask for sponsorship. Rachael asked if Sarah could get meeting dates for the organizations.

11. Upcoming Meetings:

- The February 22, 2024 meeting will be held in Dillon
- The March 28, 2024 meeting will be held in Townsend