

**Southwest Montana  
General Board Meeting  
March 21, 2024  
American Legion Hall Townsend**

**Attendees:** Sarah Bannon, Bruce Binkowski, Linda Brown, Rachael Brug, Eve Byron, Debbie Carlstrom, Becky DiGiovanna, Jocelyn Dodge, Lynn Foland, Mary Johnston, Rebecca Jones, Kerri Kumasaka, Andrea Opitz, Branden Pendergast, Melanie Sanchez, Maria Pochervina, Gay Rossom, Vic Sample, Elaine Schnell, Chiara Schober, Julie Schroder

1. **Meeting Minutes February 22, 2024** – Rebecca Jones moved to accept the minutes; Rachael Brug seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Public Comment** – Eve Byron from the Montana Historical Society gave an update on the new building, the new store on Last Chance Gulch and that the Montana Historical Society is planning a 2-3 day grand opening event.
3. **Financial Report** - Executive Director Sarah Bannon presented the financial report. Becky DiGiovanna moved to accept the financial report. Kerri Kumasaka seconded the motion. Motion passed.
4. **Executive Director Report (Sarah Bannon)**
  - a. Sara Bannon reported that SWMT will purchase a vehicle to use for the increased travel around the region.
  - b. Maria and Sarah have been working on the bylaws rewrite. It is a massive job and is slow progress. They are still working on the bylaws. The revisions will be sent out to the Board for review and comments.
  - c. The Cohort/Pilot program has opened will close on April 30. Anaconda, Dillon, Boulder and Townsend are working on grant applications.
  - d. Jocelyn, Maria and Andrea all attended the Calgary show. Andrea reported it was a great success and the new SWMT display booth was very well received.
  - e. The Governor’s Conference on tourism is April 14 – April 16.
  - f. Sarah and Maria have completed the RFP for a Marketing Agency.
  - g. The Resiliency Plan is still under way and there is a \$250,000 grant for training.
  - h. Sarah reported there will be a major push to get SWMT events out via print, digital, social and streaming outlets
5. **Public Relations Report (Maria Porchevina)**
  - a. The Bookstore Trail has been adding new bookstores and is up to 28 bookstores. The other regions are doing a financial review of the program to determine if they will participate financially.
  - b. Maria is expecting to be out traveling the region this spring.
  - c. Maria has been tracking the commercial real-estate throughout the SWMT region
  - d. Jocelyn will be attending the River Summit and the Chamber Tourism Convergence
6. **Snow Mobile Maps (Jocelyn)**
  - a. We will be publishing snow mobile maps
  - b. The snow mobile association has a website with interactive snow mobile maps

- c. We will be talking with the various land management departments (USFS, BLM) about uses of the public lands

**7. Call Center Update (Elaine Schnell)**

- a. Elaine reported that they have been getting up to 20 visits a day at the call center
- b. Year to Date there have been 899 inquiries
- c. The top 5 locations for inquiries are Butte, Helena, Dillon, Virginia City and Deer Lodge
- d. The top 5 activities are: History/Ghost Towns, Wildlife Viewing, Hot Springs, Lewis and Clark Trial sites, Lodging
- e. The top 6 inquiries by Location are: Florida, California, Pennsylvania, Washington, Montana and Ohio

**8. Windfall Update (Lynn Foland)**

- a. Windfall is continuing to work to include Southwest Montana in the Glaciers to Geysers program:
  - Motorcycle Trails
  - Hot Springs
- b. Windfall is adding a list of SWMT Museums to the website
- c. Suggested that SWMT Towns consider flying Canadian Flags to make Canadian visitors feel welcome
- d. Apparently Canadian Cell phones without an international plan do not work in the US. Some visitor centers are seeing Canadian travelers stopping to see if they can borrow a phone to make calls (since we no longer have pay phones)

**9. Tempest Update (Linda Brown)**

- There are a number of view projects underway:
  - Drink it in
  - Tizer Gardens
  - Living History in Virginia City
  - Player Pianos – Virginia City
  - Last Change Stampede – Helena
  - Montana Folk Festival – Butte
  - Grant-Kohrs National Historic Ranch
- Linda showed “YouTube Shorts” vides for Butte, Bread and Butter Café – Townsend and Drink It In
- The website has been adding Rick Greatz “This is Montana – Southwest Montana” articles
- Tempest has content Projects for:
  - Stargazing in Southwest Montana
  - Montana Author’s and Book Trail
  - Montana Rodeos
  - Blog Center: Visiting Old Prison, Prison Riots of 1959, Summer Theater in Southwest Montana
- Sarah and Linda asked everyone to get their events posted on the website

**10. Big Hole/Beaverhead River:**

Rebecca Jones asked if there were grants available to create documentary movie/video refuting recent reports of the Big Hole and Beaverhead rivers being too warm and the fish dying.

**11. Cooperative Marketing Grants:**

We have a number of Cooperative Marketing Grant requests for March totaling \$21,614.92

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|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation | Brochure Distribution                | \$2496.42 |
| Visit Helena                           | Content Prod-National Park Travelers | \$5000.00 |
| Boulder Chamber of Commerce            | I-15 Billboard                       | \$2600.00 |
| Boulder Chamber of Commerce            | Music and Arts Festival              | \$2000.00 |
| Copper Village Museum and Arts Center  | Expanded Publicity                   | \$1618.50 |
| Butte Center for Performing Arts       | Marketing Project                    | \$5000.00 |
| Powell County Chamber of Commerce      | Print Brochures                      | \$2900.00 |

Becky DiGiovanna moved to accept the March Cooperative Grant requests. Chiara Schober seconded. Motion Passed

**12. Upcoming Meetings:**

- The April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting is TBD. It will be a brochure exchange
- In May Southwest Montana will have a southern route trip