

**Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting
March 27, 2025
Butte Public Library**

Attendees: **SWMT Staff:** Sarah Bannon (Executive Director), Maria Pochervina (Public Relations Manager), Julie Schroder (Office Administrator); **Board Members:** Lisa Braca, Rachael Brug (President), Becky DiGiovanna, Jocelyn Dodge (Past President), Ann Finch-Johnston, Kehli Hazlett, Melissa Mielde, Andrea Opitz, Susan Ovitt, Vic Sample (Secretary), Chiara Shober (Vice President), Cassidy Smith, Mike Strang, Celina VanHuning; **Tempest Technologies:** Katya Petersen; **Abbi Agency:** Haley Burgess; **Call Center:** Elaine Schnell

The meeting was called to order by President Rachel Brug at 10:10am.

Meeting Minutes February 27, 2025: Becky DiGiovanna moved to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Kehli Hazlett. Motion Passed.

Public Comment: Rachael Brug asked Visit SWMT to extend the Book Trail project for this year. Becky DiGiovanna moved to support the Book Trail; Jocelyn Dodge seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: Sarah Bannon, Executive Director, gave the Financial Report. Vic Sample moved to accept the financial report as presented; Cassidy Smith seconded. Motion passed.

Executive Director Report: Sarah Bannon, Executive Director, gave her report. She discussed the difficulty and amount of time spent on the Resiliency Plan.

Call Center Report: Elaine Schnell from the Butte Call Center gave the report. Printed statistics were provided to the attendees.

Public Relations Report: Maria Pochervina, Public Relations Manager, asked if Elaine Schnell if we could get statistics comparing the Canadian activity this year vs. last year to see how the tariff situation is affecting SWMT tourism.

Maria also reported on the Hospitality Training Videos project. There was a discussion about how to incentivize employers and employees to do the training videos. It was felt that the Chambers of Commerce in the area might be a good resource for getting the videos incentivized.

Tempest Technologies: Katya Petersen reported on the Tempest Technologies upgrades to the website. Tempest is working on the Video and Photo assets availability. There are 3 new videos being produced for the website: Mother Lode Theater (Butte), Myrna Loy Center (Helena) and the Deer Lodge Museums.

Katya distributed a printed website report detailing the website statistics.

Abbi Agency: Haley Burgess reported on the progress of the Travel Guides and Rack Cards. A markup of the rack card was passed around the attendees.

Legislative Update: Maria Pochervina reported on the Big Sky Rail bill (HB848). Maria testified via online supporting the bill allocating some of the bed tax to the Big Sky Rail project.

Jocelyn Dodge discussed the bill that reallocated marijuana taxes from maintaining trails to law enforcement and Drug Enforcement.

Rodeo will be the official state sport.

Cooperative Marketing: SWMT has \$25,000 in the budget for cooperative marketing. SWMT has requests for \$23, 328 grants spread throughout the region (the complete printed list was distributed to the attendees). Becky DiGiovanna moved to approve the Cooperative Marketing grant requests; Kehli Hazlett seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker: Chris Fisk gave an exceptionally entertaining talk on the history of the various Butte Ghost Tours.

2025 Frontline Tour: This year's Fam Trip will be on May 13, 2025. The Frontline Tour Bus will depart from Butte between 8:00am – 8:30am. The trip will visit Dillon, Bannack, Jackson, the Big Hole Battlefield, Wisdom and Wise River. Box lunches will be provided.

The next meeting will be in Dillon on April 24, 2025 at 1:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18pm.

The meeting adjourned at 11:44am.

