

**Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting Agenda
Helena Chamber of Commerce
Thursday, February 26th, 2026
Meeting Started at 1:01 pm**

In Attendance: Jocelyn Dodge, Beck DiGiovanna, Callie Aschim, Rachael Howard, Jason Burneti, Julie Shelton, Ruth Moen, Jacque Lavelle, Alyssa Starr, Haley Burgess, Linda Brown, Chiara Schober, Barb Ruter, Elaine Schnell, Rachael Brug, Erin Farris-Olsen, Julie Sheldon, Maria Pochervina, Sonya Rosenthal, Kehli Hazlett, Jeanette Kopf, Colton Tash, Ginny Sullivan, Dax Schieffer

Welcome and Announcements

- Renewal of Membership: Julie Shelton, Dale Siegfied, Gay Rossow and Bruse Binkowski
First: Jocelyn Dodge; Second: Jeanette Kopf; Motion: passed
- There was no public comment.
- Approval of February 2026 Meeting Minutes: First: Jocelyn Dodge; Second: Jacque Lavelle; Motion passed.
- Financial Report by Maria:
 - Financial Report not accepted as there is an error with the QuickBooks Reports:
 - State Checking: \$111,887.17
 - Mutual Funds: \$225,531.28
 - Membership: \$62,589.13
 - Resiliency: \$18,781.40
 - Money Market: \$3,012.69
 - Deposit from State: \$267,890
 - Motion to Accept Financials: First Callie Aschim; Second Becky DiGiovanna; Motion: passed
- Executive Director Report by Maria:
 - Motion to Approve Bylaws: First Jeannette Kopf; Second Kehli Hazlett; Motion: passed.
 - Audit – Flagged Items: Our last printing of the TG was flagged; we worked with TAA to amend our contract so they can handle the printing process for all our printed pieces. Rick Graetz/UofM/ \$80K has been flagged. \$80K as the work should have been acquired through the RFP process. Met with Rick as he wants to continue with projects in our region, at no charge to SWMT. An agreement will be drawn up for this work and the deliverables.
 - Budget: Previously shared the need to decrease our budget by \$120K, which we worked to eliminate some projects. Bed tax check received today, \$267,890 with the previous checks it seems we are one track to make our original projected budget. LFST received to date is \$72,520, DOC asked us to decrease this amount

in budget to \$13,558. I have an email into Anna Marie Moe asking for clarification.

- FY27 Budget and Marketing Plan will be presented at the April meeting. I am thinking at this point in time to work on a budget of \$950K, working any additional funds DOC gives us as a projection to projects we can cut if need be. I am unsure how this is working.
- International: Calgary Show, March 20-23, including travel, Jocelyn, Kehli, and Helena will be attending International Webinars with DOC. One with receptive and international representatives was held today at 8am with another with Asian and Australian counterparts tonight at 5pm.
- Travel Writers and Media Trip (Tia) We have a writer coming to Butte March 16 & 17 and Tia has her press trip scheduled for May 13 – 15 Chicago Media Mixer March 5th. The theme for the event will be “A Night in Montana,” using stargazing and outdoor imagery in the expansive planetarium dome to inspire media and content creators to learn about our state’s outdoor recreation scene and vibrant dark skies. The Montana Department of Commerce is excited to host a media mission in Chicago on March 5, 2026, aimed at connecting with local writers, editors, and content creators to share the latest travel stories from across our state. Our theme, “Meet Montana,” will spotlight compelling story ideas that highlight our state’s top destinations and the people who make them special. We are inviting each tourism region and CVB to participate and share their latest updates and hyperlocal insights. There is no cost to participate—we will be providing the event space and coordinating logistics. More details will come as soon as we know how many people can attend. Please let us know if you are interested in attending. We would love to have you there to help showcase what makes Montana so special.
- Community Outreach: April 13 – 15, Dillon, Anaconda and Helena. Flyer and press release has been approved and will be sent out. We are hoping Taylor Tidwell from the DOC will be joining us.

Each workshop includes:

- An overview of Visit Southwest Montana and its marketing programs
 - A review of current collateral materials, including the travel guide
 - Guidance on collaborating with Visit Southwest Montana
 - A “PR 101” session covering media best practices
 - An introduction to working with influencers
 - Montana Department of Commerce will share strategic goals, opportunities (grants and resources) and success stories
- Travel Guide: Print bid is in, \$83,129 with about \$40K being paid out of our membership account from advertising and listings. Travel guide has been reviewed, I believe Haley is sending it along to Darius for his creative musings.
 - SWMT Office: I have been working out of the Chamber of Commerce in Butte, with times of being in my home office. I have much filing to do, slowly, very slowly.

- Resiliency Plan: Report due end of March, and then we will receive the last of the \$250K which will take us to the end of May. Work to be finished is the Crisis Management Plan, Group tour, Hospitality Training and website.
- Hospitality Training is going great. Quite a few people have looked at the draft. Katya and Sarah Bolt will work on the filming. The community welcome videos will be added. We are thinking in April we will be ready to release this. We will need prizes to incentivize people participating in this training.
- Website RFP: Our contract with Tempest will expire after 7 years, this time around, and we need to go out with an RFP. So far, I have Jocelyn and Jeanette on the committee to assist. The RFP needs to be ready and posted by the end of March. Any volunteers?
- Next Steps: Marketing Plan, RFP, and new members/board members.
- Glaciers to Geysers: This is a Joint Venture with Western Montana's Glacier Country and Yellowstone Country. We are only able to participate at the \$15k level, whereas GC and YC are in at \$60K. Haley has been working with Windfall on the creative.

Cooperative Marketing Grants

- Montana Learning Center: Requested \$2,500; Given \$1,200.00. Motion to Approve: First Kehli Hazlett; Second Julie Shelton; Motion: passed.
- Blackfoot Pathways Sculpture: Requested \$2,500; Given \$2,500. Motion to Approve: First Jeanette Kopf; Second Jocelyn Dodge; Motion: passed.
- Butte Chamber of Commerce: Requested: \$1,820.00; Given \$1820. Motion to Approve: First Chiara Schober; Second Julie Shelton. Motion: passed. Recused: Jeanette Kopf, Kehli Hazlett, and Jocelyn Dodge.
- Western Legacy Center Inc.: Request \$2,000; Given \$2,000 for just the website, excluding E-Commerce functions. Motion: First Jocelyn Dodge; Second Jacque Lavelle; Motion: passed. Recused: Chiara Schober.
- Hats Off to Butte: Request: \$600; Given \$600. Motion: First Jocelyn Dodge, Second Chiara Schober; Motion passed. Recused: Jeanette Kopf and Sonia Rosenthal.
- Montana Bookstore Trail: Requested \$4,000; Given \$2,900 through Cooperative Marketing; \$1,100 Out of Opportunity or visitor services. Motion: Tabled.

Call Center

- 255 Guides Requested
- 227 Bulk Mailed Out
- Cities of Interest: Anaconda, Helena, and Butte/Dillion
- Top Information: History and Ghost Towns, Lewis and Clark Trail
- Requests: California, Washington, and Minnesota
- 356 Bulk Mailed Sent Out at the end of February

The Abbi Agency:

- Total Impressions: \$1,330,539
- Cost Per Click \$0.21
- Total Clicks 20,831

- Total Spend \$4,411.92
- Click Through Rate 1.57%
- Top Markets: Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Seattle
- Summer planning has started thus the uptick in visitors.

Tempest Tech

- Total New Followers
 - Facebook: 937
 - Instagram: 252
- Organic Views
 - Facebook: 319,221
 - Instagram: 34,579
- Content Interactions
 - Facebook 5,976
 - Instagram 1,311
 - Watch Time 17 d 3h
- Ads vs. Organic
 - Total Views
 - Facebook: 631,833
 - Instagram: 37,081
- YouTube Overview
 - Total Views: 253,286
 - Watch Time: 1,071.6h

Voices of Montana Tourism with Dax Schieffer

- The Value of the Visitor
- Education & Outreach
- How Voices Tells the Story: Social Media, Public Relations, Digital Marketing, Industry Collaboration, Community Presentations, Legislative Education Roundtables
- 69th Legislative Review
 - Coordination and Communications SB90 opposition
- Legislative Lobbying January 11th, 2027, Next Rotunda Day
- Tourism: \$13.24 Million from non-residents; \$5 Billion in Income
- Discussed Language of our Funding Structures and Legislative Decisions

Meeting Adjourned: 3:21 pm