

**Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau
& Office of Economic Development**

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

September 25, 2014

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, Tim Haas, Ken Jaray, Julie Vance, Joy Vernon

Absent: Amanda Galloway, Marcy Morrison, Sarge Mac Donald

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held Thursday, September 25, 2014 at Manitou Springs City Hall in City Council chambers. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Karen Cullen at 8:35 a.m.

A. Action Item: Approval of August Meeting Minutes

Tim Haas made a motion to approve the minutes of the August meetings as presented. Gwenn David seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of August Financials

Tim Haas reported things are relatively unchanged from last month and feels we are on track for the year and should finish in the black. Staff did send information for advertising in the newsletter but has had no response. Karen recommended the Marketing Task Force discuss pricing for banner ads on the new website so that can be sent to the membership to generate income for 2015. While we will not reach the projection of income from web site banners, Tim feels we have been conservative in our estimate on Events Revenue so that will make up some of the difference. Karen asked if the costs for the coffin races are covered by grant money. The Friday evening event (fireworks) is covered by the Red Cross grant but the expenses of the events are Saturday are paid for through sponsorship and t-shirt sales. Joy requested a meeting to discuss the full event since she has finished with ManiFest. Joy will contact the events committee to set a date. Julie Vance made a motion to accept the Financials as presented. Rachelle Cully seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of New & Renewing Members

Karen reported on a visit with Tracy Miller and suggested a letter be sent to the members giving them a report of all of the advertising efforts put forth this year. Staff is anticipating membership applications from the Space Foundation and Outlook Lodge. Angler's Covey has also been approached but staff has not heard anything from them. Board members asked about Royal Gorge Bridge. Staff will make contact with them. Ken Jaray asked if there was a Membership Solicitation and Renewal Plan in writing that the Board can review. Staff reported there was not a written plan. Karen requested a list of all businesses in Manitou Springs and whether they are

members or not be included. Ken requested a written plan be presented in October. Ken made a motion to approve the New, Renewing and Non-Renewing member list. Gwenn seconded the motion and it was approved.

D. Request: CSCVB Tourism Economics Study

Doug Price, Colorado Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau, sent an email to Mayor Snyder requesting City endorsement of the Tourism Economics Colorado Springs Destination Marketing Funding Analysis & Recommendations, which he attached for review. Both Marcy Morrison and Leslie Lewis were copied on the email. After Marcy and Leslie met with Mayor Snyder, a meeting was set up with Doug Price. The Mayor recommended the endorsement should be sent from the Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development. The CSCVB has received a donation to cover the cost of the study. They did request a \$500 donation from Manitou Springs (and other organizations) to cover the \$3,500 cost for the one day presentation of the study results. Mayor Snyder has received approval from City Council to pass the \$500 to the Chamber to pass along to the CSCVB. Ken asked if there is a way to make the study more regional. In the intro it mentions the Pikes Peak Region but then talks about budget relative to market. Ken didn't feel analyzing just the CVB budget "doesn't do justice to the region" and the marketing and strategies regionally, including budgets, should be looked at to determine what everyone is doing that overlaps or what may be missing. Gwenn brought up additional costs to expand the study and Ken felt it should be negotiated. Karen reported that the CVB advertises regionally. After discussion, Ken felt the important conversation would be with the CVB and how we could better work together to better utilize limited dollars. Leslie has spoken with Amy Long (CSCVB) about having a meeting to talk about how we can better collaborate. Ken suggested the discussion be moved to a Board level with a few people from our board and from their Board meet informally to talk about collaboration and what should filter down to staff level. Tim feels some of that already happens and it is more our need to play off what they are doing. After additional discussion, it was determined that Leslie would set up a meeting in the Spring with Amy (CSCVB) and Ryan (Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association) to discuss any missed opportunities and how the organizations can work better together and report back to the Board. Julie made a motion to write a Letter of Endorsement for the Tourism Economics Colorado Springs Destination Marketing Funding Analysis & Recommendations. Ken seconded the motion and it was approved.

E. Marketing Update

Camille Blakely came to provide the board with a review the results and provide metrics of where things are after almost a year of working with the Marketing plan. She handed out copies of the Strategic Plan, which Julie suggested be provided to the membership. Camille handed out a calendar of the year to show all efforts they were part of, a Summary booklet that includes metrics and a chart showing taxable sales for 2012 – 2014. Camille brought display boards that showed press received which included press releases written by Brittany and sent to Blakely + Company for tweaking and to be sent out. Camille said their goal was to get Brittany to the point where she was writing press releases without their assistance. In the proposal for 2015, it will just include just edits to allow our dollars to be more focused on just getting people to Manitou

Springs. Other boards included some of the ads created and photography that will be included in the new website.

Camille reviewed the Summary booklet which included the calls to action, the key messaging used, the goals with the photography, the radio campaigns from May and September, the partnership agreement with Cumulus, a list of the stations used and the listener reach, the print publications, and a chart of how people heard about Manitou Springs (from the Visitor Registration sign in). Karen pointed out that the visitors don't all sign in and not everyone stops at the Visitor Center. The next page covered the results of the digital campaigns that were run in the Denver and Dallas areas. Camille then reviewed the newsletter subscribers. All of the people in the database were added to the newsletter (some of the email addresses were several years old) to create the newsletter subscriber list. The statistics for the website are for the current website; the comparison will be interesting next year to see the changes with the new site. The information highlighted was the number of sessions (how many people visited the site) and the number of pages they visited in the site. There is another digital campaign (mainly Denver) that has begun running for fall. Ken asked if was the intention to monitor the statistics information monthly or quarterly to make changes to the pages as determined by the length of time people spend on those pages. Karen stated the pages should be kept fresh. Camille thought it would take time (possibly up to six months) before we have really good data from the site. Ken recommended that the Marketing Task Force review the information and make changes in six months. Camille went through the Public Relations received in more detail and put a media equivalency of \$21,000 on those efforts. Karen felt the Media Roundtable was the best thing that helped Manitou Springs because it gave the media the positive information of things happening and they weren't focused on looking for negative (sensational) stories. Camille recommended a Roundtable every spring and explained that there has to be a reason for the Roundtable and it isn't just to get publicity. Other metrics included the shuttle ridership and the responses to "why are they visiting Manitou Springs". It was suggested that "outdoor" or "hiking" replace the "scenery" category. When Camille asked about lodging information, Gwenn and Julie reported that their numbers were better than the last two years but not back to 2011 or 2008 levels. Julie recommended Camille ask the Finance office for lodging information and realized some information is included in the Sales Tax report. The board discussed getting visitors to promote Manitou Springs more (social media but more) and using their experiences to market Manitou Springs.

F. Social Media Update

Susan Wolbrueck provides the social media management for the organization. She handed out two packets of information. We are close to 22,000 "likes". We merged two pages in January ("So Many Things in Manitou Springs" and "Manitou Springs CO") and were able to have Facebook put those likes together. We then changed the name of the page to "Visit Manitou Springs". Growth this year has been organic (not running ads to generate growth). Our likes peaked around Carnivale! (a very graphic event with lots of photos) and with the Wine Festival ticket contest. Growth comes primarily from people who find the page through Google. Any board members interested in having access to all of the data can contact Brittany and she can set them up for the Insights. Susan reviewed who likes our page and the number of people engaged. Check-ins on our page are strong in the 25 – 34 year old age group. The peak reach

for posts come during events. Susan went through the events that had caused spikes in our “likes”. Photos get response. Ken asked about photos from ManiFest. Susan reported she had some but they didn’t draw a lot of engagement. Ken explained FestPix and how that worked. Susan said photos from ManiFest would be very valuable in early promotion for next year if they have that event again. Camille said she has people send photos to her during an event and she can get them posted. Susan reported that the most we reach at one time is 10,000 but we reach 3,000 – 5,000 more often.

Susan reported that she helps member pages grow. She only shares information from members and the amount their information gets shared is based on how much information they post. There are members who post a lot and others that don’t post. Ken asked what we could get to the members that might help them understand how to post. He asked about information that would include maybe a quote from Gwenn talking about how it helps her business. Susan is putting together a proposal for Social Media Management for 2015. In that proposal she will include creating a blog for the new web site, ads on Facebook, and a Roundtable that she would hold to hear what is working and can help members connect with someone who is active to help them. Susan talked about the value the Social Media Roundtable would add to the membership and can be offered, for a fee, to non-members as a revenue stream. Ken asked if Susan would then send an email to the members telling them what would be discussed in the Roundtable. When discussing adding the topics in the newsletter, Ken felt it would be lost and should be a separate email. Camille suggested the newsletter could include a “social media tip of the month”. Karen told Susan we have money committed to Facebook advertising for the rest of the year. Susan talked about the changes in Facebook with growth not happening as much since we are not paying for advertising on Facebook and \$3.00 per day would be valuable. Gwenn talked about the results she gets from paid advertising on Facebook and Susan talked about how to target the paid advertising. Ken asked how much content we put on Facebook related to the history, mineral springs, etc on a regular basis. Susan said probably 1/12 (if she posts 8 – 12 times per day, one post is related to the history, mineral springs, or scenic beauty). Everything she puts on Facebook tweets to Twitter. She updates Twitter with events. We don’t have a lot of followers on Twitter but doesn’t see as many results with Twitter. Instagram is linked to our Facebook as well. It’s hard to get people to post to Instagram. She has upgraded our Pinterest to a business account. Pinterest has the potential as every photo on Pinterest will link to the website. People are going to Pinterest for travel. We also have a Google+ account. Google+ helps your google rankings so everyone should have a Google+ page. Youtube we are using with event videos. She has also set up a Vine account (6 second videos). Camille recommended we have a video contest in 2015.

Susan reported that to help the Shuttle, we promoted it by leaving it as the banner on our Facebook page most of the summer and that helped increase awareness of the shuttle.

G. Website Update

Karen had hoped to have the new website up this week. She reported that we have worked through the lodging information so the leads for lodging will go directly to the properties daily and will be in a little different update. We are coordinating with the hosting company to make

sure that is complete. Ken asked about changing the hosting to Xcite and Karen reported we would deal with that later. She doesn't see a problem with working with both companies. She reported if the site is not launched this week it will be next week. Karen and Brittany will go to Denver. Xcite won't launch the site on a Friday or weekend.

H. ManiFest Update

Karen reported town was packed. She and Jay handed out parking dollars on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. She reported that town was busy Friday and Saturday as well and thought it was a different crowd on Sunday. The people Saturday were friendlier. She didn't feel like the people in town were spending money. Justin Armour reported that the busier downtown Manitou is, the slower Crystal Park Cantina is. Rachele Cully reported she was busy and had regular football Sunday (with the NFL ticket), the overflow of people in town for ManiFest, and she had a lot of business from the Firefighters Memorial. She had firefighters in all three days that come every year. Karen talked with firefighters who come to Manitou every year while they are in town for the Firefighter Memorial to stay in Manitou next year. Julie said the problem with that is Hotel Elegante is the host hotel for the event with the overflow going to the DoubleTree. Julie reported that there is a shuttle that runs to Manitou Springs (the local union provides) every year. Karen felt the police need to be walking more next year if ManiFest is held again to prevent marijuana being smoked publically. Ken stated we need to talk with the Police about being more visible if they weren't. The purpose of the festival was contrary to marijuana use. Ken was downtown Sunday as well but did not see marijuana use. Ken feels this is something that we need to go to City Council and discuss and not wait until next year. The public consumption is something that should not be happening at any time. Staff reported there would be a work session with Council in October and she would contact the City Administrator about adding it to the agenda. Tim reported that retail doesn't see an increase during events but the hopes is people attending will come back another time because of the things they saw during the event. Karen felt the public relations benefit of giving away parking dollars was huge.

I. Evaluation Criteria

Leslie sent the Evaluation Criteria to the Board. Tim originally wrote the criteria in 1999 and brought it back in 2012. Karen asked for opinion on whether that form be used and suggested Leslie review herself so the board has her goals. She suggested Leslie send that to the Board and the Executive Committee could review that information prior to the next meeting. Ken asked about providing input and recommended on Events "to create and utilize an operations plan" which could be used in all sections. Karen stated the position description sent are tasks that Leslie does vs. are they the things the board wants her to do and she should be evaluated on what the board expectation is. Leslie remarked she needed to know what that is. Ken stated Leslie needs feedback of when things were done well or successfully or better than expected not just getting it done. After discussion, Ken suggested Leslie set three to five goals that could be benchmarks for each category. Karen set a goal to have the review done prior to the end of the year and recommended that Leslie make changes to the review and add goals under each category and the board review that. The board could then complete that and send the information to Karen, Tim, and Marcy and they formulate the formal review for Leslie which will

probably in November. Ken stated he didn't know what happened with the review from last year and the outcome of that. There was never a summary provided last year. Ken asked that that information be created and use it as a baseline to see if there has been progress in the areas recommended. Leslie spoke with Marcy following that process but doesn't remember specifics. Leslie asked if there were other changes that need to be made to the form other than adding the operational plans under each section. Karen highlighted some of the sections that she didn't feel apply. Leslie will put together the review in the next three weeks. The CTO grant is due Oct. 15.

J. Executive Director's Report

Staff put out the word that off-season parking went into effect October 6 and it will be 8 am – 5 pm which will be good for restaurants and 3 hour free parking will be available Monday – Friday. At the Parking Authority Board meeting, they worked on the Westside Avenue plan. The 30% design for a public meeting has been pushed back to November. Leslie is not sure they have spoken with businesses that will be impacted with access changes yet. They also discussed a program for businesses to be able to sponsor parking spaces but haven't been able to fully work that out. It will be discussed again at the October 15 meeting. Ken reported still hearing complaints about the parking enforcement, not parking. The City is working on the budget and has a retreat scheduled. Leslie met with Rebecca Davis and Jason Wells to discuss our budget. Leslie did not ask for an increase this year so that the City could use any additional funds for flood mitigation efforts. She did feel the Chamber needs to have a specific plan for funds prior to asking for an increase in 2016. Leslie clarified all the Chamber does in the meeting with Jason.

Brittany has been working on the BID Map. It was sent to the BID board for review. With both the Chamber rack card and BID maps, we waited on printing this year because we had so many still from 2013. We are now running out of both. Leslie recommended the rack card be designed based on the ad design for 2015. Staff has also been working on updating the information for the large downtown map in the Wichita parking lot which has been sent to the printer. Photos from the boards Blakley + Co brought in today. Ken asked if there is an index of all of our photos. There is a photo library on Brittany's computer that is organized by event/subject.

The coffin races are progressing. We are struggling to find two \$2,500 sponsors. Justin reported the hurdle is the distributors don't want to compete with the Manitou businesses. He has told New Belgium there is enough business that the bars will still be packed and they wondered how the liquor license works. Leslie has the liquor license for the park so it is included in the sponsor fee. Rachelle reported she has mixed emotions on the activity in the park. She thinks they are busy but has no way to know how many people don't come to the Townhouse because they are busy. She would rather see a beer garden than to have the Craft Lager festival that day and would rather see that as a separate event at another time. She is waiting for a call from RMC. Rachelle thinks it is a good idea for the City but thinks it may put a dent in her business but doesn't know how much. There will be a band in the park. Tim asked if it was this organization's job to create something that competes with its member businesses. Karen pointed out that events are not good for retail so our events hurt some faction of the businesses. Rachelle will look at her numbers and let the board know following the event. Ken said we need to be out in front of the public consumption of marijuana with the police department before the coffin races.

At Council recently, it was reported that the situation at Soda Springs Park is much better and you can't find black market marijuana at the park anymore. Rachelle has added a doorman on the weekend to deal with people lighting up on her patio. People are given one warning and if they light up again, they are told to leave. Rachelle does see police officers a lot on Friday and Saturday night because she wants them to come in. Leslie reported that we have full police staffing for the coffin races with not only Manitou Police but also the Colorado Mounted Rangers. Ken stated we need a plan in place for dealing with public consumption for the coffin races. Any problems will be directed to the police. Leslie will talk to Chief Ribeiro.

Having no other business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.