

**Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee
February 23, 2021**

Meeting conducted via electronic communication

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Donna Beverage, Union County Commissioner Appointee
Sean Lerner, Retail Appointee
Nicole Howard, City Council Appointee
Caleb Sampson, Union County Chamber Appointee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT EXCUSED:

Krystie Davidson, Large Lodging Appointee
Michael Rysavy, Small Lodging Appointee

STAFF PRESENT:

Suzannah Moore-Hemann, Union County Chamber of Commerce Director
Robert Strobe, La Grande City Manager

ROLL CALL

The meeting came to order at 3:00 p.m. with a quorum of the Committee present via electronic communication

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted without changes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nicole Howard moved approval of the minutes of February 11, 2021, as presented, Caleb Sampson provided the second. All members voted in favor, motion carried.

REVIEW OF FINANCIALS

The Committee reviewed the Financial reports thru January 2021. There were no questions.

REVIEW OF DRAFT 2021-2022 PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET

Suzannah provided the Committee with a draft program of work for 2021-22 along with the current program of work and a proposed budget for 2021-22 via email in advance of the meeting. She noted that the budget and program of work contemplated 100% of current year funding, along with 80% and 60% scenarios in anticipation of reduced funding from the City of La Grande and Union County

given the significant reduction in TRT revenues due to COVID-19. The budget identified where Suzannah suggests making reductions based on those funding levels, with the understanding that any shortfall could be offset or partially offset by using cash on hand as opposed to cutting programs or services.

The website budget line item was shown at \$5,000 for both the 100% and 80% funding levels and \$3,500 at the 60% level. Members of the Committee indicated the importance of maintaining funding for the website as a priority. There was brief discussion of continuing to contract with Worthy for content.

The TRT Grant line was reduced at both the 80% and 60% level to help fund the website at a higher amount. This was due in part of the majority of the 2020 TRT Grant recipients not having their events and rolling those funds over to 2021, reducing demand for funds.

Suzannah had also provided the Committee a proposal for Website Maintenance dated January 25, 2021, that identified a cost of \$7,200 for services. Suzannah explained that she had subsequently asked Julie of Worthy to reduce the costs to a lower amount, perhaps in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range.

Donna Beverage expressed concerns about spending additional funds on website maintenance and upkeep, with a preference to the Staff being responsible for the upkeep. Suzannah clarified that Staff does have the capability to update pages, that the intent was to have Worthy do work writing content and updating the site to be consistent with the Style Guide and Promotion Plan. The use of the term “website maintenance” implied the contract was for work that could be done by Staff and not just picture changes. The Committee reached consensus on asking for a revised proposal from Worthy that was more specific to the work that would be done and that would be considered as part of the finalization of the budget and Program of Work.

The draft budget also included funding for a RARE participant to assist with marketing and promotions as a way to increase staff capacity at a relatively inexpensive amount. The cost would be around \$20,000 for 9 months. The Committee reached consensus on Suzannah submitting the application, which has an April deadline, with the understanding that if the position isn’t approved in the adopted budget and approved Program of Work, that it would not be retained.

It was suggested to increase the training budget in the draft to allow for Staff to do additional industry specific training and attend conferences. Additional training on the website was also suggested as the basis for increasing the training investment.

The Committee was asked to provide additional feedback on the Program of Work and draft budget in advance of the next meeting.

TRT FUNDED GRANT PROGRAM CHANGES

Suzannah provided draft revisions to the various TRT funding programs in advance of the meeting. The most significant change in the TRT Grant program was considering funding events at a much higher dollar amount, up to \$10,000, with \$5,000 identified for new events that would be considered separately. The structure also contemplates weighting criteria to make the funding decisions more definitive. The Committee did not discuss specific preferences for the weighting. The intent is to identify how to rank the projects, evaluate events for success or potential success, and have set scoring criteria that allows the use of the funds to be more strategic.

The Cooperative Grant program was discussed with the consensus of the Committee to include not only the current program's practice of two or more entities sharing in advertising costs on an equal basis to purchase larger ads, but also to add sponsoring travel writers as an allowable use.

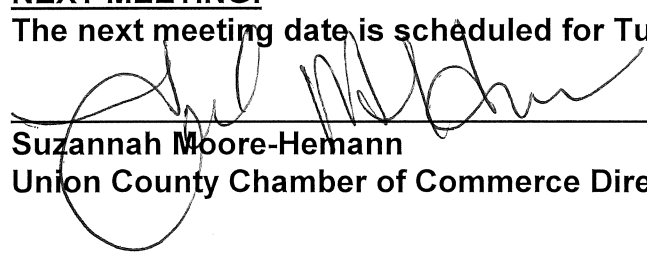
Suzannah will be updating the draft budget and Program of Work and bringing them back to the Committee for more discussion. She asked that any feedback on any of the drafts provided be submitted by March 2nd.

ADJOURN

Without further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.



Suzannah Moore-Hemann
Union County Chamber of Commerce Director