



Brewster County Tourism Council
Minutes and Motions
Regular Board Meeting July 16, 2019
Ritchey Building – Marathon, Texas

Attendees: Bill Ivey, Mimi Webb-Miller, Tom Williams, Carol Peterson, Linda Walker, Marsha Roberts, Dove Brown, Travis Roberts, Robert Alvarez & Kara Gerbert

Guests: David Elkowitz, Sarah Colando, Molly Finnerty, Belle Pena, Chris Herrera, April McAnally

Absent: Barbara Trammell, Joh Price, Alaine Berg, Wendy Little

A call to order was made by President Bill Ivey and it was determined that there was a quorum and notice for the meeting was properly posted.

President Bill Ivey called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as read.

Motion made by Tom Williams to approve the minutes as presented.

A second was made by Linda Walker

MOTION PASSED

Reports

Alpine Chamber – No Report

Marathon Chamber – Carol Peterson stated that they wanted to build on the 4th of July festivities for next year. She also noted that the budget committee for the MCoC met to create a budget for fiscal 2020. An updated events poster was created for the MCoC.

Big Bend Chamber – Molly Finnerty stated they had 6 new members and they'd increased followers on social media since they'd partnered with EMS for the 4th of July parade. September 5th is the annual membership meeting at 6 pm.

BC Historical Commission – Travis Roberts reported that about 20 people showed up to look at what needs to be repaired on the courthouse & that their next meeting will be held on August 15th.

BBNP – David Elkowitz stated that the park was going to begin going public with back country camping fees, so be on the look-out. He stated that there was a possibility of another shut down at the start of our October fiscal year & that we might still consider the electronic message boards. Visitation in the park through June was up 3% despite the first of the year shut down that occurred. There would be a press release about a new item added to the dinosaur exhibit. The park was also in the process of establishing temporary buildings at Castolon for basic services & they will of course eventually build back as much as possible with the ruins that were left.

BBRSP – Nate sent word via email that he would like to move forward with the mountain bike event & was in contact with Chris Herrera about this.

Texas Mtn Trail – No report other than Wendy is with a group out of Austin (Tom Reported). Robert also said that funding was approved from the stated, minus about 3%. A meeting is scheduled on August 7th at 11:00 am in El Paso.

Agenda Items

2020 Budget – budget approval with no questions really asked, we're doing a good job despite those that feel differently.

Chris Herrera – Chris presented his plans for the upcoming bike event to replace the Bike Fest that was discontinued. A handout was given to everyone present on the plans for this event and he was going to continue forward with this idea.

BBCoC Budget – **BBCoC president** Molly Finnerty presented the budget for fiscal 2020 with a pie chart representation, where \$30,000 of the budget was dedicated to a list of 27 events. Director Robert Alvarez questioned her on the fact that there were no dedicated amounts for the events listed. He stated that from what information was presented, that they could conceivably spend \$29, 000 on a single event and then minimal amounts on the other 26 events. The BBCoC would like to produce professional video shorts for their social media, concentrating on niche marketing such as dark skies and the like. Their budget also included \$3,000.00 for the Green Scene. A discussion on the Voices from Both Sides event ensued since it was one of the 27 events listed. The board made the decision that there could be support, so long as there were no words in the advertising from the event creators stating it was a "Fiesta Protesta".

Motion was made by Tom Williams to accept the budget for BBCoC with the addition of the Behind the Store Cook-Off to their list of events.

A second was made by Travis Roberts

MOTION PASSED

MCoC Budget – Board President Alaine Berg was not in attendance, so the approval of the MCoC budget was proposed to be tabled until the next meeting.

\$5600.00 was added to events with the lateral ability to use with existing or board approved future events. One position at \$10,000.00 was listed instead of two.

Motion was made by Tom Williams to table the MCoC budget until the next board meeting.

Motion was seconded by Travis Roberts

MOTION PASSED

President Bill Ivey asked for a 5 minute recess, to reconvene at 3:20 pm.

Meeting was called back to order at 3:20 by President Bill Ivey.

VBB Social Media/PR Report- Belle Lancaster presented her report on social media, noting that Instagram was up 4,000 followers with an all time high engagement in posts. Facebook was also up 1,000 followers from 65k to 66k. Twitter was up slightly from 2, 182 to 2,238 followers. YouTube channel had 2 additional videos added and improvements were made to the overall account.

FAM trips & content creation: She was the walk-on guide for the Chinese FAM that came in via Travel Texas. She managed their stay and guided hikes for them during their visit.

Also provided concert coverage for the Visit Big Bend evening in Terlingua for Viva Big Bend.

Staffing – The initial girl that was slated to work as our HOT tax liaison in conjunction with the RGCOG fell through. After a discussion with the attorney with the RGCOG, the liaison for the HOT taxes must be added as a seasonal employee instead of a contract employee due to having them use the office and its equipment.

The PR position was approved by the Commissioner’s Court, so a search for an employee can move forward.

Personnel Handbook – Bill Ivey handed out a VERY rough draft for everyone to go over and asked that board members bring back revisions/suggestions for the next meeting.

Board Workshop/Strategic Planning – Bill Ivey noted that we need a good set of by laws for our organization. We also need to be looking at liability insurance for the council, the board, etc.

President’s Report - In a continuation of the staffing issues, and the operations manual/personnel handbook, Bill Ivey handed out a written report noting that he and Robert & Kara were working on getting everything sorted with the Judge and other officials. He noted he would be attending the TACVB conference in Denton, and that he was hoping that with ongoing talks with the RGCOG that we can get the HOT tax situation in hand.

Director's Report – Director Robert Alvarez reported on his trip to IPW and stated that while it was a good meeting, it wasn't as good as it has been the past three years due to the addition of new personnel from Texas Tourism.

A check was presented to the Archives of the Big Bend at the last commissioner's court.

The Houston Home & Garden show went well.

State Fair – we are getting together a list of those folks willing to work the booth for us, and we will be using the same hotel that Kara found last year.

VBB is sponsoring an artist in Terlingua at the Starlight on Wednesday before the official kick-off of Viva Big Bend.

TACVB is coming up quickly, so if anyone wants to attend let us know quickly.

WTM – Wendy Little will be attending this year with Robert in London.

Signs – The first Ranching Signs have been put in down south at the visitor's center.

Emergency Action Committee - Linda Walker said she heard what David Elkowitz had mentioned about what was a possibility of a shut down and noted that we need to look at this soon.

Film Committee – A big art installation is being produced on each side of the river out of bamboo & they expect at least a million people to see it.

Tex Toler wanted to let everyone know that Brewster is listed with the state as "Film Friendly" and Robert said we already did this.

Website Committee – Modules will be ordered for the website and looking at around the 1st of November. Wendy was working on the color scheme and Aaron is working on it so we can adjust the site in-house.

Survey – No word from UTEP on the survey.

Sign Committee – Travis Roberts reported that the South Co. signs are in.

They were working on drafting a map for the visitor centers.

Tom brought the copies of the signs to the THC meeting and everyone was very interested.

The camel signs will require a couple of sentence changes in the placed at the Y and also east of Marathon.

The City of Alpine wants some of these signs and they will pay for them and we can add these to a map.

Another sign meeting is upcoming, but no date is solid yet, and Chris Ruggia will be emailing the dates.

IT Report – 14,100 people have gone to the website this month and we generally have 1500 or so. All other information was in the website report.

President Bill Ivey asked for possible dates for the next board meeting. The board agreed to set the date for the next meeting on September 19th at 1:00 pm in Lajitas.

A motion to adjourn was called for by Bill Ivey

Motion to adjourn was made by Marsha Roberts

A second was made by Mimi Webb-Miller

MOTION PASSED