



2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tamba Sellu, President
Courtyard by Marriott, Chico

Matt Reed, Treasurer
Butte County Fairgrounds, Gridley

Melissa Schuster, Secretary
Chapelle de L'Artiste Château &
Retreat, Paradise

Kate Pinsonneault
Hotel Diamond, Chico

Jason Olivares
Oxford Suites, Chico

Aaron Wright
California State Parks

Megan Kurtz
CSU Chico

Megan Gaddis
Chico Chamber of Commerce

EXPLORE BUTTE COUNTY

BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETING

November 14, 2024
Time: 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

BCAG Board Room
326 Huss Dr, Chico, CA 95928

MINUTES - APPROVED JANUARY 30, 2025

MISSION: Explore Butte County inspires people to discover Butte County, creates tourism opportunities that contribute to economic vitality, and builds community through partnerships.

VISION: Explore Butte County champions a diverse and flourishing tourism industry, making it THE must-visit destination in the North State.

VALUES: Authenticity. Innovation. Stewardship. Equity. Fun.

BRAND POSITION: The Explorer - Adventurer, Pioneer, Seeker, Open-minded, Resourceful, Tolerant, Ambitious, Down to Earth, Authentic, Determined, Outdoorsy

1. OPEN MEETING

12:02 P.M.

Attendees: Tamba Sellu, Melissa Shuster, Megan Kurtz, Aaron Wright, Megan Gaddis, Matt Reed, Kate Pinsonneault, Jason Oliveras, Nichole Farley, Will Firth, Brian Curtis, Pat Macias, Ashley Baer, Ron Lason,, Mike Egbert, Jennifer Macarthy, Debbie Mosely, Holly Drobney, Alaina Macarthy, Cameo Calderon, Ashley Baer

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

2.1. [Approve Minutes from September 19, 2024](#)

2.2. Approve September 2024 Financials (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to September)

2.3. Approve October 2024 Financials (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to October)

Motion to Pull 2.2 and 2.3 from Consent Agenda and to make a correction to September meeting minutes: Jason Oliveras was absent. With those changes, the approval of the September 19, 2024 minutes was made by Secretary Melissa Schuster.

Second: Matt Reed

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

3. OPERATIONAL ACTION ITEMS

3.1. [2025 BCTBID Annual Report](#) (Nichole Farley, 2025 Annual Report Committee)

The proposed 2025 Annual Report for the Butte County Tourism Business Improvement District (BCTBID) which includes proposed modifications to the BCTBID Management District Plan and budget allocations for the upcoming 2025 fiscal year.

[2025 BCTBID Annual Report](#)

Recommendation: Adoption of the 2025 BCTBID Annual Report and Submission to the Butte County Clerk for adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

Discussion: Tamba Sellu, Matt Reed, and Jason Olivares make up the 2025 Annual Report and Budget Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee met in to discuss proposed changes to the Management District Plan ("MDP"). The MDP was approved in 2020 with language that allows for the increase of the assessment rate by .05% annually, not to exceed 4%. Additionally modifications include the removal of the four room count threshold for the inclusion of short-term vacation rentals. With proposed changes to the MDP, requesting to clean up the term limit so the district operates on a calendar year rather than December - November.

The adoption of the Annual Report by the Board of Directors will send the formal request from the Butte County TBID Owners Association to the County Administration to begin the public hearing process to confirm the changes.

Melissa Schuster: Has a study been conducted to determine the ROI of the assessment and inclusion of short-term vacation rentals.

Nichole Farley: TBID assessment collections are down slightly despite the always on marketing campaigns to increase destination awareness.

Jason Olivares: Weekend ADR is increasing YOY.

Tamba Sellu: Growth has been steady but less than last year.

Aarson Wright: Asked is hotels have pushed back against the increased assessment rate?

Nichole Farley: No, no hotels have objected to the increase.

Jason Oliveras: Guests do not push back on the taxes or assessments. He is not worried about this negatively impacting guest at his hotel.

Megan Gaddis: Why do we want to include all lodging businesses? And Do competitors have room count thresholds?

Nichole Farley: With all lodging business included it creates an equitable playing field between all lodging properties. None of our comp set have room count thresholds.

Melissa Schuster: Short-term vacation rentals were not included initially because they were seen as competitors to the hotels. Now they can really be viewed as complimentary not competition.

Motion: Treasurer Matt Reed made the motion to adopt the 2025 BCTBID Annual Report and Submission to the Butte County Clerk for adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

Second: Kate Pinsonneault

Vote: 7 - 0 - 1

3.2. [2025 Board Meeting Schedule](#) (Nichole Farley)

Move the Explore Butte County Board Meetings from the second Thursday of January, March, April, May, July, and September, to the fourth Thursday of the Month. The Board Meeting in November will remain on the second Thursday of the month due to the holiday.

Recommendation: Approve the 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule.

Discussion: Move meetings to the fourth Thursday of the month at 1PM, keeping the November meeting on the second Thursday of the month due to holidays. Discussion between the Board around the meeting earlier than 1 pm. Because of the BCAG and Air Quality Meeting, we can not meet before 12 pm.

Motion: Aaron Wright made a motion to approve the 2025 Board of Director meeting schedule to the last Thursday of the month in January, March, April, May, July, September, November at 12:30 pm.

Second: Megan Kurtz

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

3.3. [Proposal to sell the 2021 Sprinter Van](#) (Nichole Farley)

Proposal to Sell the 2021 Mercedes Sprinter Van and Purchase a hybrid SUV. By selling the Mercedes Sprinter Van and purchasing a hybrid SUV, Explore Butte County would benefit from reduced operating costs, increased flexibility, and more efficient outreach efforts.

Recommendation: Approve staff to sell the 2021 Mercedes Van.

Discussion: Sell the van in order to purchase a hybrid SUV to accommodate: event participation/utilization, the van's build-out does not work well for storage, van only fits 3 staff but we are a team of 4, cost of registration/insurance/fuel is projected to decrease with a hybrid SUV. The total annual van cost: \$4,500 vs the total annual SUV cost: \$3,000. We can also consider mileage reimbursement saved: \$4,000.

Jason Oliveras: Jason Oliveras asks if there is a benefit to buying an SUV and keeping the van

Nichole Farley: Does not know of a benefit to keeping both. We have to re-wrap the van regardless

Melissa Schuster: The van was purchased to elevate EBC as a moving billboard during a time when van life was very popular.

Megan Gaddis: Suggested buying an SUV then selling the van if the van is underutilized.

Ashley Baer: The idea of using the van as a mobile visitors center in-market and to attend out of market events. Out of market events do not accommodate the van as a booth or to use in tabling. Even in-market events are not allowing us to use the van. If we had two vehicles, doesn't believe we would continue to use the van.

Aaron Wright: If the van gets attention though for most events because it is so big, wait and reassess next year to sell van

Kate Pinnosnault: The KBB value of \$46,000 is basically just advertising, ad funds could be used more effectively elsewhere

Melissa Schuster: Maybe 2 vehicles would be the answer, like a Prius and another SUV

Megan Gaddis: Asks for a mock-up of what an SUV wrap would look like

Nichole Farley: We would have to buy an SUV before designing. To sell the van, we could use an auction house off of HWY 5 recommended by partners or sell privately.

Aaron Wright: What works best for the team?

Cameo Calderon: Would just use one vehicle, there would not be added value with 2 vehicles

Jennifer Macarthy, Advisor: Having 2 vehicles would be a wasted expense when likely one would be used, an SUV would be most logical

Melissa Schuster: We should put a reserve on the sale if done by auction

Tamba Sellu: Asks Nichole Farley to come up with a solution and bring the option to buy in January

Motion: Treasurer Matt Reed made the motion to table this item and discuss further in January when Nichole Farley can come back with a more detailed plan.

Second: Melissa Schuster

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

4. OBJECTIVE 3: ADVOCATE FOR INVESTMENTS IN BUTTE COUNTY'S VISITOR ECONOMY

4.1. Establishment of the Destination Development Committee (Nichole Farley)

The proposed committee will oversee efforts to develop a Sports Tourism Infrastructure Master Plan, establishing a strategic foundation for enhancing sports tourism and infrastructure across Butte County.

Resolution to Establish the Destination Development Committee

Recommendation: Adoption of the resolution to establish the Destination Development Committee.

Discussion: Establish a sports tourism master plan, finalize an RFP for the sports tourism master plan, select an agency to conduct the master plan, create a committee to guide the development plan process compiled by board members, recreation districts, local sports organization representatives, Butte College and CSU Chico athletic departments, representatives from all jurisdictions, and community members interested.

Megan Gaddis: Is there a certain number of representatives needed for the committee?

Nichole Farley: No, the committee can include all those who want to participate.

Jason Oliveras: Who the audience is/age group for the sports facility?

Nichole Farley: Ideal infrastructure will be a multi-use buildings and fields for sports and conferences, if hotels are investing, tournaments first, community second to bring in overnight visits.

Motion: Jason Oliveras made a motion to Adopt the resolution to establish the Destination Development Committee.

Second: Treasurer Matt Reed

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

5. OBJECTIVE 1: LEAD AND ADVANCE THE BUTTE COUNTY TOURISM INDUSTRY

5.1. [Establishment of the 2025 Ad Hoc Nominating Committee](#) (Nichole Farley)

The proposed committee oversee efforts to ensure that the Board and our Advisors are composed of qualified and dedicated individuals who are representative of the tourism industry in Butte County

[Resolution to Establish the 2025 Ad Hoc Nominating Committee](#)

Recommendation: Adoption of the resolution to establish the 2025 Ad Hoc Nominating Committee.

Discussion: Oversee efforts to ensure board ad advisors are composed of qualified and dedicated to tourism in the area, including reaching out to Oroville properties to fill a vacant seat. Kate Pinsooneault and Megan Kurtz volunteer.

Motion: Jason Oliveras motions to Adopt of the resolution to establish the 2025 Ad Hoc Nominating Committee with Kate Pinsooneault and Megan Kurtz.

Second: Aaron Wright

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

5.2. AIRPORT UPDATE (Tom Bahr, Airport Manager)

Update from the Airport Manager on the progress to acquire commercial air.

The Chico Airport improvement initiative is making significant strides with accomplishments such as pavement and parking upgrades, community outreach through stakeholder meetings, and conducting essential studies and surveys. The initiative has already secured \$1.9M in funding, including a \$1M grant, \$500,000 from the City of Chico, and \$435,000 from stakeholders, with a new goal of reaching a \$2M incentive package to attract airlines. A recent Catchment Area Study revealed that 1,830 travelers per day, primarily heading to the LA Basin, currently rely on Sacramento Airport, highlighting a substantial local demand. The initiative's goals include securing the \$2M package, marketing to airlines, renovating the terminal, and building community support. To support the effort, individuals can meet with Tom, donate to the Incentive Program, and help spread the word. In response to community questions, Tom confirmed plans to bring one airline serving routes to Los Angeles and Las Vegas, while pursuing grants to expand the terminal. Outreach efforts include surveys with Blue Flamingo Marketing Agency and collaboration with key stakeholders, with updates available through the City of Chico's airport webpage. The airport's advantages include convenience, free parking, easy TSA processes, and the opportunity to support a local resource. Additional benefits highlighted include support for CSU Chico and Butte College hosting national conferences, making student travel more accessible,

and potential cargo business use. The team remains committed to creating a regional hub that meets community needs and attracts airlines with strategic incentives.

5.3. **MARKETING UPDATE (Ashley Baer)**

Update on the marketing efforts of Explore Butte County and our agency Madden Media.

As of October year-to-date, social media engagement continues to grow, with 17,000 followers on Facebook, 31.5K on Instagram, 20.5K on TikTok, and 4,034 on YouTube. Highlights include October's best-performing posts: a stunning fall foliage photo on Instagram and a repost about Paradise High's football field renovation on Facebook. The website attracted 363,000 total users, with 403 engaged sessions and an average engagement time of 33 seconds, while users viewed an average of 1.85 pages per session. Top-performing webpages included the home page, "stay" section, swimming holes in Bidwell Park, events, and taste-related content. Advertising efforts featured \$19,495 spent on in-house produced campaigns and \$50,956 on agency work, further driving visibility and engagement across platforms.

5.4. **TRAVEL CHICO UPDATE (Alaina Macarthy)**

Update on the marketing efforts of Explore Butte County and our agency Madden Media.

In October, 397 posts, including stories, were published across platforms, resulting in an impressive growth of 666 new followers and 662 additional website users. The Google Business profile received 53 views, while top website queries included "travel Chico," "art and wine walk DCBA Oct 4th," and "lulus outlet." On Facebook, the best-performing posts featured fall overhead aerials, the Harvest Sidewalk Sale on Oct 12th, and the Seed Orchard, while Instagram posts showcasing fall aerials, the Seed Orchard, and pumpkin patches captivated audiences. November's content focuses on gift guides and seasonal community events, with a temporary gift guide highlight created on Instagram for easy reference. The new Chico Road Bike Map, designed by David Selkirk for Travel Chico, is now live and being distributed by Cameo to local bike shops and community centers. Additionally, a Chico Public Art Walking Map, designed in collaboration with local artist Lauren Meichtry, is set to debut its final draft by January. Don't miss upcoming events and activities featured in our stories, event highlights, and Butte 365!

5.5. **COMMUNITY RELATIONS UPDATE (Cameo Calderon)**

Update on the community relations efforts in Butte County.

Year-to-date, efforts have included 143 lodging visits, 39 community meetings, 21 events, and participation in 4 advocacy conferences, including the Books Family Farm Stakeholder Event. The 365 website continues to grow, with 2,837 users in October, 542 events submitted

this year, and 179 registered users. Top searches included popular seasonal activities like Halloween events, Lights & Frights in Oroville, Artoberfest, and the Patrick Ranch Autumn Festival. Social media saw steady growth with 122 new followers, bringing the total to 1,109 across profiles, and achieving a 53.94% engagement increase in October. Recent website enhancements include a new "Signature Events" tab and a "Holiday Events Listing" tab to streamline access to community highlights.

6. BOARD UPDATES & PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is invited to address the Board regarding any non-agenda items at this time. Time is limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. The Board may not take any action on public comment.

Megan Gaddis: Chico Chamber Update: Congrats to Cameo Calderon for joining the Committed Leaders group. The final YPO of the year next Wednesday with Dan Gonzales at Daycamp. The Chamber is partnering with Rush Personnel for toy drive December 4th, 6am-6pm; the 2025 Chamber Dinner will be January 25th in the Sierra Nevada Big Room.

Debbie Mosely: November 24th Downtown Chico Christmas Preview, Small Business Saturday November 30th, Christmas Tree Lighting December 6th

Holly Drobney: CARD Ice Rink is opening tomorrow, new social media profile was made just for the ice rink, themed Thursdays, broomball league

Pat Macias: monca opening exhibitions tonight, NYE party 6-9pm

Matt Reed: Holiday Jubilee craft show at Butte County Fair upcoming November 23 & 24th in Farmers Hall

Will Firth: 13 miles of Butte Meadows trails starting work soon, planned completion by 2026

7. ADJOURNMENT