



EXPLORE BUTTE COUNTY
BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETING

September 19, 2024
Time: 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

BCAG Board Room
326 Huss Dr, Chico, CA 95928

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

MINUTES - APPROVED NOVEMBER 14, 2024

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

Start time: 12:02PM

Board Members Present: President Tamba Sellu, Secretary Melissa Schuster, Kate Pinsonneault, Aaron Wright, Megan Gaddis

Board Members Absent: Treasurer Matt Reed, Megan Kurtz , Jason Olivares

Staff: Nichole Farley, Alaina Macarthy, Cameo Calderon, Ashley Baer

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

- 2.1. [Approve Minutes from July 11, 2024](#)
- 2.2. [Approve REVISED April 2024 Financials](#) (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to April)
- 2.3. [Approve REVISED May 2024 Financials](#) (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to May)
- 2.4. [Approve June 2024 Financials](#) (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to June)
- 2.5. [Approve July 2024 Financials](#) (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to July)
- 2.6. [Approve August 2024 Financials](#) (with authorization to update for TBID assessment revenues attributed to August)

Discussion: None

Motion: Secretary Melissa Schuster moved to approve the consent calendar.

Second: Aaron Wright

5 - 0 - 0

3. OPERATIONAL ACTION ITEMS

3.1. 2024 Budget Update and EOY Budget Re-Forecasting (Nichole Farley)

Status update of our 2024 Budget and proposed budget re-forecasting for 2024. Presentation of revised 2024 budget.

Recommendation: Approve the revised 2024 budget.

Nichole Farley: CFO by Design we have come into rhythm of tracking our income. Adopted the consent calendar during the revised reporting. As we came into wrapping up august to see where we are spending and reallocate funding. Total expenses to increase 4.58% to go to advertising, and social media increase to \$36k. Creative Services remain relatively stable. Printing costs rose with promotional materials increasing by 150% and other printing by 200%.

Administration is increasing, ad agency and 90/10 split for payroll. General Admin expenses such as new staffing items for our new staff member for the Travel Chico Brand. We did not budget for legal fees increasing and accounting costs.

Net Income is a forecast that shows a net loss of 148,808.92.

Discussion:

Jennifer Macarthy: With the park fire, is there an increase in hotel stays? Will that offset some of the net loss.

Tamba Sellu: Hotels were full but it was mostly government funded from CalFire. ADR has dropped, compared to last year it is less so it's not making more money.

Motion: President Tamba Sellu made the motion to approve the revised 2024 .budget

Second: Kate Pinsonnault

Vote: 5 - 0 - 0

3.2. Appointment of Ad Hoc 2025 Budget Committee (Nichole Farley)

Appointment of an ad hoc committee to propose the 2025 Annual Plan and 2025 Budget to the Board for approval. The annual plan is due in November 2024 . The annual budget is adopted in January 2025.

Recommendation: Adoption of the resolution to create an ad hoc 2025 Budget committee with the appoint of no more than three board of directors

Appointment of an ad hoc committee to propose the 2025 Annual Plan and 2025 Budget to the Board for approval. The annual plan is due in November 2024 . The annual budget is adopted in January 2025. For planning and development of fiscal year 2025 budget, assess revenue opportunities, recommend TBID annual report to November board meeting, looking for no more than three board member.

Motion: Aaron Wright moved to adopt of the resolution to create an ad hoc 2025 Budget committee with the appoint of no more than three board of directors

Second: Tamba Sellu

Vote: 4 - 0 - 1

3.3. [Destination Management Accreditation Program \("DMAP"\)](#) (Nichole Farley)

Application for Explore Butte County DMAP accreditation. To become accredited, a destination organization must demonstrate compliance with more than 100 performance standards. The DMAP accreditation program includes the adoption of an agreement, which all organizations receiving zone micro-marketing funding and sponsorship funding from EBC will be required to sign.

Recommendation: Approve all policies and procedures to apply for the DMAP accreditation program before September 30. Adoption of these policies and procedures will supersede any policies and procedures adopted previously by the EBC Board of Directors.

Nichole: This will guide us in applying for the accreditation, if it's the right path we are on or if we will be approved. Application is due October 1st,2024. With the adoption of these policies and procedures to supersede any previous policies and procedures.

Discussion:

Melissa Schuster: Thank you for the work you have done on this, it gives me a sense of confidence that we have an organization that is heading in the right direction with best practices.

Aaron Wright: Since it is so structured it might be difficult for certain partners to stomach it but it's the right direction we need to go.

Tamba Sellu: I like there is a legal component to the third party agreements.

Nichole Farley: This will help with our vendors, on a quarterly basis and auditing process.

Aaron Wright: Increase in staff time to implement new programs, there will be increased costs to a more formalized structure.

Motion: Melissa Schuster moved to Approve all policies and procedures to apply for the DMAP accreditation program before September 30. Adoption of these policies and procedures will supersede any policies and procedures adopted previously by the EBC Board of Directors.

Second: Aaron Wright

Vote 4 - 0 - 1

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

4.1. DOWNTOWN CHICO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION - FUNDING REQUEST (Nichole Farley/Tamba Sellu)

Request from the Downtown Chico Business Association for funding of annual events. The Chico Zone Micro-Marketing Committee approved funding of \$9,500 contingent on an audit of 2024 fiscal year in 2025.

EBC has only received sponsorship recognition for the Thursday Night Market and missed opportunities for community recognition at various signature events in 2024.

Recommendation: Approve a grant/sponsorship of \$5,000 for the 2024 Thursday Night Markets and signature events in December.

Nichole: Recommendation for 5,000 for the TNM sponsorship and the remaining 2,500 can use it for signature events in October or december. This will waive the condition of the audit that the Chico Zone Committee approved in June.

Tamba: There was a point raised about having them get the funds that they would do an audit for 2025. Greg Scot, he said they work on their policies and their funding.

Public Comment:

Audrey Taylor: Representation of DCBA, The executive committee

wanted to prepare research on an audit and reached out to accountants. All the responses they all said, any non-profit of 750,000 does not need to do an audit, if they were it would range from 15,000-20,000 to conduct. Decided they would not want to do an audit. January 2024, each event had a budget outlined at this meeting. There was no vote but it was assumed it passed. We want to be transparent about our fiduciary responsibilities and with our partners.

Discussion:

Kate: If you are moving forward with this, how do they pay for the audit, such as non-profits? Is it possible to adopt a sliding scale, that is based on percentage.

Nichole: It does allow us to waive some of the conditional requirements.
Aaron: TNM, and upcoming events be approved but this needs to be a deeper conversation.

Motion: Aaron Wright moved to approve grant sponsorship of 5,000 and EBC staff will put an item on the November Agenda to review a policy recommendation for exemptions within Section 3. Conditions Precedent to Partnership of the Partnership Agreement for grants under a specific funding limit.

Second: Megan Gaddis

Vote: 3 - 0 - 2

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

5.1. MARKETING UPDATE (Ashley Baer)

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

A Marketing update was presented by Ashley Baer. In May, talked about brand promise following sentiment services, the promise is the driving force in all brand actions. Based on survey results, we created the promise which will lead our marketing efforts.

Agency Updates - Visit California co-op with Expedia, Facebook Ads, and Digital Out of Home in the Bay Area all created by Madden Media.
Social Highlights - Instagram passed 30,000 followers, upcoming influencer visits will occur first week of October and mid-November. Anticipates money going less far due to election season, will be costlier for ads

5.2. TRAVEL CHICO UPDATE (Alaina Macarthy)

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

In August, social media engagement continued to thrive, especially on Instagram, where many users reposted stories and sent direct messages. We updated the Events highlight weekly and published 298 total social media posts, bringing the year-to-date total to 2,000. Our follower base grew by 770 in August, reaching 6,639 followers year-to-date. The top-performing Facebook posts for August were related to the Chico History Museum, Sycamore Pool, and the Wednesday Farmers Market, while on Instagram, top posts featured Lovebird Coffee & CSU Chico Campus Art, Sycamore Pool, and The Madison Bear Garden. For October, we are shifting our focus to highlight outdoor beauty and the arts.

On the website front, August saw 741 new users, bringing total users for the year to 5,514. The top landing pages included Silver Dollar Fair, Gold Cup Race (August 18th), Friday Night Concerts, and Seasonal Activities in Chico. Notably, 56% of website views came from organic searches, demonstrating strong visibility in search engine results.

In terms of general updates, we are designing a Downtown Public Art Walking Map in collaboration with local artist Lauren Meightry, set for completion by the end of the year. We've installed new window clings at W 2nd & Broadway, and our Chico road biking map, created with artist David Selkirk from Upper Park Clothing, is printed and ready for distribution. Additionally, we'll have an ad in the Fall Guide edition of the Chico Enterprise Record. Lastly, the Travel Chico Adventure Guide is printed and circulating, thanks to Ashley's efforts. Recent attendance at the 2024 OneWest Tourism Education Conference and CalTravel Summit provided valuable insights into Fall travel trends, leadership, and best practices for DMO collaborations.

5.3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS UPDATE (Cameo Calderon)

Update on the community relations efforts in Butte County.

Year-to-date, we have conducted 116 lodging visits, attended 33 community meetings, and participated in 17 events. We've also attended four advocacy conferences, including the CA Rural Exchange meeting, the OneWest Education Summit, and the CalTravel Summit. One key outcome of CalTravel lobbying efforts is the continuation of Clear Lanes and TSA Precheck, while the fate of the Entertainment Zones Bill remains TBD, pending jurisdictional approval if passed.

In August, we welcomed 2,473 new web users, received 491 event submissions year-to-date, and now have 161 registered users. The top web searches for August included "country fest," "county fair," "gravel grind," and "destruction derby." On social media, we gained 118 new

followers and posted 224 times during the month.

In terms of the RIPE platform, we've secured 41 bookings year-to-date and created three new landing pages focused on influencers, Chico State, and Oktoberfest. A special feature on the Wildflower Century partnership and its landing page has also gone live. These RIPE landing pages have been operational and in use since January.

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 brought Butte County Business Competence Survey
Megan Gaddis says Chico Country Fest was canceled due to lack of tickets bought

Kate Pinsonneault asks all to join the Art & Wine Walk in October

7. ADJOURNMENT

1:29PM Adjournment.