

Minutes

Travel Federation of Iowa Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, August 17, 2009

Attending: Kirk Brandenberger, Carrie Koelker, Kim Burger, Pete Malmberg, Kristie Wetjen, Tom Kuhlman, Dee Polak, Michele Walker, Ann Vogelbacher, Nancy Landess, and Craig Patterson.

Attending by phone: Kathy Dirks and Shirley Phillips

Absent: Julie Allesee, Catherine Bergman and Linda Bacon

- 1. Call to Order:** President Pete Malmberg called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.
- 2. Approval of minutes:** It was moved and seconded (Kuhlman/Wetjen) to approve the July minutes as distributed. CARRIED.
- 3. Treasurer's Report:** Tom Kuhlman presented the budget. He was able to balance the budget but providing some additional income for the legislative showcase line item. A current balance sheet was distributed to board members. It was moved and seconded (Dirks/Brandenberger) to approve the budget as distributed. CARRIED.

4. Committee Reports:

Issues Survey: [Committee members Kristie Wetjen, Catherine Bergman and Amy Campbell.](#) Wetjen reported the committee did not meet formally but she looked through the survey information and found the most combined votes representing 1, 2 and 3's included funding for the tourism office, the school start date, and supporting funding for historic & cultural districts, trails, CAT/RECAT. It was moved and seconded (Walker/Kuhlman) to select the tourism office funding and school start date as the two priority issues for the coming year with a support statement to be developed for funding of historic and cultural districts, trails and CAT/RECAT.

Wetjen will work on the wording of the priority and support issues and will email when available. Board members discussed leading into these with development terminology such work force development, quality of life, return on investment, etc. may be better received by legislators as compared to previous approaches.

Board members felt it is not realistic to continue to ask for an increase to the tourism budget due to the economic crisis and likelihood of budget cuts. Instead board members agreed the focus should be on: 1) informing legislators tourism is a revenue generating industry with immediate results, 2) the importance of keeping your sales force and marketing efforts strong during an economic downturn, 3) attempting to gather additional statistics for the amount tourism contributes through SILO and other taxes throughout the state, and 4) obtaining numbers from the Tourism Office on the results of the television advertising campaign and the return on investment on advertising, etc.

Board members agreed part of the message should include how the Tourism Office does a great job considering their limited budget.

TFI Program at Tourism Conference: [Committee members Shirley Phillips, Michele Walker and Carrie Koelker](#). Phillips was selected to chair this committee and will report to Malmberg as plans develop. TFI has approximately 20 minutes for the program so not a lot of time is available.

Board members discussed possible gift items for conference attendees during the program but decided to save on the budget and not do a gift item this year.

Possible incentives for district leader sign up were discussed but decided not to pursue these for district leader recruitment. Something may be developed to recognize district leader usage of Voter Voice, etc. and awarded at Unity Day instead.

Results from the online survey indicated there is confusion about what the district leader program. The other concern is many district leaders responding to the online survey indicated they are no longer interested in serving as a district leader. Ideas to tweak the program were discussed including providing a job description (Kim Burger has a copy of a previous description), and clearer expectations of what is involved and why serving as a district leader is important. The goal remains to keep all 50 senate districts covered but there is a need to make sure potential district leaders feel welcome, recognized for their efforts and most importantly trained to serve as a district leader. Some confusion also seems to exist about the number of leaders needed per district. It was decided to use the terminology that a “minimum” of two leaders are needed per district. Some industry representatives feel they don’t have to participate if one or two names are already listed for their district.

As a follow up to the discussion Kim Burger and Kristie Wetjen reported they attended a meeting with the DMO/CEO group recently. This group includes directors of convention & visitors bureaus, chambers and other destination marketing organizations. The group has requested a meeting with the TFI board. It was determined scheduling this with the next regular TFI board meeting on Monday, September 28 would work best. The TFI board will meet at 11:00 AM for the TFI board meeting. The DMO/CEO Group will meet with the TFI board starting at 1:00 PM with the room available until 3:00 PM if needed. Burger and Wetjen will develop an agenda for the DMO/CEO – TFI Meeting and distribute to TFI board members in advance.

Board Orientation & Bylaws Review: [Committee members Shirley Phillips, Kirk Brandenburger and Kim Burger](#). The committee will report at a future meeting.

Fact Book Development: [Committee members Carrie Koelker, Michele Walker, Ann Vogelbacher and Kathy Dirks](#). [Dee Polak and Kim Burger](#) volunteered to join this committee as well. The possibility of revamping the fact booklet was discussed with the committee to develop ideas later. A “how to” guide or supplement may be needed for industry members to help explain how the fact booklets can be used. Statistics, charts,

etc. are needed as quickly as possible to allow sufficient time to design and print the booklet for distribution at the Iowa Tourism Conference. Approximately \$2,000 is budgeted for the fact booklets with the goal of printing 3,000 copies. Malmberg will prepare a letter for the beginning of the fact booklet.

Legislative Showcase Luncheon & Program: [Committee members Ann Vogelbacher and Carrie Koelker](#). Vogelbacher reported a bid will be sent soon. Ideally a location for the luncheon will be confirmed in time to include this information on the booth registration information that will be distributed at the tourism conference.

Legislative Showcase Organization: [Committee members Kathy Dirks, Carrie Koelker, Michele Walker and Ann Vogelbacher](#). Dirks reported the facility arrangements are secured, the contract with Freeman Decorating allows for a \$1 increase per booth price and booth registration materials will be developed and available at the tourism conference. Booth registration fees will remain at \$150 for region members and \$300 for nonmembers. Registration for the legislative luncheon is a separate fee but is listed on the booth registration materials.

TFI Booth/Exhibit for the Tourism Conference & Showcase: [Committee members Kristie Wetjen and Kirk Brandenburger](#). A schedule for staffing the TFI booth during the tourism conference will be developed. Wetjen and Brandenburger will assign times to TFI board members and email out to the board. Board members are responsible for switching with another board member if their assigned time doesn't work for them.

District Leader Coordination: [Committee members Catherine Bergman and Julie Allesee](#). Vogelbacher reported Catherine Bergman agreed to assist with the district leader program with Julie Allesee to assist as well.

5. Old Business:

(a) FY 2010 Slate of Officers. Michele Walker reported Shirley Phillips has agreed to serve as a TFI officer on behalf of WITR. Phillips served as an officer previously. It was moved and seconded (Koelker/Brandenburger) to approve the following slate of officers for FY 2010. CARRIED.

President – Pete Malmberg (CITR)
President Elect – Kristie Wetjen (EITA)
Vice President – Shirley Phillips (WITR)
Treasurer – Tom Kuhlman (WITR)
Secretary – Ann Vogelbacher (CITR)

Officer positions are for one year with the exception of treasurer with Kuhlman serving as treasurer on a continuing basis. The secretary position rotates between the region directors. Ideally each region is represented through the president, president elect and vice president positions.

(b) Bylaws. Tabled until the bylaws committee meets.

(c) Native Distilleries. Patterson emailed a list of dates and locations of public forums regarding an issue with native distilleries not being able to sell their products on site. There are currently two operations in Iowa impacted by the law - Templeton Rye and Cedar Ridge. There is a new board chair for the liquor board and Patterson indicated it would be helpful to have TFI board members attend the forums if possible. Patterson agreed to email talking points to the board as these would be helpful for those able to attend any of the forums.

6. District Leaders Report. none given.

7. Iowa Tourism Office Report: Nancy Landess reported

The Tourism Office is exhibiting at the Iowa State Fair through August 23. The booth is staffed daily from 9 to 9. Choice Hotels is again sponsoring \$150 gift cards with a winner selected each day of the fair. Registrations for the gift cards are accepted in the fair booth and also online at traveliowa.com

The Lt. Governor's tour has paused during the fair but a Passport Program is being promoted at the Governor's booth at the Iowa State Fair. Two more trips are scheduled to take place before the tour wraps up in September. The Lt. Governor has visited 53 of the 67 communities on the tour so far.

Online registration continues for the Iowa Tourism Conference with 123 registrations confirmed at this time but more are expected. September 1 is the date where the conference registration fee increases. The room block at Meskwaki is filling and an overflow hotel may be needed.

The deadline for applying to be designated as a Sports Authority District was August 12. Convention & visitors bureaus are the only eligible applicants and the review process will begin after the state fair. Up to ten CVB's will be designated with the funding of \$500,000 to be distributed equally.

TIA recently announced the ranking of state tourism office budgets. For FY 09 Iowa ranked 43rd. Iowa's budget of \$4.9 million was less than all surrounding states. Iowa has even fallen behind Nebraska and Kansas. The Midwest regional average with Illinois removed was \$10.5 million in FY 09.

Catherine Bergman, Kathy Dirks and Julie Allesee will serve as judges for the nominations received for Legislative Friend of Tourism to be presented at the tourism conference.

A facilitator is needed for the TFI general session at the tourism conference on Thursday morning at 8:30 AM and the 10:30 break out session. Stephanie Vance is the speaker for both sessions. Kristie Wetjen agreed to introduce Vance and facilitate these sessions as needed. The Tourism Office will provide further details to Wetjen in advance of the conference.

8. Lobbyist Report: Craig Patterson reported:

Both Amy and Craig plan to attend the tourism conference but will need to leave Thursday after the general session due to a commitment with the Library Association conference but they will return to the conference later.

Amy and Craig will be meeting with Brian Johnson, a lobbyist with the state fair to discuss school start date and other strategies.

Declining revenues continue to be a concern. There is still the possibility of an across the board cut yet this fiscal year. These cuts would be passed along to all departments equally as compared to if a special session where legislators can select specific areas to cut.

9. Upcoming Meetings & Adjournment:

Monday, September 28 -- 11:00 AM, 2nd Floor Main Conference Room, IDED Offices. Followed by meeting with the DMO/CEO group from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

October – no meeting scheduled for October due to the tourism conference

Monday, November 23 – 11:00 AM Conference Call

Monday, December 21 – 11:00 AM Conference Call

Monday, January 25 – 11:00 AM Conference Call

Monday, February 22 – 11:00 AM Conference Call

March -- No meeting was scheduled for March

Thursday, April 29 – Evening before Iowa Tourism Unity Day. Time & location to be determined.

Monday, May 24 – 11:00 AM, Location to be determined

Monday, June 28 – 11:00 AM, Location to be determined

It was moved and seconded (Wetjen/Walker) to adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Vogelbacher, Secretary 2009-2010