

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Grouse Mountain Lodge: Whitefish, MT
October 25, 2015**

Members Present

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Karen Baker
- Tony Brown
- Robert Carette
- Carol Eichler
- Tim Giesler
- Trevor Haar
- Sandra Johnson-Thares
- Maclaren Latta - via phone
- Paula Ruark
- Dax Schieffer
- Michelle Skinner
- Matt Sease
- Steve Wahrlich
- Joe Wilson

Members Absent

- Bryce Baker
- Jeri Duran
- Blair Hope
- Alex Tyson
- Amber Wood-Jensen

Others Present

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

Call to Order and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Chair Paula Ruark at 3:00pm. Introductions were made.

Lobby Lights Presentation

Mark Samar from Lobby Lights gave us an online presentation about his wage comparison survey company. This program helps associations to connect members to wage and compensation data.

Agendas / Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved to accept the minutes of the September 16, 2015 Board of Directors meeting. Motion was seconded and approved.

Financial Reports (Attached)

Stuart presented highlights of the actual expenditures versus approved budget and reviewed income and expenses versus the previous year.

He noted that convention trade show registration is down, but participant registration seems to be about the same as last year. He also noted that Lodging dues are up due to the fact that we have more members compared to this time last year as well as construction and discount rate members from last year are now paying full dues.

Motion: It was moved to accept the financial report. Motion seconded and approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive/Budget – Paula Ruark, Matt Sease & Stuart Doggett

Stuart reviewed the year-end compilation for MLHA. He noted it is also included in the membership meeting agenda packet.

Motion: It was moved to accept the year-end compilation. Motion seconded and approved.

Membership / Non Dues – Matt Sease, Stuart Doggett

Matt thanked everyone for getting the word out about MLHA membership, but noted more work needs to be done. He reviewed the unpaid list, mentioning that several of the properties have recently sold.

The Minimal Essential Coverage plans offered by PayneWest and Leavitt Group were briefly discussed and Stuart recommended that MLHA send out an RFP to both companies so the group can better compare the programs and make a decision about which one to endorse. The RFPs deadline will be November 4th. Sandy

suggested we let the membership know we are pursuing this benefit. Steve suggested we also ask both companies what they might need from us to make the benefit successful.

The Lobby Lights presentation was discussed and how it might be useful to MLHA. Stuart will let them know we are interested, but with only 3-4 localities at first.

Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Steve introduced the new Voices of Montana Tourism Director, Dax Schieffer. Dax gave a brief summary on how his first week has gone. He has met with the committees but wanted everyone to know he's still in a listening process. He stressed three initial objectives:

1. Work with existing funding partners.
2. Create structure of 501-c and get this moving quickly.
3. Work on finding out all the other areas that benefit from tourism and try to get them on board.

The proposed, new IRC rules were discussed and how DPHHS is trying to get Montana more in line with the International rules.

Steve talked about the proposed sub-committee with the Department of Revenue – they have yet to meet with Gene Walborn, the Deputy of Labor. The issues are still there and Steve proposed we invite them to our retreat in Bozeman. If they are not able to attend, a conference call option will be offered.

AH&LA, Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Our partner agreement with AH&LA is up at the first of the year. The new one is very similar to last year's. The only difference is the addendum: *In cases where the independent properties choose to be a member of AH&LA but not a member of the state association AH&LA will still pay the PSA \$1 per room when the PSA choose to bill the independent.* Stuart recommended we continue our endorsement with AH&LA.

Motion: It was moved to accept the new agreement with AH&LA as a partner state. Motion seconded and approved.

Legislative software update: Steve informed everyone about the very useful, personalized contact tool AH&LA uses to have members contact legislators. Stuart noted he contacted AH&LA to see if we could have access to this tool during our legislative sessions. They let Stuart know that we could send them our messages and they would send them for us as they have access to the Montana Legislators.

Stuart informed everyone that AH&LA is continuing to bring media attention to entities that are employing deceptive practices to trick customers into thinking they are booking directly with a hotel.

Sales Council, Carol Eichler

Carol let us know that 20 people participated in the Sales & Marketing retreat in June in Big Sky. Six to seven people joined the Sales & Marketing council by coming to the retreat through a special registration rate, which will most likely be used again at the next retreat. The elections for both president and vice president of the Sales & Marketing council will be held this year.

Convention / Education – Michelle Skinner, Charlotte Lauerman

Michelle reviewed the conference agenda and conference packets were handed out to all those in attendance. Mentoring assignments for first time members were reviewed as well as those board members introducing speakers.

Stuart reviewed the membership meeting agenda. Scott and Tony were appointed to do this year's resolutions.

Other

Paula talked about our upcoming retreat in Bozeman December 3-4 with moderator Marc Richardson. We'll meet from 4-6pm on Thursday and 8:30-2pm on Friday.

Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be at on February 17, 2016 in Helena. Meeting Adjourned at 5:30pm.