

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Yogo Inn: Lewistown, MT
May 21, 2015**

Members Present

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Karen Baker
- Tony Brown
- Robert Carette
- Carol Eichler
- Tim Giesler
- Sandra Johnson-Thares
- Andy Sabatini
- Matt Sease
- Michelle Skinner
- Alex Tyson
- Steve Wahrlich

Members Absent

- Bryce Baker
- Jeri Duran
- Mike Garcia
- Trevor Haar
- Blair Hope
- Maclaren Latta
- Paula Ruark
- Joe Wilson
- Amber Wood-Jensen

Others Present

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

Call to Order and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Steve Wahrlich at 2:20pm. Introductions were made.

Agendas / Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved to accept the minutes of the January 7, 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 MLHA is projected to show a loss on the cash side of the budget this fiscal year; which is typical during a legislative year.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Stuart shared and reviewed the 2015/2016 proposed budget.

Motion: It was moved to accept the 2015/2016 budget as presented. Motion seconded and approved.

Membership / Non Dues – Matt Sease, Stuart Doggett

Matt noted that the Lodging membership is at 174 compared to 167 a year ago; so we did reach our retention goal. The membership recruitment person hired is no longer with us and there is no plan to pursue another person at this time.

Matt said we will continue with the \$200 construction rate for properties that have opened within a year of being built. Robert will work on another letter directed at smaller and seasonal properties. To try and increase membership, we will offer a 20% discount and one free convention registration to new members. Matt also suggested we show value of MLHA membership: updated testimonials will be added to the website and we're working to add a new medical insurance benefit with the Leavitt Group.

The top prospects list was reviewed – several properties were taken off the list and assignments were made to contact the remaining properties. All were encouraged to contact non-member properties in their areas.

Matt also mentioned looking into working with corporate and chain properties to see what we can do to encourage them to have all their properties become members. Presently, some may only have a few as members, but own other properties.

Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Stuart reviewed the bills on the Legislative tracking list and thanked the Legislative Committee and others who took the time to come to Helena to testify during the active 2015 session.

Members discussed the reorganization efforts at the Montana Department of Commerce. Members expressed concerns about the lack of information on how it will affect the Office of Tourism and it was agreed to pursue and request information from leaders at the Department of Commerce.

AH&LA, Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Steve talked about the Legislative Action Summit and their focus on workforce. Of special interest at the summit: extreme wage initiatives, ACA, technology and distribution, short term rental market, OTAs, J1s and H2Bs program – which we wrote a letter to all Montana congressmen and all support.

Convention / Education – Michelle Skinner, Charlotte Lauerman

Michelle noted that the committee went over last year's agenda and potential speakers. Brad Ludden will be the Keynote and requires only a donation to his non-profit First Descents. As the convention planning proceeds, we will determine the amount we will give.

The convention will be sports themed and vendors will be encouraged to give away sports themed prizes and have sports themed games at their booths.

A sponsorship idea Michelle mentioned is to have "food stations" with a sponsor for each station. Facebook will be used to promote the convention with properties posting pictures of staff to Facebook to be entered in a drawing for a free convention registration.

The MLHA scholarship may be used for free registration for student(s) in hospitality at FVCC, Browning or Dillon. Karen will check on if a hospitality program exists in those schools and possibly have instructors recommend deserving students. Within the \$500 scholarship budget, two free registrations could be given away, or possibly one with lodging included.

Hospitality and Tourism Alliance, Maclaren Latta, Alex Tyson

Alex noted the success of the Governor's Conference and the exposure of the Hospitality and Tourism Alliance during the break-out. The intent was to show non-lodging partners how they are affected by tourism. She noted good dialog was sparked.

Sales Council, Carol Eichler

Carol talked about the upcoming Sales & Marketing Retreat and the two good speakers scheduled. She reviewed the agenda and noted 14 are registered so far but she is working on getting more to attend. Carol is trying to recruit new members by offering discount memberships with retreat cost.

Other

Stuart reviewed his proposed, new contract with the group.

Motion: It was moved to accept Stuart's proposal and fee increase by his management company with the discussed contract items to be reviewed at the next Board Meeting. Motion seconded and approved.

Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be Wednesday, September 16th in Bozeman – location determined later. Meeting Adjourned at 4:06pm.