

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Radisson Inn - Helena
June 16, 2016**

Members Present

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Bryce Baker
- Karen Baker
- Robert Carette
- Valerie Edwards
- Greg Elliot
- Tim Giesler
- Paula Ruark
- Dax Schieffer
- Jeff Schoenhard – via phone
- Matt Sease
- Betty Stone
- Jim Tucker
- Steve Wahrlich
- Tina Wiser

Members Absent

- Bill McGladery
- Trevor Haar
- Joe Wilson

Others Present

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

Call to Order and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Wahrlich at 2:40pm.

Agendas / Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved to accept the minutes of the February 17, 2016 Board of Directors meeting. Motion was seconded and approved.

Financial Reports (Attached)

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

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive/Budget – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Stuart went over the proposed 2016/2017 budget (attached).

Motion: It was moved to accept the 2016/2017 budget. Motion seconded and approved.

Membership / Non Dues – Matt Sease, Charlotte Lauerman

Matt noted that we are about a half a year into our goals to increase membership and that we have 11 new members since last year; but we are 17 behind the year before. Sales & Marketing Council has had a 15-member increase, yet we lost 5 Allied members.

To meet the proposed goals in the next 2 ½ years, Matt noted that we need 165 new Lodging members, 60 new Sales & Marketing members and 60 new Allied members. Matt reminded everyone to do their property visits and calls as promised: meet personally with 3 current MLHA members, 3 current Allied members and 3 prospective members in each of the next 2 quarters

Matt proposed a revamp of the membership renewal letter. Valerie has a good template that we will follow: the MLHA letters will be used to grab attention: M for Montana, L for lodging, etc. A new Allied membership renewal letter will also be created.

Some changes were proposed for the Sales & Marketing council:

1. Allied and Lodging members will be invited to participate in the annual Sales & Marketing retreat.

2. Abolish Sales & Marketing dues, but add \$100 to each retreat registration.

The board was concerned about dropping Sales & Marketing membership fees and proposed that Sales & Marketing members that attend the annual Convention will receive half of their Sales & Marketing membership dues back as a discount on the convention registration fee (\$62.50).

Matt proposed we continue the \$200 new construction rate. He'll also be sending emails to all board members to find out how they are doing on following up on the membership goal assignments.

Matt would also like to try and get nearby, local state and provincial lodging associations involved with us: invite to our convention, visit about their situations, etc. Stuart will make these connections.

Motion: It was moved to open the Sales & Marketing Retreat to all MLHA members and offer a 50% discount off Sales & Marketing dues (\$62.50) for those Sales & Marketing members that register for the convention. Motion was seconded and approved.

Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Stuart said he is keeping an eye on HJR27 – Statutory Resolution as the 4% lodging tax falls under this resolution. During meetings, Stuart noted that so far they have just come up with a guide on what statutory resolutions are to give new legislators and staff and looks to be more educational than anything; but he will still watch.

Steve commented on the small meeting with Greg Gianforte and said it went well but noted Gianforte seemed tourism neutral whereas Bullock seems pro-tourism. Both candidates have been invited to the annual convention and both have accepted.

Voices of Montana Tourism Update: Dax is planning eight business education roundtables (last year they were called legislative roundtables) directed at business leaders who benefit directly and indirectly from tourism. Policy makers and press will also be invited to the roundtables. Dax also noted that the Montana Restaurant Association is coming on board to participate.

Dax asked all to make sure the following, proposed dates didn't conflict with any major events:

September 14: Glasgow
September 15: Great Falls
September 19: Red Lodge
September 20: Butte
September 30: Helena
October 6: Kalispell
October 7: Missoula
October 11: Billings
October 27: Bozeman

The Department of Commerce has been invited and welcomed to be an audience participant.

Steve recapped the Legislative goals:

1. Started dialog with the Department of Commerce.
2. Haven't yet started dialog with the Department of Labor, but have ideas.
3. Dialog started with the Department of Revenue and need to continue this dialog.

Stuart brought up the Montana Infrastructure Coalition that was started by a group frustrated with the bonding bills the legislature has proposed in the past. There has been a lot of business interest and Stuart mentioned it would be good for MLHA to be an involved, non-voting participant and proposes MLHA donates \$500.

Motion: It was moved to donate \$500 to the Montana Infrastructure Coalition. Motion was seconded and approved.

Convention / Education – Karen Baker, Charlotte Lauerman

Karen let the board know that we've made a few changes to the agenda:

The Healthcare and Workers COMP sessions and the Going Green and Being Energy Efficient at Your Property sessions have been combined to make room for a Tuesday afternoon session for a free AH&LA speaker.

The J1 session has been renamed to Job Recruitment and J1 session. Karen will send out the AH&LA list of speakers to the committee so one can be selected.

Steve noted that it might be beneficial to have the membership vote for new board members Tuesday afternoon or online so we get more participation. Most people leave and do not attend the membership meeting Wednesday morning.

AH&LA, Steve Wahrlich

Steve attended the Legislative Action Summit in Washington DC mid-May. There were four areas of concern brought up:

1. Online booking scams: more and more entities are creating bogus websites posing as real hotel reservation sites that will scam users for money and make them think they are booking a hotel room. Steve Daines was asked to sponsor a bill to help with this issue.
2. Short-term booking rentals like AirB&B: most of these properties are not collecting and paying the appropriate lodging taxes.
3. Overtime rules: looking at why it is not indexed. For example, \$47,000 in Montana is a lot different than \$47,000 in New York. Steve talked to a representative from Tester's office about these concerns and concerns about who might be exempt.
4. Drive by lawsuits: there are individuals that make a living off ADA lawsuits. Steve noted they'd like to implement a 90 day "fix it" period that allows business to fix the ADA (many minor) infractions before a lawsuit can be filed.

Steven highly encouraged board participation in the AH&LA Hotel PAC via participation and personal donations.

Sales Council, Valerie Edwards

Valerie noted the council had their retreat last week at Chico Hot Springs with 24 people registered. She received very positive feedback after the meeting. In October, at convention, they will vote in a new vice-president and request bids for next retreat location after convention.

She mentioned the council talked about bringing back the "Mentor Program" where new Sales and Marketing members can reach out to veteran Sales & Marketing professionals. Audi and Valerie will be sending out an email to see who is interesting in becoming a mentor and will then share that list with any new Sales & Marketing people.

Other

Stuart mentioned the Soroptimist Human Trafficking awareness program. They hope to have lodging properties discreetly post signs on how to recognize the signs of human trafficking. Steve asked Stuart if MLHA could possibly write a letter from MLHA encouraging members to participate and then mail or email to the membership with the sign. Sign will also be posted to the MLHA website.

Bill McGladery asked Stuart to bring up "Train the Trainer" training and how he'd like to see this implemented again.

Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be September 15 in Great Falls. Meeting Adjourned at 4:27pm.