

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Hotel Arvon – Great Falls
September 15, 2016**

Members Present

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Bryce Baker
- Karen Baker
- Valerie Edwards
- Tim Giesler
- Trevor Haar
- Paula Ruark – via phone
- Dax Schieffer
- Matt Sease
- Jim Tucker
- Steve Wahrlich
- Joe Wilson
- Tina Wiser

Members Absent

- Robert Carette
- Greg Elliot
- Bill McGladery
- Jeff Schoenhard
- Betty Stone

Others Present

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

Call to Order and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Wahrlich at 12:42pm.

Agendas / Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved to accept the minutes of the June 16, 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.

Steve mentioned during the financial reports that Heartland Payment Systems has not been as responsive to MLHA in recent years. He wanted to know what board members were using for credit card processing. Stuart will talk to Angela Ihry with Heartland Payment Systems to express concerns and the issue will be revisited at the January board meeting.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive/Budget – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Steve let everyone know that at our next board meeting in January, the board will attempt to visit with representatives from the Department of Labor, the Department of Revenue and/or the Department of Commerce on the first afternoon. Questions will be ready before hand to talk about our relationships with these departments and questions that come up during tax audits. The board meeting will take place the next day.

Membership / Non Dues – Matt Sease

Matt noted that our membership numbers are up in all categories, but we have around 40 Lodging members that have not renewed yet this year. Matt discussed the top prospects list and that getting those properties to join comes down to board members making personal contact with these properties in their regions.

Every Friday Matt will start sending out emails or making calls to the board to remind them of their duties and get update on who they have talked to. He reminded the board to visit with three current lodging members, three current allied members, three prospective lodging members and three prospective allied members. He noted it might be useful to create a top projects allied membership list like we do for lodging.

Matt and the committee proposed that we start offering incentives for current MLHA members that recruit new members. We will request gift cards from current member properties and give one of these gift cards plus 50% off 2017 convention registration to any current member that recruits a new lodging or allied member. Board members do not qualify and Matt will make this announcement at the 2016 convention. After this year's convention, "Referred by" will be included on all applications for better follow-up information as well as incentive tracking. The convention evaluation will also now include a questions asking participants if they met any new vendors at the trade show that they will use/follow up with.

In addition, to better understand how much membership uses our allied members, Charlotte will send out a survey to the board asking which allied members board members use and how much.

To boost membership, Matt expressed that it might be useful to hire a retired hotel professional to recruit. We will revisit this option in January.

It was also proposed that during board meetings, board members go out in pairs to solicit membership in the town where the board meeting is being held. Again, we will revisit in January.

To end, Matt requested the board go back to the tradition of meeting over two days and including a social activity.

Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett

Steve let us know that Senator Daines will be sponsoring a bill concerning Online Booking Scams. Several board members meet with three of his staff members in Bozeman three weeks ago to discuss this issue.

Stuart updated the board on the upcoming Legislative session. He has been attending interim meetings with the Finance Committee and paying attention to changes to the 4% bed tax – nothing has been noted, but there is one more meeting before the session begins so he will know for sure at that time. Stuart reviewed the Legislative Bill Tracking list and has currently flagged nine bills.

Steve confirmed that Gianforte will be participating in the Governor Candidate's Forum at the upcoming convention – he has requested to go first and since he confirmed first, was granted that request. Bullock is a maybe, be he is hopeful he will be there. Four questions will be given to the candidates a couple weeks before the forum and ideas were discussed.

Jim expressed that our questions need to prompt positive tourism answers and not responses that our members don't want to hear so that needs to be considered when creating final questions.

Steve recapped the Legislative goals:

1. Continue dialog with governor candidates and use candidate forum at convention to generate discussion
2. Continue/encourage dialog with Department of Revenue, Department of Labor and Department of Commerce – starting with inviting them to our board meeting in January.
3. Track bills and communicate during legislative session and work with AH&LA to utilize their online tool to communicate with local legislators (noting that independent properties that do not pay AH&LA dues through MLHA will not be able to use the tool).
4. Plan a breakfast and lunch (not respectively) with both Democratic and Republican Legislators.
5. Board will be contacted by Dax if he is coming to your community to meet with any group and invite board member to participate.
6. Jim and potentially other Helena members will offer discounted room rates at Jorgenson's to those testifying during the legislative session.

Voices of Montana Tourism Update: Dax had had two of the business education roundtables – yesterday in Glasgow and today in Great Falls. They have included Legislators, legislative candidates, business leaders. MLHA and the media. They have gone very well and have generated good, community conversations. He hopes those on the board can join a future meeting and invite others they might think are interested.

It has also been proposed to do another 6-10 roundtables during off legislative years in the smaller communities.

Convention / Education – Karen Baker, Charlotte Lauerman

The convention committee did not meet during committee meetings, but briefly discussed the convention after the membership committee meeting. Charlotte requested board members contact and confirm with vendors/presenters for the peer panel discussions. They have planned a conference call to firm up last minute details for Monday, September 19th at 1pm. Charlotte will send the call in information to the entire committee.

AH&LA, Steve Wahrlich

Steve noted online booking scams legislation proposed to try to identify these fake sites.

Steve also highly encouraged board participation in the AH&LA Hotel PAC via participation and personal donations. There is no state association with 100% board donation support and Montana should strive for this to support our relationship with AH&LA.

Sales Council, Valerie Edwards

Valerie noted the council has confirmed Dave Meldahl to speak to the council at the convention. She is currently working on last minute details with one final Sales & Marketing speaker for the convention and will get the information to Charlotte.

Bids for the June retreat will go out after the convention.

Other

Stuart mentioned Train the Trainer sessions offered by Jody Smith at Flathead Valley Community College. They can be attended in person or as webinars. The board seemed interested. Karen will attend one session and report back. Valerie will also contact her to see if she can present at the Sales & Marketing Retreat next year.

Allied: Trevor expressed concern from himself and other Allied members he has talked to about their value to MLHA. He proposed there should be one or two full Allied members on the board and no alternate. He also proposed a two-year term rather than one. Matt noted this requires a change of the bylaws which can only be done at a membership meeting.

A survey will be developed that will ask Allied members how MLHA can serve them better. They will share this survey at the next board meeting.

Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be January 10-11 in Helena. Meeting Adjourned at 4:27pm.