

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Jorgenson's Inn & Suites – Helena, MT
January 11, 2017**

Members Present

- Bryce Baker
- Valerie Edwards
- Tim Giesler
- Ryan Kunz
- Paula Ruark
- Matt Sease
- Betty Stone
- Jim Tucker
- Steve Wahrlich
- Joe Wilson

Members Absent

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Karen Baker
- Rick Cabrera
- Trevor Haar
- Bill McGladery
- Dax Schieffer
- Lauri Tognetti (attended committee meetings)
- Tina Wisner

Others Present

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

Call to Order and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Wahrlich at 2:17pm.

Agendas / Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved to accept the minutes of the October 23, 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

Steve noted that Ryan and Lauri attended the first Board Orientation and each will let us know their comments.

Membership / Non-Dues – Bryce Baker, Jim Tucker

Jim let everyone know that the membership lists need to be updated. Charlotte will send out the lists (Top Prospects, Unpaid 2016/2017 dues renewal and New Construction), and all board members need to respond to all with any deletions/additions by February 1st.

The Avitus Group contract has been reviewed – Stuart confirmed it is the same as last year with the exception of a marketing fee of 2.5% on page four.

Motion: It was moved to accept the Avitus Group contract as written. Motion seconded and approved.

Stephanie Cummings with Heartland visited with the committee and asked for advice on how to better gain business from MLHA. It was in agreement that Heartland – and Allied members in general – should identify themselves as MLHA Allied members when inquiring about potential business and MLHA members (board especially) should give them the courtesy of time to listen.

We also learned that properties could bundle together as one value to save in credit card processing fees. We requested that Stephanie look into bundling MLHA members as one entity to save in these fees as a member benefit.

Jim and Bryce reminded the board about an exciting opportunity – their contact assignments! Within the next two months, each needs to contact three current lodging members, three current allied members and three potential, new lodging members. Within the following three months after that, each must do the same for a total of 18 contacts in the next five months. Ryan will work on a testimonial benefit letter that will be sent out to all current and potential members when we do our membership push in the spring.

Lastly, Jim and Bryce are working on some membership specials to specifically solicit independent properties to get them to join. They will try to get Allied Members to create additional benefits to help in this effort. They will report back at the next board meeting.

Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Matt Sease, Stuart Doggett

Stuart alerted everyone to the upcoming hearing on 1/18 at 8am on SB 75: Establish a Montana trade center in Calgary. MLHA opposes this bill that would take some of the 4% accommodations tax to establish a trade office in Calgary. He noted the Department of Tourism and film industry also oppose and we will solicit help from board and membership to testify against the bill.

Steve summarized what was heard at lunch from the legislators in attendance: infrastructure will be a large focus of this legislative session. Steve noted that as an association, we will remain neutral on infrastructure as long as it is broad based and not based on tourism dollars; unless something dramatically changes.

Convention / Education – Valerie Edwards, Tim Giesler, Charlotte Lauerman

Valerie noted that the committee went over the updated agenda. She recently visited Big Sky Resort to do a walk-through of potential meeting space and decided it would be beneficial to have the keynote in the Trade Show room. Charlotte is checking with K&J to see if this is feasible given their schedule, as vendors will have to set up earlier.

Keynote speaker possibilities were discussed with three finalists: Olympian bobsledder Johnny Quinn with a presentation on adversity (Grant with Big Sky is checking), National Director of Sales for Starwood Hotels (Jill Brewster with Element checking) and Steve Weber (Tim Geisler is checking). The committee decided \$2000 total for keynote, including travel costs.

Potential educational speaker topics discussed were: Certified Hotel Operator Test, Cold Calls & Relationship Work and Bluebuzzard Proposal presentation (Sales & Marketing), What Does Turnover Cost, Retaining Current Employees and Becoming a Preferred Employer in your Field (Mary Hampton), AH&LA free AMEX speaker, AH&LA update, best practices for posting jobs online and a Tech Trends Panel (Room Key, Orbital Shift, and Upserve/Guestfolio). Leadership training and one chance for a first impression where also discussed.

AH&LA, Steve Wahrlich

Steve was proud to announce that MLHA had 100% participation in contributions to the AH&LA PAC. As small as an association as we are, we are well recognized in Washington DC. It was a record PAC year for AH&LA and 80-85% of the people they gave money to were elected.

Stuart reviewed the 2017 AH&LA contract and did not see too many changes.

Motion: It was moved to approve the AH&LA contract as written. Motion seconded and approved.

Steve concluded by mentioning the Stars of the Industry Awards given out by AH&LA. We have never submitted anyone and should align our awards with theirs so we could nominate some of our members.

The Convention committee asked Steve if bringing an AH&LA representative back to our 2017 convention would be beneficial and he agreed.

Sales Council, Valerie Edwards

Valerie let us know that six properties bid on the 2017 Sales & Marketing Retreat, with Grouse Mountain Lodge winning the most votes by the council. She is working with Corinna (from Grouse Mountain Lodge) and Audi on speakers for the retreat that will take place June 4-6. The council has 29 Sales & Marketing members presently, but several more have committed to renew.

ISHAE Meeting Report, Stuart

Stuart thanked the board for sending him to this meeting as it was very beneficial and he learned a lot. He shared some best practice tips he learned about board applications, email, and other useful things.

Schedule by-laws subcommittee meeting

This subcommittee will be discussed at our next board meeting.

Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be May 24-25 in Helena so we can attempt to meet with the Department of Revenue, the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce. Meeting Adjourned at 3:30pm.