

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Comfort Suites Helena  
August 14, 2019**

**Members Present**

- Bryce Baker
- Karen Baker
- Valerie Edwards
- Tim Giesler
- Becky Henne
- Erica Kimble
- Shelli Mann
- Barbara Moran
- David O'Connor
- Dax Schieffer
- Matt Sease
- Jim Tucker
- Steve Wahrlich
- Joe Wilson – via phone
- Tina Wiser

**Members Absent**

- Blair Hope
- Ryan Kunz

**Others Present**

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

**Call to Order and Announcements**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matt Sease at 12:40 pm.

**Agendas / Approval of Minutes**

David O'Connor noted that in the last minutes he was listed as present and absent.

**Motion:** It was moved to accept the minutes of the May 29, 2019 Board of Directors meeting, as amended. 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.

Members discussed the Voices contribution and expenditure listing on the P & L sheet. It was agreed to add a line to the expenditure section to clarify the remittance of contributions from individual contributors.

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

***COMMITTEE & COUNCIL RELATED UPDATES***

**Executive/Budget – Matt Sease, Stuart Doggett**

Stuart discussed the Montana Infrastructure Coalition and how MLHA has been an associate member. This membership has helped us be involved in the infrastructure discussions. They have asked us to renew our membership, but Stuart noted in the coalitions materials they have a new prioritization that calls for, “capturing an “impact fee” from the recreational/tourism/business visitor that has an undeniable impact on Montana’s infrastructure but pays only a fuel tax and an intermittent resort tax to offset that impact”.

Steve noted it will benefit MLHA to renew, just to be a part of the conversation related to the new prioritization. Stuart said he would reach out to the Director, Daryl James, and note that we want to continue, but this prioritization (bullet point four) has raised some concerns with our board and we’d like some verification first.

## **Membership / Non-Dues – Matt Sease for Ryan Kunz, Stuart Doggett**

Members reviewed the highlights of the committee meeting which included reviewing the paid and unpaid lists. In addition, it was agreed that we will maintain the current promotion we're using (50% of membership and 50% off of 1 convention registration) – also leaving up to board members to offer individual discounts when having membership conversations with prospective members. It was suggested MLHA develop testimonials from existing members on why and how they find value in MLHA, plus many felt a White Board Illustration should be developed to show how members benefit from the association's effort to remove the vendor allowance quarterly cap in SB 338.

Additional membership benefits, including medical, were discussed.

The Top Prospects list was reviewed – Chateau Stage Stop Inn and Holiday Inn Express Helena should be taken off the list. The committee reviewed the unpaid list and many people have left the General Manager positions – Charlotte will update those.

To ensure we're getting invoices to the correct people, it was suggested we address second dues notices to "Accounts Payable" rather than the General Manager.

## **Legislative/PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett**

Steve talked about interim SJ 24 committee and the difficult conversations occurring. The committee agreed on 4-5 major items they want to address. They divided into smaller groups and will bring the research back to the group. A big question is should there be a different way of looking at how these dollars are governed and public / private partnerships. There are viable suggestions and concerns and MLHA has 2-3 people to speak on our suggestions. There will be a conference call on September 17th to come up with suggestions for the committee.

On January 1 2020 the lodging tax increases from 3% to 4% even if the sale occurred before January 1, 2020. Steve said there are some concerns with the lack of communication with the Department of Revenue following through and letting properties know about the additional 1%. It was agreed MLHA should do a third notice in the coming weeks to members to remind them of the further change in the tax starting January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dax gave a Voices of Montana Tourism update – he's been reminding partners about our tourism story. He's also Looking at what other states are doing with public/private partnerships and tourism.

Steve ended the committee discussed by requested \$50 from each board member for the AH&LA PAC – you can go online to donate. Last year, Montana was the first association and only one of two states whose entire board donated to the PAC.

## **Convention / Education – Tim Giesler, Charlotte Lauerman**

The committee reviewed the final agenda. Everyone will reach out to vendors not yet registered to solicit participation as well as sponsorships. In addition, the committee members will be sure to share the event information via mouth, social media and web to increase participation numbers.

Different evaluation methods were discussed. The same, emailed evaluation will be sent, but directly after the meeting ends so it is fresh in participants' minds. The committee suggested we waive the registration fee for students from the MSU Hospitality Program.

The committee is working on entertainment. We will no longer have the Governor's forum due to so many candidates, but we will invite them to the Voices of Montana Tourism lunch on Tuesday.

## **AH&LA Updates, Steve Wahrlich**

Matt, Steve as well as Shelli are headed to Washington DC to attend the AH&LA Legislative Action Summit September 9-10. Chip Rogers has taken over as Executive Director of AH&LA and that seems to be going well. Senator Daines is reintroducing the online booking scam bill. Stuart noted there is also a hotel advertising transparency act introduced by a legislator in Texas which will expose resort fees and how they're handled. Stuart said AH&LA is not in support. He will continue to follow.

**Sales Council, Erica Kimble**

Erica passed out a handout. The Sales and Marketing Council currently has 37 members with 34 being up for renewal. The renewal notice as well as the retreat RFP were sent out August 13. The 2019 retreat was held at the Cottonwood Inn and had 9 attendees. Presenters were very good and they visited some local hotels and tourist locations. Erica proposed having properties suggest an alternate date in case the selected dates do not work for most people that want to attend.

She will provide testimonials from Sales & Marketing for the new website. Charlotte is requesting testimonials from the entire board and will email a reminder.

**Other/Next Meeting/Adjourn**

Board members asked for clarification of the proposed by-law changes the board had approved for consideration by the members at the upcoming annual meeting. It was reported the changes will be distributed twice to members by mid-September to fill the 10 day notification requirement. The members can then vote in person or by proxy at the annual meeting in October to approve or not approve the proposed changes.

It was announced that the next MLHA Board Meeting will be held Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 4pm the annual convention. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:55pm.