



GPRTA MINUTES

Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association Board

March 5, 2019

Podollan Inn & Spa

In Attendance: Johnathan Clarkson, Don Whiteford, Karna Germsheid, Cyndi Corbett, Paulette Butler, Barb Shannon, Isak Skjaveland, James Leppan, Karen McGriskin, Sandi Neville, Lacy Negal for Mark Butler-Jenkins, Jessica Guimond for Sean McCallum, and Jenn Vos.

Absent: Bill Smith, Clyde Blackburn, Ed Smith

1. Johnathan called the meeting to order at 5:41 PM

2. Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Cyndi Corbett– Carried

3. Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Sandi Neville – Carried

4. Introductions – Everyone introduced themselves as we had some new alternates attending the meeting.

5. Financial Report (Treasurer) – Membership billing as been completed except for the City of Grande Prairie, we are waiting on confirmation of rate. We have billed for the VIC contract to the City of GP but are waiting for approval. Membership payments are coming in. As of January 31, 2019, we have \$133,420.79 in Accounts Receivable which is mostly membership with a few 2019 visitor guide payments. A few of the larger amounts are the City of Grande Prairie \$14,692.13 (VIC Contract), County of Grande Prairie \$67,597.43 which was received in February, DMF \$21,141.50 received in February, MD of Greenview \$11,105.85 and Nitehawk \$4,087.13. We have gained new members in January and they are Chris Kadyk – Sunlife Financial, Fore Seasons Indoor Golf Course and Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau. Unfortunately, we have lost Joey's Only as a member. As of January 31, 2019, accounts payable was \$14,760.94 which includes Q99, Big Country, Impact Print & Promo, Pitney Bowes and Receiver General.

Motion made by Paulette Butler to approve the financial report, seconded by Don Whiteford – Carried

6. GPRTA President's Report – Johnathan advised that his report will be covered by James's Ed Report.

7. Executive Director Report (period January 23-Feb.28)

Meetings/Events:

Jan.24- Growing the North meeting; Website meeting (ATIS); Flight Centre meeting

Jan.25- IAT meeting, Tour of Evergreen Park

Jan.28- Tour of Podollan, Executive Committee meeting

Jan.29- DMF meeting (Community Foundation board room)

Jan.30- GPRTA board meeting (Chamber board room)

Jan.31- Tour of Paradise Inn, GPRTA Radio Campaign meeting

Feb.1- Rotary meeting, Hitech meeting
Feb.4- Staff meeting (Centre 2000); ACT VIC application
Feb.5- Meeting with Sarah, Gord – Bear Creek Folk Festival (w/Breanna); Tenant Meeting, BIG Tuesdays (Office)
Feb.6- BSN Steering committee meeting
Feb.8- Rotary meeting, meeting with Tracey (NWC)
Feb.10-13 Growing Rural Tourism Conference; Deliver ACT VIC application
[staff also attended Edmonton RV Show Feb.6-11; Family Day w/Prairie Mall Feb.16 and Alberta Gift Show
Feb.23-26]
Feb.14- DMP Kick Off Meeting
Feb.15- Gift Show meeting; Rotary meeting, GTN booth prep
Feb.18- FAMILY DAY
Feb.19- GTN prep/help set-up/vehicle deliveries
Feb.20-21 Growing the North conference (James & Jenn attended)
Feb.22- IAT meeting, Meeting at Philip J Currie re marketing/summer season
Feb.25- Meeting with Don/Crystal re: Rotary bus tours; Meeting with Horst (Alaska Highway); Executive Board
Feb.26- Telephone meeting (NWC); Meeting with Jason (Teepee Creek Stampede) re cooperative marketing
Feb.28- DMO meeting (Travel Alberta)

News/notes:

Very busy February with staff attending 4 different trade show/conference events – GTN, Alberta Gift Show, Edmonton RV show & Growing Rural Tourism in Camrose, plus staff working with the Prairie Mall on the 16th of February for a Family Day event.

Tourism was heavily involved with the GTN with two speakers – Jon Montgomery opening things up thanks to our DMF, and Jim Barr on day 2 with his digital marketing presentation.

Two funding updates – one regarding our ACT VIC mobile (roaming) contract \$37,000 annually for two years. Our application was received and approved. There are a certain number of hours we have to fulfill each Summer month, along with some travel counselling data, to receive our funds. Not as stringent as our previous contract. Hiring of staff has commenced with an ad on Indeed, shared across our FB page too. Interviews to begin shortly. To refine this area, I have decided to create a Visitor Services Coordinator role, which means we will no longer have a separate site supervisor over the Summer or front desk supervisor. Those roles are merged into this new role. All visitor services – be it at the Centre or during roaming campaigns, will be coordinated under this new role. It will be offered to Crystal within the next few weeks officially. Sheila has also requested to slow down and return to casual hours after March 15.

We received our \$7000 VSIF grant request to purchase a portable digital display. This will enhance our visitor services options with live access to websites, maps etc. Can also be used for advertising, membership value ads etc. Expected end of April, just in time for the Summer season. Will be housed at the VIC but taken to all roaming events where wifi, electricity and cover is available.

I was accepted into the CDME scholarship program – Travel Alberta will cover 80% of the costs to get certification. First courses are in April this year.

After NWC (Richard Warring) was approved as our DMP consultant, we sent out an invite to our kick off March 15. There will be a section where we request that all stakeholders, especially board members, participate in a quick work shop on the roles and responsibilities within the tourism sector in GP and area. We have had telephone meetings and spent many hours at the Camrose Rural Tourism conference going over the fine points.

Events coming up:

March 15- DMP Kick Off (Centre 2000)
March 18- BSN Kick Off
March 19-20 Grant writing GPVSB (Jenn & James)
March 23- ATB Food Expo
March 25- Bylaw Committee meeting
March 26- Sunrise Rotary Presentation on Tourism

8. Old Business:

- a. **Grande Prairie Guide Update (Jenn)** – Guide is coming along, you will start to see proofs from me if you haven't already. For the month of February, we are at 22 hours. From December till now we are at 122 hours for the guide which includes all staff. The biggest time consumption right now is for the front desk staff as they are researching and confirming the content for our listings in the guide. Johnathan mentioned that we are tracking the hours as it was an unknown piece from previous years. At the last meeting I was asked to do a comparison from 2018 to 2019 for ads in the guide. **2019** we have 57 ads which total to \$60,204.17 and **2018** we had 53 ads for \$55,161.20. The guide will be available for the AGM on May 2, 2019.
- b. **Website update (James & Jenn)** – Coming along, this is a cooperative marketing campaign and the parts left to do is the content building and we are including the content and photos from Seekers Media. We are working on promissory notes as the deadline is fast approaching. We have seen the new layout of the website, looks great have made a few tweaks. We are aiming to have the website launched at our AGM on May 2, 2019.
- c. **Trade Show / Conference Update (Jenn)** – There is not as much happening for Tradeshows and conferences as last month. The Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum attending the SHIFT conference, we have not been informed as to who will be attending. Karen mentioned that it will either be Derek or Brittany who will be attend on the Museums behalf. The Food & Beverage Expo will be happening on March 23, 2019. Now that we have the ACT contract in place, we will be attending the Spring Show Training at the beginning of May, the Petroleum show May 16 & 17, AVIP dates TBD and Travel Alberta Industry conference at the end of October.
- d. **SkiNorth AB Update (James)** – James asked if anyone had the chance to see the videos completed by Jim Barr with Seekers Media. James played one of the videos for the board. If you would like a copy of the content, please let us know and we will share the content with you. James mention we may do another campaign in the summer for the region.
- e. **AGM Update May 2 (Jenn)** – Breanna, James and I have toured a couple of different locations, they were the Paradise Inn & Conference Centre, Evergreen Park and the Podollan Inn & Spa. After viewing the above-noted properties we have chosen to hold our AGM at the Podollan Inn & Spa. We will be sending out further details shortly. This will be an evening event.
- f. **Marketing Update (Cyndi) – February 7-10**
 - Edmonton RV Show (Edmonton Expo Centre)
 - Crystal & Breanna attended.
 - Promotion to the region with a focus on Camping.
 - All new promotional flags created were displayed during the show.
 - Over 400 information packets about our Region were dispersed.
February 16
 - Family Passport Quest with Prairie Mall
 - Partnership with Prairie Mall.

- Thank you to everyone that donated prizes.
- 132 participants.
- Great reaction from participants.
- Possibility of making it annual.

February 20 & 21

Growing the North Conference

- Booth displayed at conference with GPRTA information.
- GPRTA mention with Breanna introducing DMF speaker Jon Montgomery.
- Johnathan introduced GPRTA speaker Jim Bar.
- Great acknowledgment of tourism throughout conference.
- Jenn & James attended conference on behalf of GPRTA.

February 21

French for the Future Forum

- Francophone and French Immersion students (Grade 9 to 12). Came from our region, Peace River, Spirit River, Dawson Creek, and Falher area. Approx. 300 students.
- GPRTA was asked to be a trade show booth.
- Breanna attended and conversed with the students to promote our Region but also going into the tourism field.
- Information/promo items regarding GPRTA given out.

March 2

Maple Sugar Festival

- Johnathan and Breanna attended and manned a GPRTA booth for the event.
- Great family event, GPRTA passed out mittens for kids.
- GPRTA split partnership with DMF.
- GPRTA logo will be on ACFA website for the next year.

March 23

Food & Beverage Expo

- DMF has provided funds to sponsor the event.
- GPRTA logo on all posters for event.
- DMF committee members have covered all volunteer spots required for event.

9. New Business

- 2019 Membership form (James)** – James will email out the membership form out to all board members. We have added some value ads this year. Our Marketing brochure was given to all attendees so they can hand them out as well as our goal is that we are always growing our membership. We have throw-back Thursday, Road Trip Wednesdays happening now. Johnathan asked about the app, Jenn advised that we are currently working on the app and making changes so that we can be the ones to go and make the changes required instead of being charged an amount every time. Jenn mentioned that you will still see the eye on all the DMF pages in the Tourism Guide.
- DMP Kickoff (March 15) (James)** – Richard and Tracey from NWC attending, I will introduce them. Don will present in Johnathan's presence. Someone from the DMF and County will speak. The goal is to keep speeches short as the NWC presentation will be longer. Radio stations have been invited. There will be workshops and a networking portion at the end. If you want to share the invite with someone you know who would be interested in attending, please do so. We want as many people interested as possible as this is for the Region.
- Alto Awards (James)** – The Alto committee is looking for representatives to sit on the board. James would like to have someone from the North to be on the board and it can be anyone. James suggested that Don Whiteford would be a good candidate to be on the committee, the application is due on March 15, 2019. James will start the application and ask Don for

information as he goes. "If you are not at the table you are on the menu" We need to be at the table. We are thinking of having the DMF sponsoring an award by doing this gives us the opportunity to speak at TAIC conference.

- d. **Alberta Culture Days Grant (James)** – This application is due March 29, 2019 must be a non for profit who applies. ACFA came to us and asked if GPRTA and them can apply together. This is a 3-day event, we will require letters of support and James will send an email request to all the board members.
- e. **DI Event Calendar** - James sent an email with the DI event calendar prior to the board meeting. Lauren from the City asked if there was anything, we could use to develop economic impact? This is what Travel Alberta uses and has a contract for it which lets us use it for free. This can be shared and used for Events, Festivals and sports. This calendar is more accurate than the Steam App. Destination International also use this and are responsible for updating and making the necessary changes.

10. Round Table Discussion:

Sandi: Thanks for coming. We have been very busy, lots of tourist activity. In Edmonton all last week. Fort Mac tomorrow and then 10 days in Nova Scotia. Red Arrow is busy, and increase runs to Edmonton. Charter for Kids, changing routes, potential runs to BC. No increase in occupancy but in restaurant. Long term parking

Cyndi: Town of Beaverlodge to become a member of WASP. Wapiti Area Sinergy Partnership, they meet every Tuesday, get to know the people in your area. At Wembley March 12. Intermunicipal meeting March 14 at 7pm, all municipalities to attend. Please share these on your social media, please and thanks. March 15 Soccer registration 9am to 5pm. Town of Beaverlodge in town square. 5:30pm - 7pm. Our next board meeting will be held at Town Square from 5:30pm to 7pm.

Jessica - Thank you for lovely supper. Sean totally missed out on the meal. County connector is going very well. Family day went very well, not a great turn out due to weather. Ag society is fundraising for gym and maintenance. Skate a thon, one day kids and next day older kids. Library having Harry Potter day coming up. Daryl asked if they have received the ag society. Daryl to provide Tim's contact info to Jessica and Cyndi.

James: - Alberta Tourism Market report, I was looking at the spotlight and Banff 1 and Grande Prairie 2 in occupancy. We are way head of Jasper and some of the others.

Isak Skjaveland: Fantastic supper. From the Town of Sexsmith Chautauqua days will be the first Saturday in June.

Don: 4 positions up for election, Don, Mark, Barb & Karna. Barb & Karna are wishing to let their name stand. Don Moon would gladly put his name forward. Paulette mentioned that Joel Hollingsworth would like to put his name forward. Wendy Bosch with the DownTown Association and Karen suggested to contact Jeff Erbach to see if he would be interested in being on the board.

Daryl: County connector is up and running, people are starting to be more aware of the service and numbers are increasing. I did attend Growing Rural Tourism, but it was not very good and I don't think I would go back. The worse one I have been too. James said he supports this and for us we may look at only attending every couple of years depending on the speakers. Maybe we look at adding a second day to the Growing the North Conference.

Paulette: very busy, gearing up for kinky boots and the Food & Beverage Expo and renovations, renovations, renovations but they are coming along.

Karen: Katie from the City of GP is interested in volunteering on the board. She was with Gymnics for 11 years. For the PJCM we are still conducting interviews for ED position, we are working on second set of interviews.

Lacey: Thank you for having me. It will be Darcy Chamberlist that will be coming in as Mark Butler-Jenkins is now our Senior Director of Operating and Brand Standard Development for Pomeroy Lodging.

A list of questions from Mark:

1. What the direction of the DMF is going forward and who is the Main Contact?
2. List of all the sponsored events?
3. List of all the members are?
4. What's the budget for 2019?

James advised he is the contact and I will have to go back to the committee and see what we can release and what we cannot. Our DMF is a subcommittee of GPRTA.

Johnathan: We are done with the cold weather; the hill was closed for 18 days in February due to the extreme cold. The thing we find is as soon as Environment Canada puts the red banner on their website it's an up-hill battle for us. February has been a challenge, we have lost 2 to 3 staff due to not being able to put them into work. We had to push all our school groups into March, I am leaving at a not so good time, we are flat out with school groups mon to Friday and our regular hours on top of that. Typically, we lose on average 10% of our season to cold weather but no all at once. Luckily on social media people have been forgiving. Don Whiteford said the hill was in great condition. Our grooming staff have been keeping up. The Restaurant is going Tuesday through Sunday and going well. 1/2 million in gross revenue on the restaurant for this year which is awesome for a new venture for us anyway, not great profit but we are holding our own with staffing. Sponsors appreciate night for tomorrow night, already have 492 RSVP'd to it, which is insane, last year we had 311. Basically, open up the hill for the night for those attending as they support us throughout the year. Slush cup March 31, 2019, slush rush fun run, Ernie Sports came on board as our sponsor for our running races, this is huge for us as we have never had a Title sponsor before. Our plan is to buy a timing system, re-negotiating our contract with the City of GP for Bearpaw, we want to renew that going forward going into 3 years as of May 1. Nitehawk campground is full 58 site out of 72 are full, that have stayed the winter with us, which is great. The plan over the next five years will add an additional 83 sites from the fundraising from the Charity Golf Classic. Rotary Club of Grande Prairie gave us \$25,000 and the Friday Club gave \$25,000 to purchase a 3-lane summer tube slide, last year was a one lane. To be up and running for this summer. Our corporate and birthday parties are going well, a small group area was installed for trailers. Lots of good things happening at Nitehawk.

11. Next Meeting – April 3, 2019 at 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM Location at the Town of Beaverlodge Office

12. Motion to Adjourn Meeting: at 7:45pm: -*Paulette Butler* - **Carried**