

Washington Tourism Marketing Authority
April 23, 2020; 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Zoom meeting

Attendees:

Washington Tourism Marketing Authority (WTMA): Chair, Judy Tuohy; Vice-Chair, Anthony Anton; Secretary, Jodi Kayler; Treasurer, Vijay Patel; Donna Sbarra; Marsha Massey; Cynthia Verge; Tiffany Turner; Todd Tatum; Robb Zerr; Senator Takko; Representative Ryu

Guests: Shiloh Burgess, Clay Hill, Ron Peck, Rebecca Connelly, Becky Bogard, Diana Thibado, David Blandford, Andi Day, Mike Moe

Excused: Kris Rietmann

Absent: John Eminger

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 am.

Review of Zoom logistics

Introduction of Tracy Gunter, Department of Commerce

Officer Reports

Secretary

Jody Kayler. January minutes presented. Vijay motioned, Anthony seconded to approve minutes with no corrections. Full board approved.

Treasurer

Vijay Patel. Budget report reviewed. He will meet with the bank next week to ask if monthly charge can be waived. Lynn noted Zoom will have an associated cost.

Committee Reports

Contract Management

Donna Sbarra reported that with the pandemic, the lay of the land has completely changed. Due to these unforeseen changes and the impacts of tourism, the contract with WTA is probably going to need to be amended. The contract committee will meet and work on the scope of work.

Policies and Bylaws

Marsha Massey reported that the Policies and Bylaws need to be updated, but they will defer to next meeting.

Board Development

Cynthia reported that the Board Development is on hold for the time being.

Finance

Vijay is looking for a board member to help support the finance responsibilities.

WTA Presentation

Becky Bogard announced that David Blandford will be the full time WTA director effective May 1.

State of the industry with COVID19: David Blandford, WTA gave a report on the impacts. Some key findings are that COVID19 is nine times more impactful than 9/11. \$502B loss. Through mid-March 700,000 jobs lost, 65% hospitality, 48% population reported cancelling all travel plans for the near future. Meetings and conventions have seen significant cancellations. Dramatically affects lodging tax revenue and many other sectors locally. Many hotels are closing temporarily due to business reasons. What does responsible reopening look like? Ron Peck added airport and cruise data – significant drop. With travel restrictions nothing is happening. Airlines will likely dramatically cut domestic flights. Restaurants/attractions/culture – nothing occurring in a congregate manner. Anticipate sports market one of the first to return. Focus on ‘rubber tire’ market until airline travel picks up. Destination marketing efforts... Not eligible for PPP, will need assistance. 80% of tourism is small business. Advocating technical fixes for 501c4 and c6 organizations in CARES Act. Concept of responsible tourism – not overwhelming smaller communities, walking single file on trails, pack in/pack out.

Financial Impact: Becky Bogard reported that the state tourism marketing account is full for biennium. All departments have been asked to see where funding can be cut back. Conversations are happening with Director Brown, asking for the tourism funds to be left whole. Match – how do we move forward with that? What can we do to help with the ‘drive market’/local tourism? The RCW allows latitude with ‘including but not limited to’ obtaining out of state tourists. Anthony Antoine indicated Hospitality Association is working on guidelines for lodging and restaurants for reopening. Andi Day stated that WTA would take lead on other sectors, or link to other core associations, including festivals/events.

Contract Deliverables: David Blandford Submitted draft crisis communication plan, but noted that it was not written for global pandemic. Travel and tourism has been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. Need to revise the plan. WA destination branding. Pause on this effort. Conversations with organization but no contract signed. First phase: assessment, likely 2-3 month process. Brand will be shared by industry, including tool chest. Created measurement framework but must take another look given the current situation. Reassess marketing efforts. Destination Marketing Organizations’ ability to partner has dramatically changed. Rebecca indicated open to changes/adjustments. (What is her role?) Dave and contract committee will meet to flush out the details. Lynn stated we need to amend the contract but it looks like it will be fine for the current fiscal year to allow funding to flow. Becky suggested amending both Scope of Work and Deliverables for next fiscal year. Sandra Adix has strongly suggested policy development around match. Lynn will seek clarification from Sandra about match – specifically the timeframe from which it can be pulled. Jodi suggests measuring our success compared to other states or parts of the world.

Lynn is happy to set up Zoom meetings for committee meetings as needed. Also SeaTac meeting room has video equipment to allow both in person and Zoom participation.

The meeting adjourned at 11:42am