

Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors
March 23, 2016
8:30 a.m.

The Board of Directors of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau met Wednesday, March 23, 2016 in the Grandview Conference Center at Big Cedar Lodge. Chairman of the Board William Mahoney called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Brad Thomas provided the opening prayer. Debbie Bennett, General Manager of Big Cedar Lodge welcomed all.

Review of Minutes – Bill Tirone made a motion to approve the February 24, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. Ron Jett seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Treasurer Ron Jett provided a brief review of the financials. The organization is currently go through the annual audit. Brad Thomas made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Jeff Bourk seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Membership Update – Membership Development & Retention Manager Janet Akers provided a presentation of the report included in the packet.

Membership Drop Report – It was determined to remove the Mountain Data Center from the drop list. President and CEO Jeff Seifried reported staff is revisiting how we communicate with our members. Jeff Bourk made a motion to approve the membership drop report. Shawn Pingleton seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Black Tie Recap – Events and Membership Services Manager Emily Sutliff provided a recap of the Black Tie Gala held in February, which set a record with 704 in attendance (601 in 2015). Save the date for the 70th Annual Black Tie – Friday, February 24, 2017 at the Branson Convention Center.

Membership Drive – Jeff stated Your Chamber Connection, a third party consultant who does only membership drives, is being hired to work with us this year. This is an effective, proven model driven by volunteer leaders. We are seeking five board members to be team captains. Jeff talked briefly about the process. The drive is scheduled for three days at the end of June.

STR Update – Director of Meetings and Conventions Deborah Cohen reported she is working with STR and the Branson/Lakes Area Lodging Association to ensure Branson inventory is correct. Only 36 of 150 properties are reporting. STR will reach out to businesses not reporting. The goal is for the report to be as accurate as possible.

Website Usability Study – Liz Mabe, Director of Digital Marketing, addressed the board about the upcoming usability study set to begin April 4 and go over four weeks. She distributed the timeline and stated the goal is to have the end report in May. An action plan will follow the study.

We are putting together a committee of the Board. Please let Jeff know if you would like to be involved. Shawn Pingleton agreed to chair the committee.

School Start Date – Director of Government Affairs and Special Assistant to the President, Monica Evinger spoke about and distributed a white paper on the Missouri school start date. Dr. Brad Swofford spoke to the issue from a school superintendent’s standpoint. Following discussion Tim Connell made a motion that the BLACC/CVB Board of Directors would like all Missouri schools to start no earlier than the third week of August. Mike Pitman seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Jeff and Monica talked briefly about SJR 39, which has been passed by the Missouri Senate and is heading to the House of Representatives. It would prohibit the state from imposing penalties on individuals and religious entities who refuse to participate in same sex marriage ceremonies due to sincerely held religious beliefs. The resolution is similar to Indiana’s, who lost \$60 million in business due to taking the stand. This would affect meetings, conventions, sporting events and a variety of other revenue generators to the state. If passed, the bill would have to go to a vote of the people. This board will be pressured to take a stand on the issue.

Chairman’s Report – Chairman Mahoney talked about contacting a number of member businesses. They’ve been pleased to hear from him. He reminded all to take the time to contact the businesses assigned. Jeff will send out talking points next week.

President/CEO Report – There has been a change to the contract with the Mount Branson property. Parakeet Pete’s was sold and the new owner requested we remove the stipulation for a letter of credit backed by cash for us to tear out the structure if ever needed. Brad Thomas asked about protection for the land in the contract if it was transferred again. Jeff will report back on this next month.

2015 by the numbers – infographic distributed at the meeting.

This meeting of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB Board of Directors adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Present: Dathan Atchison, Jeff Bourk, Tim Connell, Bob Cox, Cliff Davis, Ron Jett, William Mahoney, Shawn Pingleton, Mike Pitman, Scott Skoglund, Angie Smith, Jared Story, Brad Swofford, Brad Thomas and Bill Tirone.

Absent: Randy Brashers, Mike Combs, Clay Cooper, Pam Druffel, Chris Hamon, Jamie Keys and Patrick Parnell

BLACC/CVB Staff Present: Janet Akers, Terra Alphonso, Jonas Arjes, Leah Chandler, Deborah Cohen, Monica Evinger, Heather Hardinger, Cathy Hubert, Liz Mabe, Aaron McCullough, Jeff Seifried, Emily Sutliff and Shelly Vorhaben