

**Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 28, 2016**

The Board of Directors of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau met Wednesday, September 28, 2016. Chairman William Mahoney called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Brad Swofford provided the opening prayer.

**Review of Minutes**

Bill Tirone made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2016 meeting as presented. Bob Cox seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Financial Report**

Jeff Bourk made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Mike Pitman seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Hotel Inventory Update**

Director of Meeting and Convention Sales, Deborah Cohen provided the hotel inventory update. There are 18,842 available units in Taney and Stone Counties. That number includes hotels, cabins, condos and B&Bs. There are also 27 extended stay properties, representing 833 units. No VRBO or HomeAway units included. Jeff Bourk stated it would be good to know how many timeshare units are in the two counties, as well as VRBO, etc.

**Membership Update**

Janet Akers, Membership and Community Relations Manager provided the update. Staff was requested in the August meeting to research how many members dropped due to discontinuing secondary memberships. Seven members have dropped for that reason.

Janet presented the membership drop report. Mike Pitman made a motion to approve the report as presented. Shawn Pingleton seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Book Now Button Recommendation**

President/CEO Jeff Seifried provided history of the book now button on ExploreBranson.com and reported on the committee's findings. H2R Market Research conducted a survey of area businesses to see what is preferred. We are here for the consumers and to drive traffic to the end-user.

Recommended steps moving forward:

- Business owners decide where the book now button and website button are directed.
- All marketing materials shall reflect consumers may purchase tickets using ExploreBranson.com
- Website Usability Ad hoc Committee will create an RFP for a ticket sales company for those business owners who would like to use our white label.

Guidelines:

- The book now button must directly take you to an online booking option.
- The website button must go to the business website and not a third party company.

The data collected will help businesses determine how to best market their product and this model will allow us to track the amount of business industry partners get from our site.

Policy changes recommended (came from consumer testing conducted earlier in the year):

- Listing policies: Show type tags are limited to three from five.
- ExploreBranson.com advertising policies:
  - o If a business is using an image of another business in their advertisement, the CVB must be provided with written consent allowing permission.
  - o Businesses may only advertise in the sections of the website they are represented. For example, only shows would be allowed to advertise in the show sections. Concern is loss of revenue. The District Marketing Council expressed some concern about it, too. It will go back to committee for reconsideration and presented to the board later.

Bill Tirone made a motion to approve the committee's recommendations excluding the policy regarding advertising only in sections of site where the business is represented. Mike Pitman seconded the motion. Mike Combs thanked the committee for their efforts and coming up with a good solution. Vote taken, all approved. Motion carried.

#### Washington DC Fly-In

Monica Evinger, Director of Government Affairs, and Jeff Seifried provided a brief recap of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry's DC Fly-In September 20-22. Chairman of the Board William Mahoney and Ty Lewis with Branson Airport were also on the trip. The group met with U. S. Chamber of Commerce staff, U. S. Senators Blunt and McCaskill, U. S. Congressmen Cleaver, Graves, Hartzler, Long, Luetkemeyer, Smith and Wagner. Several topics were discussed, including the Department of Labor's Overtime Rule, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, emerging issues and the "entitlement crisis".

#### U. S. Chamber 'Get Out the Vote' Initiative

Monica reported on the U.S. Chamber's tools for employers to encourage employees to vote this November.

#### Chairman's Report

Appoint Election Judges – Tim Connell made a motion to approve the following as Election Judges for the upcoming board of directors' election, Chip Arnette, Tracey Barton, Paula Butler, Deidre McCormick and Wade Robson. Mike Combs seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Officers Committee – Brad Thomas made a motion to approve the following to serve as the 2017 Board of Directors' Officers Committee, Randy Brashers, Mike Combs, Pam Druffel, Mike Pitman and Scott Skoglund. Shawn Pingleton seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried. Members of the 2017 who are interested in serving in an officers' position next year need to let members of this committee know of their interest by the October 26 board meeting.

#### President/CEO Report

Jeff reported the Branson Theater League addressed Branson City Council at their September 27 meeting to request \$150,000 for marketing this Christmas season. Our staff will follow up with City Council regarding the request.

The theater league also expressed displeasure with the #notyourgrandmasbranson and video developed specifically for the meetings and conventions market. The league expressed concern that it could cause a decline in Branson's older visitors. The video picked up traction by others sharing it on Facebook.

Building Update – The USDA package is complete. The committee will meet in the next 30 days to review the USDA loan product, as well as a local product.

October Board of Directors Meeting – We will have a planning session at the October meeting. The facilitated session will take approximately 1.5 hours and board members will receive a survey prior to the meeting.

Ignite Branson – The reveal/kick-off is October 20. There are four planned events in 2017 for the rebranded young professionals group.

Christmas Coalition – We are in discussion with Peter Herschend to possibly move the Christmas Coalition under the BLACC/CVB umbrella.

Jeff reported staff is exploring the most effective and impactful way for our organization to light up for Christmas.

Explore Branson Tourism – We received the official letter from IRS September 27. The entity will handle all to do with the Tourism Community Enhancement District (TCED). This BLACC/CVB board will also serve as the Explore Branson Tourism board, which will meet once per quarter. The new entity will not hold cash. It is a pass through entity to meet the TCED requirements.

Rockaway Beach is revisiting the possibility of having a casino in their city. Our board took a position in 2004 that a casino in the area was not good for our brand. If the board wants to take a position on the issue, government affairs will write a white paper, if desired.

Heather Hardinger discussed the new website, OnPointMo.com, which is part of the workforce effort where employers can post job openings and employees can post resumes.

The Taney County Partnership's new talent attraction and retention video was shown in the meeting.

This meeting of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB Board of Directors adjourned at 10:00 a.m.