

Stillwater/Oak Park Heights Convention and Visitors Bureau

Minutes for November 18, 2015

Voting Board Members in Attendance: Jerry Helmberger, Steve Roll, Larry Loyer, Chuck Dougherty, Tiki Oswald, Shannon Oldsberg

Voting Members Absent: Alex Rojas

Others in Attendance: Christie Rosckes, Sheri Hopfe, Erika Oesterreich

Agenda was approved.

Approval of October Minutes-Approved as written

Treasury Report: 3rd quarter OPH \$10,804.52, checks Fresh Avenue \$5000, Stillwater Trolley \$202.50, Lowell \$129.32 Knot wedding pages \$1684, Northern Vineyard \$90, Explore MN \$1000, TC Wedding Show \$1895 Home Town for Holidays 10,000, \$2000 in black but \$73000 coming in next quarter. Motion to approve treasure report. Treasury report approved.

Erika updated Chamber News. Holiday Mixer at Lake Elmo Inn Event Center Tuesday night, \$25 for members \$75 for non- members. Home and Garden Event in April at high school now changing to community showcase, free to public, businesses highlighted, food entertainment, and more updates to come.

Sherri reported on IBA. Twinkle Parade coming on Saturday, comments are that so many people are asking for money. Begging for money, so sponsors are down right now. Seed program meeting tomorrow night at Maple Island if want to come. Check is coming, 13 businesses are involved at this point. Recycle more through the state office. Got a \$15000 grant to promote recycling downtown. You can sign up as a single business. Growing membership because of Seed promotion. Freight House closed for season. 6:00 meeting at City Hall regarding Sticks in Stillwater event

Jerry went over Doug Menikheim's Strategic Plan from the city. Develop our community. Economic development will affect lodging and businesses. See two page plan. If can provide expertise, please volunteer for committees.

Marketing Report from Christie. See report. Highlights: radio campaign is running right now for 3 weeks. Got the footage from the Minnesota Traveler advertising segment. Explore MN Checkpoint scavenger hunt has begun - Coupons for smartphones and lots of social media. Views for lodging are down 9% from discoverstillwater, but overall site traffic still huge increases. . Spaces magazine had a celebration for a 13 page spread on Stillwater, shopping and dining plus advertising.

Discussion Items

CVB Grant Recipients for 2016-Harvest Fest request for \$13000 may be a little high and have had a tremendous number of requests this year, and can only give \$40,000. Proposing \$7500 cap for grants in the future to align with state EMT grant standards. Decided \$500 for Ice Cream Social \$1500 for Cruisin on the Croix, \$1000 for the Run Stillwater, \$500 for Log Run, Summer Tuesdays \$1500, St. Croix Splash

\$2500, National Gondola Event \$2000, Iron Man Bicycle Ride \$1000, North Star Bicycle Festival \$1000, and Sticks \$6500. 20% of the budget is \$43500. Think about our future. Harvest Fest discussion is marketing we get back, good exposure for it. Be aware of new events coming in the future, limit money for existing events so we can help new events. Read Grant Policy. Chuck proposed \$8000 for Harvest Fest, \$8000 for Hometown, and the rest for other events. Art Reach for \$3000 or \$2500? Have \$22500 left. Log Jam had a pretty good year, and can use the Lumberjack name again, so should get some better advertising from that, propose to give them \$5000. Has the potential to pay for itself too. Asked for \$10,000. Discussion about the banners for Hometown for the Holidays and the placement of discover Stillwater logo. Should have recognition because we are the primary sponsor for the event. Have \$18000 left so split it down the middle for Harvest Fest and Home Town? Warn grant applicants of cap of this many dollars for 2017. Recap \$9000 for Harvest Fest, \$9000 for Hometown for the Holidays, \$2500 for ArtReach. Motion was made to approve these amounts. Motion carried. Letter was drafted to send to each applicant on how much they received and what the expectations are to receive this money. Christie create letter for each recipient.

Approve CVB Grant Process for 2016-Limit the size of our grants? Events need to be prepared and gear up for it, so they can prepare well in advance. Due to the large number of events, money is limited. Request to limit \$7500 in future, so can look for other sources. Motion for verbiage to be changed to \$7500 cap in 2017. Motion carried.

Edits to 2016 Visitor Guide and Map proof-minor changes to address. Ads were proofed by each advertiser. Taken care of.

Stillwater App Development Research-called 3 other CVB's to see who they used. Reason to do one is mobile phone usage is higher 3 hours a day are spent on the phone, and smart phones are used to make travel plans. This would be an additional tool to interact with visitors. Would visitors use it? Can we afford it? Other CVB's are 3 times larger than ours that are using it. If we do it, we should do it right. Needs to work right, and have support for the technology. Could be a great tool, but has to look beyond the heads in beds. Chambermaster is a resource. Would like feedback, and look at next year. The website is already mobile friendly.

Finalize 2016 budget-see proposed budget, majority is approved, just a few items. MN co-ops and Explore MN grants have both been accomplished, also MN Meetings and Events.

- i. Toast to the Valley is a new publication by Inns of the Valley featuring wineries, breweries, and Inns. 16 page directory will be put in visitor areas and mailed out. Do we want to advertise in this publication? CVB does very little marketing for the bed and breakfasts. Minimum is \$350, back page or full page for \$1200. Just print, not online. List comes from Explore MN for the mailing. Back cover was suggested by Jerry and Chuck. Tentative and come back to it.
- ii. Group Travel Market propose to do the same as last year. Ad is ½ page in travel planner \$2769 and target 4000 visitors. What do we get for advertising as we are not a venue that can accommodate groups? Does market to bus tours. Do we want bus tours? The other is Group Tour Magazine, an Explore MN coop which is 60% off, 15000 distribution, ¼ page in 2 issues or a larger ad in one issue for \$2400. 1/3 page \$2200. Decided to forgo all group travel advertising except the \$600 for the ABA conference.
- iii. Wedding Market do what we did last year, and leave it alone? Get the biggest bang for our buck. Spend 5% of our budget for advertising. Change focus? Scale it back to one wedding fair

instead of three which saves money. If we see that wedding business is falling down, we can change the focus again.

- iv. Vacation Traveler Market with radio campaign same as last year. My talk in January for winter getaways. Now we are running a holiday shopping spree. Co-op with businesses in town. Spend same as last year. Station to be determined. Good to go. Explore MN biking guide ad last year did two different publications. \$2450 which also includes an ad in Minnesota Monthly. Hit biking hard for next year again. Propose an increase of \$10000 for digital advertising that includes banner display ads, google ad words, and digital content. Target the rest for our website. No concerns for increase. Cut AAA digital. \$3000 over the budget, so cut coasters so now just a \$1000 over. Adjust cost of ads in guidebook next year.
- v. Administration Contract Services for \$1000 to help pay for photographers, videographers, shopping, social media event costs, administration costs, etc.. Christie's contract comes up in December.

Motion to approve the final budget. Approve the budget for \$227,953. Motion carried.

Next meeting is December 9, 10:30 at AmericInn.