

**LOUISIANA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

HOME2SUITES BY HILTON PARC | 1909 KALISTE SALOOM ROAD, LAFAYETTE, LA 70508

LIVE OAK A MEETING ROOM

June 26, 2019 | 9:00AM – 10:30AM

Sponsored by Allison Elizabeth, Conversant Media

Present

Travis Napper
Janice Delerno Verges
Kyle Edmiston
Dickie Brennan
Ralph Ney
Timothy Bush
John Crook
Brandy Evans
Marion Fox
Arlene Gould
Eric Hoffman
Joanna Folse-Alexander
Ben Berthelot

Denise Thevenot
Donna O’Daniels
Jeremy Cooker

Absent

Kevin Kelly

Members on Phone

Alana Cooper
Lynette Tanner
Peggy Benoit

LOT Present

Megan Ryburn

Lynne Coxwell

Associate Members

Present

Jim Caldwell

Louisiana Travel Association

Jill Kidder
Laine Garner
Laura Cating
Tiffany Schultz
Anna White

1. CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Janice Delerno Verges called the meeting to order at 9:00am and thanked everyone for attending.

Vice-Chair, Ben Berthelot (in absence of Secretary) called the roll and a quorum was present.

2. INTRODUCTION OF SPONSOR | Allison Elizabeth with Conversant Media

Janice Delerno Verges thanked Ben Berthelot and Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission team for their hospitality and great time at the board reception and dinner the evening prior. Janice introduced Allison Elizabeth with Conversant Media. Allison presented a brief video on Conversant Media’s services.

3. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Ben presented the April 2, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes in packets.

ACTION #1: Eric Hoffman moved to accept the minutes from the April LTA Board Meeting.

Timothy Bush seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Treasurer, Kyle Edmiston presented the June 20, 2019 Finance Committee Minutes in packets.

ACTION #2: Marion Fox moved to accept the June Finance Committee meeting minutes **Eric Hoffman** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

B. Kyle Edmiston presented the Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2019, that showed Total Current Assets \$743,776.87, which includes Checking/Savings \$282,325.04, Accounts Receivable \$430,868.93, Other Current Assets \$30,582.90 along with Fixed Assets \$436,438.52 bringing Total Assets to \$1,180,215.39. Total Current Liabilities \$392,161.13, which includes Accounts Payable \$139,950.73, Other Current Liabilities \$252,210.40, along with Total Equity \$788,054.26, which includes Retained Earnings \$612,273.65 and Net Income \$175,780.61 brought Total Liabilities & Equity to \$1,180,215.39.

The 2019 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual for January through May 31, 2019, showed Total Income \$1,292,787.68, which includes Administration Income \$60,111.43, LTA Membership Income \$99,525.18, Advocacy \$24,643.00, Education \$33,954.01, Print/Digital Income \$632,234.00 and Marketing Campaigns Income \$442,320.06, along with Total Cost of Goods Sold \$665,541.00, bringing the Gross Profit to \$627,246.68. Total Operating Expenses \$460,197.96 brought Net Ordinary Income \$167,048.72, with Total Other Income to \$19,321.44 and Total Other Expenses \$10,589.55, bringing the Net Other Income to \$8,731.89 and Total Net Income to \$175,780.61.

Kyle stated the net income is over budget by \$55,996.41.

Kyle asked if anyone had any questions. There were no questions.

Kyle stated that it was his pleasure to give the May Financial report and that he thought the LTA staff is doing a great job at controlling expenses and working hard to stay within their individual budgets.

Jill agreed with Kyle and complimented the staff for controlling their own budgets.

ACTION #3: Arlene Gould moved to accept the May 2019 financials. **Timothy Bush** seconded the motion. All approve. Motion passed.

Jill Kidder presented the 2018 Postlethwaite & Netterville annual financial review. Jill stated LTA had a clean audit review, that went very well. The accountants' conclusion of the financial statements stated that "Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

Jill pointed out that some of the rebranding expenses in 2018 were not in the budget and those expenses had to be taken as expenses which were not depreciated as originally outlined.

The good news is that the LPL investment account that tanked at the end of 2018 is back up. We were able to avoid needing to move money from the LPL account for 2018 cash flow purposes, as originally approved by the board.

Jill stated that there was a reduction in the corporate annual tax rate: down from 35% in 2017 to 21% in 2018. The rate reduction reduced our taxes from \$4830 to \$2898 - \$1932 less than accrued for 2018. LTA's tax returns were filed on time.

Jill asked for any questions. There were no questions.

ACTION #4: Kyle Edmiston moved to accept the 2018 Postlethwaite & Netterville annual financial review. **Marion Fox** seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. CHAIRMAN REPORT

- A. Janice presented Kerry Andersen's LTA board resignation. Janice stated that she was sorry to see Kerry leave the board and wished her well on her future endeavors. Janice asked the board to accept Kerry Andersen's board resignation.

ACTION #5: Brandy Evans moved to accept the Kerry Andersen's resignation. Donna O'Daniels seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- B. Janice announced that Dickie Brennan will replace Kerry Andersen as Secretary of the LTA Board. All members were excited to have Dickie on the Executive Board. Janice asked the board to accept Dickie Brennan and the Board Secretary replacement.

Jill stated that she had a wonderful conversation with Dickie Brennan and is excited that Dickie is willing to continue to serve on the LTA Board of Directors going forward.

ACTION #6: Kyle Edmiston moved to accept Dickie Brennan as Board Secretary. Travis Napper seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Janice announced that Kevin Dolliole, MSY Director of Aviation, will fill the open board seat and replace Dickie Brennan on the board.

Jill presented Kevin Dolliole's bio in the board packets.

Janice asked the board to accept Kevin Dolliole as a new LTA board member.

ACTION #7: Donna O'Daniels moved to accept Kevin Dolliole as a new LTA board member. **Denise Thevenot** seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

6. PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT

- A. State of the Tourism Economy

Jill presented on the state of the tourism economy. Jill stated that we are in the longest travel and tourism economic growth period in modern US history. US travel trends index grew 2% in March 2019 making the industry's 111th straight month of overall expansion. Domestic Travel increased by 1.9% in 2018. International inbound travel was slightly up last year over 2017, but the conclusion is that we are losing market share to other countries. Spending was up across the board by domestic leisure, business and international travelers in 2018.

Jill presented the US Travel Stats (in packets).

The tourism industry came out of this year's legislative session looking good. The state budget fully funds CRT – LOT plus \$3M to Office of Lieutenant Governor's. The \$.45 cent state sales tax that remains of the 1 penny that was sunseting which has alleviated some of the pressure over funding from a legislative standpoint. The fiscal cliff no longer seems to be looming, but we will continue to see pressure from our local leaders as 4 out of 5 of the tourism bills this year were initiated by local leaders wanting to take or redistribute occupancy tax. It is important we strengthen our travel industry message with elected officials and Louisiana citizens. We must start at a local level.

B. HB 339 – Dwight recap

Jill presented a recap of HB339 – Dwight, stating that even though the bill is a good government and good business bill, we unfortunately, reached an impasse with the business community. As a pro-business industry, we do not want to further set ourselves at odds with those concerned about workforce housing.

Although workforce housing is unrelated to the original intent of the bill, this issue has garnered opposition from LABI, oil & gas, the Farm Bureau Federation and others. At this point, the opposition believes that this bill would codify the man camp issue, meaning that it would reinforce current law and help Calcasieu Parish win their lawsuit. They believe that this was the original intent of the bill.

While this belief is misguided, it was too late in the game for us to change the narrative and find the votes needed to pass a clean bill.

We are in discussion with Rep. Dwight today about how to best proceed in the future. Thank you all for your efforts in support of this bill. Although we did not land where expected, this process has taught us a lot. We have gained muscle and effectiveness as an industry. It has also motivated to work collectively toward the best interests of our entire industry.

Jill stated that we will continue to work for a hotel definition solution that moves the travel industry forward in a future year.

Jill stated that the association will recommend executing the voluntary agreements with Airbnb to collect occupancy taxes until the hotel definition bill is passed. Jill also stated that the ongoing lawsuit in Calcasieu Parish will go to trial in December and we will know more on our next steps at that time.

Ralph Ney discussed the addition of Airbnb hotel room sales by Marriott Baton Rouge.

Jill stated that LTA is working with AAHOA to form an advocacy partnership going into the 2020 legislative session.

C. STS Congressional Summit recap

Jill presented a recap of the STS Congressional Summit in Washington, D.C. The STS Congressional Summit on Travel and Tourism is a platform to educate Members of Congress on the broad diversity of the travel and tourism sector and the significant contribution it makes to our national, regional and local economies. Each

year, STS provides an opportunity to delegates from the twelve southeastern states to deliver the message that tourism's vitality must be nurtured and supported at all levels of our government. Good federal policy and strong partnerships with our Congressional leaders and key government agencies assist our travel industry in telling our destination stories to the world and in delivering exceptional travel experiences.

The Louisiana Travel Association has partnered with US Travel and STS for more than 10 years to take our key travel industry message(s) to DC. This year's STS Congressional Summit goes down as a true success with ninety-three people from the southeast region attending meetings with their congressional leaders, from June 11-13. Your Louisiana delegates included: Donna O'Daniels, Buddy Boe, Rebecca Blankenbaker, Stacy Brown, Jonathan "JT" Taylor, Timothy Bush and Jill Kidder. We want to specifically thank Jonathan "JT" Taylor, Livingston Parish CVB, and Timothy Bush, Louisiana's Cajun Bayou, for taking the lead as our State Congressional Summit Co-Chairs.

Issues that we discussed with our Congressional members were:

- Boost international travel to the US and Louisiana by maintaining Brand USA and the funding framework through 2027 (Congressional Delegation requested to sign on to the attached Welch-Bilirakis-Titus letter)
- Address the National Park Service and public lands deferred maintenance backlog (Restore Our Parks Act S. 500 / Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act H.R. 1225)
- Support the Explore America's Act (S. 1746 / Co-authored by Senator Bill Cassidy)
- Strengthen the American Battlefield Protection Program (Preserving America's Battlefields Act S. 225 / H.R. 307)
- Modernization and support for our National Heritage Area Program (H.R. 1049, with "categorical exceptions")
- Establish strong investments in our transportation infrastructure
- Support for our craft beverage partners (Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act S. 362 / H.R. 175)
- Join the Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus co-chaired by Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) and Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)

Janice thanked Timothy Bush and JT Taylor for co-chairing the STS Congressional Summit committee and stated they did an excellent job.

D. Jill reviewed the 'President's View and Newsletter' with the board (in packets).

D. Councils and Committees Reports

1) Advocacy – Marion Fox/Laura Cating /Jill Kidder

Marion Fox and Laura Cating presented the 2019 Legislative Session recap

- Legislature successfully passed a more than \$30 billion state budget
- For the first time since Gov. Edwards and the current legislators were elected in 2015, there was no call for a special session.

- Overall, no budget drama because of the additional sales tax revenue!
- Major focuses of the session: teacher pay raises, abortion, gambling proposals, medical marijuana and money for infrastructure
- A stable state tax base allowed for “somewhat” consistent funding for the Office of Tourism’s 2019-2020 budget. This resulted in reduced interagency transfers needed for other departments within CRT. However, the legislature has required LOT to increase funding for Essence Festival from \$500,000 to almost \$950,000 without General Fund appropriation.

Laura Cating presented the tourism session results.

- \$700 million in Deepwater Horizon oil spill recovery money was redirected to finance roadwork, bridge upgrades and port improvements.
- Statewide regulations for ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft passed
- Louisiana restaurants will now be required to post information about imported crawfish or shrimp on menus or signs at their main entrances.
- Effort to extend the state’s historic building tax credit program failed
- River Parishes successfully passed a 2% occupancy tax addition
- New Orleans reached a complex, but workable, compromise offering tourism aid to the city’s infrastructure needs

Dickie Brennan stated the importance of working as one team with other industry associations. He stated that being on the same page with other industry organizations will streamline the process at the Capitol.

Laura presented an overview of Tourism Day at the Capitol (in packets) with 32 Advocacy Sponsors participating as well as the LTLA class. Ten legislators attended the Legislative luncheon at the Lt. Governor’s barracks launching a one on one sit down between the CVB directors and their legislators.

Laura presented an overview of National Travel and Tourism Week (in packets). LTA had significant engagement from the members gaining 2,203 post engagements, 64-page likes, 135-page views and 25 new twitter followers.

Jill discussed the importance of renewing TravelPAC membership. Jill stated that membership has decreased in 2019 and the association needs everyone to sign up and spread the word. TravelPAC will need to be built back up, Funding the PAC is critical in an election year.

2) Marketing and Communications – Brandy Evans/Laura//Laine/Tiffany

a. Marketing Programs Update

Brandy Evans presented the marketing programs update

- We have 16 CVBs participating in the Louisiana Sports Package. This is the most we have ever had participate! Team Louisiana is sponsoring the

SPORTS Conference through this package. We have 7 people attending so far which is great!

- The new research programs we added to the plan last year are doing great as well! STR Report, we have 7 participants that are getting monthly data from them. AirDNA has had 3 participants and both programs are 1-year campaigns so those have been well received.
- We also added TV into the marketing plan last year and that has really taken off with 11 participants so far for the OTT Campaign and Gray TV Promotion.
- Digital is doing extremely well. Last year, we ended with a total of \$360,000 in ad placement and so far with halfway through the year we are at \$321,000 in ad placement with digital!!! The most popular programs being AARP Digital, Compass Digital Campaign, Compass Festival Campaign, AAA Digital, Madden's Retargeting and their Geofencing Campaign, Southern Living Digital, TripAdvisor, ADARA Digital and Travel Channel/Food Network Digital.
- Print campaigns have continued to be successful as well with Louisiana Cookin', AARP Print, National Geographic Traveler, Food Network, Southern Living, Group Travel Leader, Group Tour Magazine, AJR publications and of course our Compass Multi Magazine Insert are all doing great and many more!
 - Brandy presented a Chatbox video of the new program which conducts conversation via auditory or textual methods.

b. Current LTA Programs Update

Laine Garner presented the current LTA programs

- LTA Explores | July 14-15, 2019
- Faith Travel Trip 2019 | July 15 deadline
- 2020 Golf Sales Sheet | September 17 deadline

Laine presented an update on the new Digital Visitors Center which is planned to launch in January of 2020. Laine stated that the Digital Visitors Center will live on the LTA website. Laine and the membership department are working hard to spread the word on the new program.

c. Atlanta Culinary Trails Event | October 22-23, 2019

Laura Cating presented an update on Atlanta Culinary Trails in October

- Atlanta, October 22-23
- Media Preview Night on Tuesday, Oct. 22
- Restaurant Night on Wednesday, Oct. 23
- AJC Food Editor, Ligaya Figueras, connecting us with restaurants and serving as event host
- Media partner: Atlanta Journal Constitution
 - All chefs will be confirmed by next week, but so far they include Houmas House and Miss Kay's Sweets & Eats

- Top sponsors will be featured in native content articles, promoted at peak times
 - Restaurant Night will be highlighted through an AJC landing page, Louisiana special section, digital and print advertising, plus PR partnerships
- d. Approval of 2020-2021 Marketing Plan
 Tiffany Schultz presented the 2020-2021 Marketing Plan
 Tiffany stated that her goal was to have the new Marketing Plan ready by Summit in August. Tiffany presented the newest varieties of the plan. She stated that the PR program will deliver more impact to the smaller CVBs. Tiffany presented Bandwagon as a new media buy in.

ACTION #8: Timothy Bush moved to accept the 2020-2021 Marketing Plan. Arlene Gould seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

3) Development –Laine Garner

- a. Membership Renewals and Corporate Partners
 Laine stated that corporate partner recruitment is ongoing and moving forward.
- Membership is at an 86% renewal rate
 - 66 members still need to renew
 - 26 premium partners enrolled
- b. LTLA Advocacy Class updates
 Laine presented the 2019 LTLA Advocacy class updates.
 LTLA students attended Tourism Day at the Capitol and toured the House and Senate Floors as well as the committee room.

4) Governance – Travis Napper/Jill Kidder

- a. Travis Napper presented the Governance Committee report stating that the LTA bylaw changes were approved by the Governance Committee on the April 23, 2019 conference call. Travis stated that he was surprised at how much he enjoyed working on the bylaw revisions and was pleased with the changes the Governance Committee had approved. Travis reviewed the bylaw ‘points of reference’ overview of changes with the board (in packets).

ACTION #9: Timothy Bush moved to accept the LTA Bylaw changes. Marion Fox seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Travis presented the updated LTA Board of Directors Election Process and Board nominations form (in packets). Janice stated she agrees the board works best if the Executive Board continues to move up the ranks.
 Jill stated that the Governance Committee did an excellent job updating the nominations process. Board applicants will now submit their resumes with their application to join the LTA Board of Directors.

Jill presented the board terms spreadsheet (in packets) stating that six members of the board will need to be reelected in 2020: Alana Cooper, John Crook, Brandy Evans, Marion Fox, Ralph Ney and Donna O’Daniels.

Three board members will roll off the board: Lynette Tanner, Denise Thevenot and Travis Napper.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. LACVB is sponsoring the Annual LMA Convention, August 1-2, in Monroe, LA.

B. The Lt. Governor’s Travel Summit is August 27-29 at the Crown Plaza in Baton Rouge.

Laura Cating presented the tentative schedule and sponsorship opportunities in packets.

C. The next board meeting will be September 17-18 in St. Tammany Parish.

D. The 2020 Annual Meeting will be January 29-30, 2019 in Morgan City.

Marion Fox shared that the newly opened Gator Chateau had over 6000 visitors in the first month and was doing great.

Janice thanked the sponsors, Allison Elizabeth with Conversant Media and the Lafayette CVC.

ACTION #10: Ralph Ney moved to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION STEPS:

ACTION #1: Eric Hoffman moved to accept the minutes from the April LTA Board Meeting. **Timothy Bush** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION #2: Marion Fox moved to accept the June Finance Committee meeting minutes **Eric Hoffman** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION #3: Arlene Gould moved to accept the May 2019 financials. **Timothy Bush** seconded the motion. All approve. Motion passed.

ACTION #4: Kyle Edmiston moves to accept the 2018 Postlethwaite & Netterville annual financial review. **Marion Fox** seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #5: Brandy Evans moved to accept the Kerry Andersen’s resignation. Donna O’Daniels seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #6: Kyle Edmiston moved to accept Dickie Brennan as Board Secretary. Travis Napper seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #7: Donna O'Daniels moved to accept Kevin Dolliole as a new LTA board member. **Denise Thevenot** seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #8: Timothy Bush moved to accept the 2020-2021 Marketing Plan. Arlene Gould seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #9: Timothy Bush moved to accept the LTA Bylaw changes. Marion Fox seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ACTION #10: Ralph Ney moved to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anna White