

Louisiana Travel Association

Board of Directors Meeting

Homewood Suites & Hilton Garden Inn

2015 Old Minden Road, Bossier City, LA

September 16, 2020 | 9 – 11:30 a.m.

SPONSOR: Madden Media

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

Ben Berthelot
Dickie Brennan
Kyle Edmiston
Timothy Bush
Alana Cooper
Arlene Gould
Brandy Evans
Eric Hoffman
Jay Sharplin
Jeremy Cooker
Morgan Moss
Ralph Ney
Rebecca Blankenbaker

Kevin Dolliole
Donna O’Daniels
John Crook
Kevin Kelly
Marion Fox
Joanna Folse-Alexander
Peggy Beniot
Nick Zaver

LOT Present:

Doug Bourgeois
Lynne Coxwell

LTA Staff Present:

Jill Kidder
Laine Garner
Laura Cating

Absent:

Janice Delerno Verges

I. Call to Order/Announcements

- a. Chair Ben Berthelot called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and thanked everyone for joining either in person or via Zoom.
- b. Secretary Timothy Bush called roll and confirmed a quorum.
- c. Chair Berthelot thanked Brandy Evans and the Shreveport Bossier CTB for hosting the September Board meeting.

II. Introduction of Sponsor | Danah Heye, Madden Media

- a. Chair Berthelot introduced Danah Heye, Madden Media, and thanked her for sponsoring the meeting. Danah shared information on the 2021 LTA Co-ops Campaign. Danah asked Board members to contact her if they were interested in any of the programs or if they would like additional information.

III. Approval of Board Minutes

- a. Secretary Timothy Bush presented the minutes from the July 1, 2020 board meeting (minutes in packets).

ACTION #1: Kyle Edmiston moved to accept the minutes from the July 1, 2020 LTA Board Meeting. Arlene Gould seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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IV. Financial Report

Kyle Edmiston presented the Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2020, which showed the Total Current Assets \$324,203.13 which includes Checking/Savings \$210,971.51, Accounts Receivable \$95,204.00, Other Current Assets \$18,027.62, along with Fixed Assets \$408,834.25 bringing Total Assets to \$733,037.38. Total Current Liabilities \$279,234.97, which includes Accounts Payable \$99,863.60, Other Current Liabilities \$179,371.37, along with Total Equity \$453,802.41, which includes Retained Earnings \$652,376.80 and Net Loss \$-198,574.39 brought Total Liabilities & Equity to \$733,037.38.

The 2019 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual for January through August 2020, showed Total Income \$1,185,686.31, which includes Administration Income \$66,881.07; LTA Membership Income \$145,110.24, Advocacy \$22,885.00, Education \$39,424.83, Print/Digital Income \$612,403.59 and Marketing Campaigns Income \$298,981.58 brings the total Income to \$1,185,686.31, along with Total Cost of Goods Sold \$647,690.93, bringing the Gross Profit to \$537,995.38. The Total Operating Expenses were \$738,794.90 bringing the Net Ordinary Loss to \$(200,799.52). Other Income of \$19,796.73 less Total Other Expenses of \$17,571.60 Totaled Net Other Income of \$2,225.13 and the Total Net Loss for August was \$(198,574.39).

ACTION #2: Eric Hoffman moved to accept the May 2020 financials. **Timothy Bush** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

V. Chairman's Report

Ben gave an executive committee report. He stated that going forward, all Board meetings should be in person. The option to attend the meeting via conference call will still be an option.

ACTION #3: Ben Berthelot, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, presented the motion for all future LTA Board meetings to be held in person. **Arlene Gould** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ben stated the Executive Committee discussed the status of a Visitor's Guide. He stated that discussion has been back and forth about the importance of having a guide and noted that it is an important revenue stream for the LTA and many CVBs rely on it as a form of advertisement. He asked for input from the Board. He proposed the idea of asking the State to approve an official Visitor's Guide at no cost to the state. He stated that the Executive Committee has approved a recommendation to pass a Resolution in support of that. He opened the topic up for discussion.

Jill Kidder provided the background on the Visitor's Guide. Jill stated that just printed sales totaled \$494,000 last year and digital sales are also an option.

She stated that Miles has agreed to provide \$30,000 to move forward with the guide

Doug Bourgeois commented that the State/Lt. Governor's Office is planning to underwrite Summit 2020 to make sure the LTA has revenue. He stated that would probably be more than the State doing Summit and the Guide. He noted there are currently 80,000 guides in stock. He recommended a filler/inspiration guide at a reduced cost until they get to a point where they want to do a reduced guide. It will serve as an intermediate guide while continuing to support LTA through Summit.

Ben asked if they are certain that this is direction that the Lt. Governor's Office will be taking.

Doug stated that as of today, that is the plan.

Jill noted that one concern is the Visitor's Guide is a big drive for the membership program.

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Doug added that the “filler” would be from December to July. Google Toolkit?? Advertising will be a drastically reduced rate. He re-emphasized that a good many guides still exist to use a Welcome Centers.

Ben stated there is a Resolution on the floor and offered an amended motion to authorize the Executive Committee to continue the conversation regarding the Visitor’s Guide and approve the ability to craft a message, if needed. Kyle Edmiston seconded the motion.

ACTION #4: Ben Berthelot submitted a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to continue the Visitor Guide discussion and approve the ability to craft a message, if needed. Kyle Edmiston seconded the motion.

- a. Ben asked Kyle Edmiston to provide an update on Hurricane Laura. Kyle reported that Hurricane Laura was the strongest storm in 30 years. He stated there was not a building that was not affected in some way. 50% of Lake Charles is without power. The roof of the office building was lost, and they are currently operating out of Sulphur. He thanked Ben Berthelot and his entire team for allowing his office to operate out of their building. He added that Summit will still be held at the Golden Nugget in Lake Charles in November and thanked everyone for their support.

Arlene Gould, Alana Cooper and John Crook provided reports on damages that occurred in their respective areas.

Nick Zaver shared that he, and regional directors from around the country, are all pitching in to donate to the Louisiana Hospitality Foundation - approximately \$12,000.

Ben shared that Denise Darrell with United Way is asking for volunteers to work in their warehouse.

- b. Chair Berthelot asked Doug Bourgeois to provide the LA Office of Tourism update. Doug reiterated that the Lt. Governor has come to a very generous compromise to continue to support the LTA to the level in the past through sponsorship of Summit as well as offer the ability to all partners for advertising at a drastically reduced price. He stated that they will revisit the Visitor’s Guide next year and continue to work on recovery efforts with all partners. Doug asked everyone to send them the itineraries for the Louisiana Trip Campaign.

Jennifer Berthelot shared information on the Google Recovery Toolkit, Digital Academy and Help Kit. She stated that it is a free program with unlimited registration for one year. Information on the program will be sent out next week.

Doug stated work will continue on a revised strategic plan and also the Sunshine Plan that will provide funding for all CVBs.

VI. President/CEO Report – Jill Kidder

- a. Building Sale Update – Jill Kidder provided an update on the sale of the LTA building. A potential buyer has made an offer of \$612,000 for the building. Staff will be working virtually once the building is sold. Looking for space to house warehouse/distribution center.
- b. Councils and Committees – Jill Kidder
 - i. Advocacy Update
 1. Special Session Update – Jill stated that a special session will likely be held in November. Talking points will be drafted and shared prior to the session.
 2. Federal Update – Hoping Destinations Marketing Organizations will be included in Heroes Act and next round of funding. Thanked group for their support in this endeavor.

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3. Main Street Recovery Program – Money still exists in the Main Street Recovery Program. These are grants and it is to reimburse small business expenses related to COVID. Up to \$15,000. Louisianamainstreet.com.
- ii. Marketing & Communications Update – Jeremy Cooker/Laura Cating
 1. Marketing Update – Jeremy Cooker
 - a. CVB Marketing Comms virtual forum. Hosted by LTA in mid-August. 25+ participants from all around the state. Each CVB gave an update on their current status their marketing direction and their current tone.
 2. 2021-2022 Marketing Plan Update – Jeremy Cooker
 - a. New plan is out now and is on the LTA website under the Promote section. This year’s book includes a new “media bundles” section, allowing participants to take advantage of the best pricing on a mixed media campaign. Plan will be mailed to past participants this week. Email/social push scheduled now through October.
 3. Culinary Trails – Laura Cating
 - a. Currently at \$73,500 and expecting to end at \$80K+
 4. Attractions – Laura Cating
 - a. Ended at \$25,000; significantly adjusted printing cost to help us come closer to budget; printing this week
 5. Christmas - Laura
 - a. Hoping to have more participants in by end of the week, but challenges presented with fewer events
 6. Recipe Book 2020
 - a. Digital/social campaign happening right now
 7. Print/Digital
 - a. We are expecting to be about \$50k short on budget due to the cancellation of a number of publications and many members pushing buys back to 2021; but the good news is that our digital budget has done exceptional especially with the addition of the Recovery Marketing plan. We are almost at budget for digital programs.
 8. Communications Update – Laura Cating
 - a. July/August – focused on federal advocacy push for CVBs (see stats); 309 VoterVoice messages sent to Cassidy & Kennedy
 - b. September/October – pushing Marketing Plan participation
 - c. Hurricane Laura Relief Fund – partnership with Louisiana Hospitality Foundation; will offer grants to hospitality workers; already raised about \$15k
 - d. Upcoming – Summit, LTLA 2021, Louey Awards??, membership renewal, Legislative Special Session, LTA office move
- iii. Development Update – Laine Garner
 1. Membership Update – talking on a weekly basis.
 2. LTLA Update – finished up a program in July. Next class in October in Monroe. Reorganizing for next year.
 3. Webinars scheduled for LTLA
 - a. ADARA | September 30
 - b. Entrada | October 21

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VII. Unfinished Business – Ben Berthelot

- a. Update on 2021 Visitor Guide – Addressed earlier in the meeting.

VIII. New Business

- a. Update – Lt. Governor’s Travel Summit – Summit will be held in Lake Charles, November 10-12, 2020. Kyle Edmiston stated that because of the Lt. Governor’s very generous contribution to fund the Summit, registration fees will go directly to the bottom line and provide funding for the LTA. He encouraged everyone to utilize contacts and consider contacting anyone that may benefit from attending Summit, i.e., vendors, attractions, etc. He stated it is important financially to have as many registrations as possible.
- b. Next LTA Meeting | December 8-9, 2020 | Lafayette
- c. Timothy Bush announced he has accepted a position with One Spartanburg Inc., as Chief Tourism Development Officer. He will be greatly missed.

IX. Adjourn

ACTION #5: Timothy Bush moved to adjourn. **Kyle Edmiston** seconded the motion

ACTION ITEMS:

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ACTION #2: Eric Hoffman moved to accept the May 2020 financials. **Timothy Bush** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION #3: Ben Berthelot, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, presented the motion for all future LTA Board meetings to be held in person. **Arlene Gould** seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION #4: Ben Berthelot submitted a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to continue the Visitor Guide discussion and approve the ability to craft a message, if needed. Kyle Edmiston seconded the motion.

ACTION #5: Timothy Bush moved to adjourn. **Kyle Edmiston** seconded the motion