



Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board

Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 4, 2024, 1:00 p.m.

437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes

Members Present: Chair Pat Foster, Vice Chair Eric Clark, Treasurer John Morris, Secretary John Mendel, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Kirk Wallace, Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa, Board Member Mary Beth Ericson

Members Absent: Board Member Tom Parker

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Pat Foster called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 437 Old Mammoth Road.

2. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Board Member John Wentworth provided an update on the California Jobs First program.

Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa arrived at 1:05 p.m.

Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa reported that August was her busiest month in the past five years. Ms. Quesada-Costa discussed her continued staffing issues, utilizing out of town seasonal staff versus local staff, lack of housing for employees and the need for wellness services for employees. She said that Labor Day Weekend was incredibly busy. She reported that people

were talking about the incident with Victor the Bear and had voiced their desire for MLT to use some of their funding to better educate tourists.

Board Member Kirk Wallace reported that July and August were both busier than last year for him, but said events at the Village and Bluesapalooza appeared lighter than last year. Mr. Wallace spoke about staffing issues and said that he and a couple of restaurants next to his brewery shared staff when needed.

Secretary John Mendel reported that his business hit all-time highs for July and August. He said that while he was volunteering at Bluesapalooza he felt the crowds were more spread out than usual.

Treasurer John Morris said the Board should push the Town Council to reinstate some of MLT's marketing funds for Fiscal Year 2025/26. Mr. Morris said that the stewardship messaging was critical, however, lodging occupancy had dropped which affected the rest of the businesses in Town. Mr. Morris announced that the Mammoth High School Huskies Volleyball Team would host a Volleyball Invitational on Friday from 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. with a \$5 entry fee which would be donated to the volleyball team.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments given at this time.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Vice Chair Eric Clark

Seconded by Secretary John Mendel

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (8): Chair Pat Foster, Vice Chair Eric Clark, Treasurer John Morris, Secretary John Mendel, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Kirk Wallace, Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa, and Board Member Mary Beth Ericson

Absent (1): Board Member Tom Parker

Carried (8 to 0)

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 5, 2024

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 MLT Ad Tracking Results - Presentation on 2023/24 Ad Tracking Results

Executive Director John Urdi outlined the information in the MLT Ad Tracking Results presentation.

There was discussion between Mr. Urdi and members of the Board.

5.2 Revised Special Event Funding Review - Overview of New Special Event Funding Guidelines as Set By the Ad Hoc Special Event Review Committee

Vice President, Community Engagement Betsy Truax outlined the information in the Special Event Grant Funding Guiding Document and the Grant Cycle Scoring Document.

There was discussion between staff and members of the Board.

5.3 Website Growth Marketing Presentation - Review of Website Strategies and Tactics

Digital Marketing Manager Samantha Lindberg outlined the information in the Website Growth Strategy presentation.

5.4 Resident Sentiment Survey Results - Presentation of Resident Sentiment Survey Findings

This item was taken out of order.

Vice President, Community Engagement Betsy Truax outlined the information in the Resident Sentiment Survey.

There was discussion between staff and members of the Board.

5.5 President & CEO Contract Recommendation - Review of Revised President & CEO Employment Contract; Board Discussion and Vote

Chair Pat Foster outlined the information in the revised Draft President and CEO Agreement, the Executive Director Review Committee Bonus Calculation document and the Staff and Board Executive Director Reviews.

There was discussion between Mr. Urdi and members of the Board.

Moved by Secretary John Mendel
Seconded by Board Member John Wentworth

Approve President and CEO's new Contract.

For (7): Chair Pat Foster, Vice Chair Eric Clark, Secretary John Mendel, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Kirk Wallace, Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa, and Board Member Mary Beth Ericson

Absent (2): Treasurer John Morris, and Board Member Tom Parker

Carried (7 to 0)

Moved by Chair Pat Foster
Seconded by Secretary John Mendel

Approve the following bonuses: Transient Occupancy Tax generation (TOT) \$10,163.26, Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) generation \$10,163.26, Board Evaluation \$6,233.47, MLT Staff Evaluation \$5,488.16, for a total bonus of \$32,048.15.

For (7): Chair Pat Foster, Vice Chair Eric Clark, Secretary John Mendel, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Kirk Wallace, Board Member Cristi Quesada-Costa, and Board Member Mary Beth Ericson

Absent (2): Treasurer John Morris, and Board Member Tom Parker

Carried (7 to 0)

5.6 Discussion of Town Council Proposed 2-point Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Increase (from 13 to 15%) - Board Discussion and Vote on Whether to Take a Position on the Proposed Increase

This item was taken out of order.

Treasurer John Morris led a discussion as to whether the Board should take a stance on the Town's proposed 2% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) increase. Mr. Morris said he would have liked to have seen work on the Placemate Program first to see how that turned out before bringing a general tax, rather than a measure specific to housing.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Councilmember Chris Bubser spoke about the process the Town Council went through which led to the decision to put the measure on the ballot as a general tax rather than a special tax and discussed the shortage the Town would still have even if the 2% tax passed. Councilmember Bubser spoke in favor of the tax.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board to take the stance that they support housing and Housing Now! Initiatives, but they would not take a specific position on this measure as a Board.

Treasurer John Morris left at 1:52 p.m.

5.7 Financial Reports

Receive an update regarding the financial health of the Mammoth Lakes Tourism and the results of the previous month for Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) and current account balances. Discussion of President & CEO check signing limit – currently anything above \$500 needs a second signature (administrative action no vote needed, just board consensus).

Executive Director John Urdi outlined the information in the Financial Reports.

Chair Pat Foster led a discussion around the President and CEO's check signing limit.

There was discussion between Mr. Urdi and members of the Board.

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board to increase the President and CEO's check signing limit to \$9,999.99.

6. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A brief recap of past, current, and future efforts of each department.

6.1 International Sales

Vice President, Global Tourism Michael Vanderhurst gave an update on international sales activities. Mr. Vanderhurst reported that there would be a lot of Familiarization (FAM) Activity centered around fall colors and

activities, and said that MLT would accompany Visit California for Brand USA Travel Week. He said that MLT hosted a writer from Southern California in conjunction with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) and discussed upcoming international media visits.

There was discussion between Mr. Vanderhurst and members of the Board.

6.2 Community Engagement

Vice President, Community Engagement Betsy Truax provided an update on community engagement efforts. Ms. Truax reported that MLT was a member of Destination Think and announced that MLT had been asked by Destination Think to create a video for World Tourism Day, and thanked members of the Board and community who participated in the video they had submitted. She reported that she was working on the annual report and said that it would focus on MLT's stewardship and community engagement initiatives.

6.3 Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing Manager Samantha Lindberg introduced new Marketing Coordinator Jenna Andersen and provided an update on digital marketing efforts and social media activity. Ms. Lindberg reported that MLT had done a photo shoot with LA Kings Captain Anže Kopitar and spoke about the "It's a Mammoth Thing" video series which launched in July and focused on specific topics to educate the public on responsible recreation. She said the next video to be released would focus on wildlife, and would be followed by a fall video that would discuss winter parking.

There was discussion between staff and members of the Board.

7. OTHER STANDING UPDATES

7.1 Mammoth Resorts Update - Eric Clark

Vice Chair Eric Clark gave an update on Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) news, activities and operations. Mr. Clark spoke in favor of the upcoming wildlife messaging having a more somber approach. He discussed the success of the Mountain's avalanche closure cutting video and reported that all their safety messaging would be presented through videos moving forward. He announced that Gran Fondo would take place on Saturday, the Bike Park would close mid-September, and said that

tubing and the coaster were only available on the weekends now, and that tubing would close at the end of September. Mr. Clark provided a Capital Projects update.

7.2 Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce Update - Tom Parker

There was no update given.

7.3 Town Council Update - John Wentworth

Board Member John Wentworth gave an update on Town Council news, activities and operations. Mr. Wentworth discussed items that would be on tonight's Town Council meeting, including a workshop with MLT, and discussed a recent Los Angeles Times article about a Mountain Lion attack in Malibu.

There was discussion between Executive Director John Urdi and members of the Board.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 2, 2024, from 1-3pm. Board to consider rescheduling or canceling the October meeting due to the President & CEO being out of office at that time.

There was discussion between Executive Director John Urdi and members of the Board about canceling the October meeting.

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board to cancel the October meeting and reconvene the Board at the regular meeting scheduled to be held on November 6, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.