

**TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**OCTOBER 6, 2020**  
**GoToWebinar Virtual Meeting**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Katie Grice, Chair—Big Sky	Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish	Patricia McGlynn—Kalispell
Rachel Gregg, Vice Chair—Missoula	Nicolle Fugere—Fort Benton	Sabre Moore—Ekalaka
Lindy Brunson—Kalispell	Alicia Harvey—Bozeman	Brian Sprenger—Bozeman
Tami Burke—Glasgow	Glenniss Indreland—Bozeman	Steve Wahrlich—Billings
Chris Dantic—Glendive	Bill McGladdery—Butte	Joe Willauer—Twin Bridges
Jeff Ewelt—Billings		

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Lane Spotted Elk—Lame Deer      Alger Swingley—Great Falls

**DEPT. OF COMMERCE (DOC) and MT OFFICE OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MOTBD) STAFF**

Jan Stoddard—ISO Bureau Chief	Susan Joy—Made in Montana Program Manager
Kim Birrell—International Travel Trade Coordinator	Carmen Levick—Tourism Outreach Coordinator
Kev Campbell—Business Development Specialist	Joe Ramler—Senior Economist
Ben Gill—Research Economist	Barb Sanem—Compliance Specialist
Marlee Iverson—Interim Marketing Bureau Chief	Kate Siberell—Content Marketing Coordinator

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS**

Council Chair Katie Grice called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:00 a.m. Roll call of Council members, Tourism Regions and CVBs, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) staff and other attendees followed.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approval of the June 8, 2020 TAC Meeting Minutes
- TAC Member Roundtable Comments

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the June 8, 2020 TAC meeting minutes. Brian Sprenger seconded. Jan Stoddard clarified that the consent agenda should be adopted with the reading of the items listed and that is the approval of the minutes. Steve Wahrlich amended his motion to adopt the consent agenda. Rachel Gregg seconded. With no request to remove an item from the consent agenda, the consent agenda was adopted.**

Glenniss Indreland stated that she would like to amend the TAC Member Roundtable Comments as the items she submitted were not included. She asked that they be entered into the record. Because there was no request for the TAC Member Roundtable Comments to be removed from the consent agenda, it was adopted as is and the notes will be submitted for the February 2021 meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brenda Maas with the Southeast Montana tourism region thanked MOTBD staff for their work in the CARES Act funding that the Regions and CVBs received.

## **TAC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Executive Committee**—Katie Grice, Chair

Katie gave an overview of the TAC Retreat that was held on October 5, 2020 via webinar. She stated that the discussion included a tourism recovery strategic plan as well as a review of the TAC parking lot items of what has been accomplished and what remains on the list as still in progress including Air BnB clarification and more availability of lodging tax collections. She said that the TAC Executive Committee is going to draft a letter to the Department of Revenue to express the need for monthly collection data for the lodging taxes as it is necessary for decision making and planning for future marketing.

She said the TAC strives to continue working on better communications between the TAC, MOTBD, the Regions and CVBs. The TAC will continue to send out surveys to get feedback following the meetings regarding content and structure so that the meetings are effective and beneficial for all.

Katie also said that the TAC added to the parking lot items consideration and review of the threshold for collections for CVBs and the Regions. In addition to that, there was also a lengthy discussion on the tourism strategic plan and the budget concerns in order to move forward with the strategic plan.

### **Marketing Committee Updates**—Rachel Gregg, Chair

The Marketing Committee recommends final approval of the following audits as submitted:

#### **Audits with Special Circumstances**

**Sidney CVB**—The Sidney CVB fell below the threshold of collections to maintain CVB status. The Marketing Committee recommended final approval of the FY18 and FY19 Sidney CVB audit as submitted which will close out the funding for the Sidney CVB. **Jeff Ewelt moved to approve the FY18 and FY19 Sidney CVB audits as submitted. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.**

**Livingston CVB**—The Livingston CVB is now being managed by the Livingston Business Improvement District (LBID). This audit was completed and all funding for the Livingston CVB has been transferred from the Livingston Chamber of Commerce to the LBID for FY21. The Committee recommended final approval of the FY20 Livingston CVB audit as submitted. **Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the Livingston CVB audits as submitted. Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.**

#### **FY20 Audit Reports**

**Central Montana**—Patricia McGlynn moved to approve the FY20 Central Montana audit as submitted with \$0.97 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. **Jeff Ewelt seconded. Glenniss Indreland commended Gayle Fisher for her work with Central Montana. Motion passed.**

**Missouri River Country**—Brian Springer moved to approve the FY20 Missouri River Country audit as submitted with \$0.72 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. **Sabre Moore seconded. Motion passed.**

**Yellowstone Country**—Alicia Harvey moved to approve the FY20 Yellowstone Country audit as submitted with \$0.31 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. **Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.**

**Belgrade CVB**—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY20 Belgrade CVB audit as submitted with \$36.92 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. **Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.**

**Visit Big Sky**—Tami Burke moved to approve FY20 Visit Big audit as submitted with \$120,789.47 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. **Bill McGladdery seconded. Glenniss Indreland commented that the large balance of uncommitted tax funds on hand is concerning and asked that the entity try to spend the funding within the timeline of the fiscal year. Candace Strauss clarified that the funds were allocated to a marketing method and will be approved by the Marketing Committee at their next meeting. Motion passed.**

Gardiner CVB—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY20 Gardiner CVB audit as submitted with \$0.08 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.

Great Falls CVB—Sabre Moore moved to approve the FY20 Great Falls CVB audit as submitted with \$0.25 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Helena CVB—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY20 Helena CVB audit as submitted with \$0.87 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Steve Wahrlich seconded. Motion passed.

Red Lodge CVB—Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the FY20 Red Lodge CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Glenniss Indreland seconded. Motion passed.

West Yellowstone CVB—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY20 West Yellowstone CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Alicia Harvey seconded. Motion passed.

Explore Whitefish—Bill McGladdery moved to approve the FY20 Explore Whitefish audit as submitted with \$0.16 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Steve Wahrlich seconded. Motion passed.

Visit Billings—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY20 Visit Billings audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Bill McGladdery seconded. Motion passed.

Rachel stated that the Marketing Committee will be also be reviewing the Rules and Regulations for the Regions and CVBs. She asked that if there are any Council members interested in participating on that review to let her know. She said that the committee will also be reaching out to the tourism partners to get input.

The Marketing Committee also reviewed and approved on behalf of the full Council, budget increases for FY21 for the following tourism Regions/CVBs:

- Central Montana
- Missouri River Country
- Billings CVB
- Gardiner CVB
- Great Falls CVB
- Helena CVB
- Red Lodge CVB
- West Yellowstone
- Whitefish CVB

The Marketing Committee also approved on behalf of the full Council additional marketing methods for the following CVBs:

- Visit Billings
- Great Falls CVB
- Red Lodge CVB

**Research Committee**—Rhonda Fitzgerald, Chair

Rhonda reported that during the Research Committee Retreat on October 5, 2020, there was discussion of the status of the FY19/FY20 research projects and the need for the continuation of the ongoing projects such as the quarterly resident and non-resident data. During the retreat, other project ideas were submitted by attendees. The Committee will make a recommendation for research projects to the full Council in February 2021. Current and past research project information can be found at the ITRR website at [www.itrr.umt.edu](http://www.itrr.umt.edu). Rhonda also announced that Dr. Norma Nickerson will be retiring, and that Jeremy Sage will serve as the Interim Director for ITRR.

**Heritage Commission Update**—Jeff Ewelt, TAC Representative for the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC) Jeff stated that the Heritage Commission is responsible for the preservation and management of Virginia City, Nevada City and Readers Alley. Jeff noted that these are some of the most visited attractions in Montana with over 500,000 visitors per year. He said that 2020 was better than anticipated and that rental and visitor services were down slightly in comparison to previous years, but that shortfall was helped by the Village Pump gas station in Virginia City which generated over \$152,000 in sales.

Jeff also gave an overview of projects supported by HB652 which allocated \$750,000 to the MHC for preservation efforts to buildings and structures. Some of the completed projects include updates to seasonal housing for the Opera House Cabins and Daylight Village, a new fire suppression system and electrical upgrades for Nevada City, and ADA access and electrical upgrades at the Bale of Hay Saloon.

**MOTBD UPDATES**—MOTBD Staff

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) updates were given including staff changes, bureau updates, tribal tourism, marketing and research.

**MEETING RECESSED AT 12:00 P.M.**

The meeting was recessed at 12:00 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Chair Katie Grice called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll call of Council members, Tourism Regions and CVBs, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) staff and other attendees followed.

**COVID-19 UPDATE AND SAFETY INFORMATION**—Dr. Holzman, State Medical Officer

Dr. Holzman gave an update of the COVID-19 pandemic in Montana. He also reviewed safety guidelines to help slow the spread of the virus.

**INDUSTRY SECTOR UPDATES AND FY21 FORECAST PANEL**—Jan Stoddard, Moderator

The panelists gave an overview of the impact of COVID-19 to various industry sectors and provided their perspective moving forward.

- Dax Scheiffer—Voices of Montana Tourism (Montana community tourism)
- Stuart Doggett—Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association (Lodging and legislative issues)
- Roth Jordan—Montana Ale Works (Montana Retail and Restaurant Association)
- Brian Sprenger—Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (Montana airports/airline industry)
- Rachel Schmidt —Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation (Outdoor recreation)
- Mac Minard—Montana Outfitters & Guides Association (Outfitting industry)
- Pat Doyle—Montana State Parks (State parks and FWP updates)
- Gina Kerzman—Glacier National Park (National Parks forecast and updates)
- Joe Alexander —U.S. Forest Service (U.S. Forest updates)

**UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS**

- February 8-9, 2021—Helena

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.