

Custer County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes for September 10, 2019
Westcliffe Town Hall

Call to Order at 9:00am

Board Roll Call: Debbie Adams, Jennifer Anderson, Peggi Collins, Charley Ellison, Bob Swanson, Rene Smith

Visitors: Jay Printz, Mary Chamberlain (SOCO Tourism)

Public Comment: none

Amendment to Agenda: Add discussion on SOCO Tourism Summit 2020 by Mary Chamberlain

Approval of Minutes: Peggi Collins motion to approve July 9 minutes. Charley Ellison seconded it. Passed 5/0.

Guest Presentations:

Mary Chamberlain, SOCO Tourism Summit, discussed the successful 2019 SOCO annual regional conference. For 2020, The SOCO Tourism Summit would like CCTB to host an Opening Reception in Westcliffe. The 2020 SOCO Summit is scheduled for 8-10 April 2020.

Motion by Debbie Adams to participate in the April 8-10 SOCO 2020 Tourism Conference. Peggi Collins seconded the motion. Passed 5/0

Rene Smith stated the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byways is applying for a 2021 CTO tourism grant valued at \$25K and would like the CCTB to collaborate with them on the opportunity. The grant would support regional tourism and focus on Heritage Tours. CCTB recommended the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byways Board present their plan at the CCTB's Nov meeting.

Reports:

Chair: Debbie Adams reported the following:

- Received CTO scholarship to attend the Governor's Conference at end of September.
- The Custer County Strategic Plan has had no follow up from commissioners; the CCTB however, is still accomplishing the tasks it was assigned.
- Gratitude to Bob Swanson for his time and effort in making videos to elevate Westcliffe.

Treasurer: Charley Ellison provided update to financial report. Lodging Tax revenue for 2019 has increased by 20% over 2018.

Updates by Vista Works and Lava Research: Bryan Jordan reviewed various CTO grants and provided an update of its marketing efforts for July-August. Some statistics include:

- Over 7000 visitors have clicked on Custer County ads
- 72% of the hits come from Google, 80% are new visitors
- Demographics are Front Range and Dallas

- There are 9000 subscribers to the newsletters.
- For paid Google ads, our click through rate is 6 times the industry average.
- Key search phrases include Westcliffe, San Isabel and Great Sand Dunes.
- Top performing post was a paid ad that included a video highlighting the Lake DeWeese Reservoir; the video reached 44,000 visitors.
- Will find out if awarded two tourism CTO Grants next month and one this month.

Amy Moulton provided an update on layout and content of website. The site is more interactive and full of interesting news, events and articles highlighting tourism in Custer County. CCTB approved going live. Amy stated Custer County has over 3,000 followers on Facebook. Amy will write a press release to inform community of what Tourism is doing. We will aim for a quarterly press release.

Debbie Adams made a motion to approve the annual expense of \$89.00 to assist in automatic event submissions to the site. Charley Ellison seconded. All in favor, approved 5/0

Chamber of Commerce: Rene Smith discussed increased traffic with over 250 visitors signed in at Visitor Center. Key areas of interest included Dark Skies and Hiking. After polling most state visitor centers, it was determined many needed additional Discovery Guides.

Unfinished Business:

- CCTB will not be pursuing support of the Discovery Guide for 2020.
- Great response with visitor survey and stickers. Most identify Family & Friends as how they discovered area. Almost out of small stickers. Ordered larger Westcliffe bumper stickers, which are being sold at All the Range for \$3 with proceeds going to Trails for All and Search & Rescue. We will continue with visitor surveys into the fall to determine what is attracting visitors during those months.

New Business:

- Need to research and gather ideas for fresh new tourism print collateral for 2020. Want to consider a simple trifold to fit in state-wide tourism racks.
- Charley presented an update of the pursuit of a Dark Sky Reserve designation with surrounding counties. Unfortunately Custer County may not be able to participate without support from the County. The designation is a long-term process so we must educate to change the story.

Next meeting: Nov 12, 2019 at Westcliffe Town Hall

Meeting adjourned 11:05am

Jenny Anderson, Secretary