

REGULAR MEETING
Moab Area Travel Council Advisory Board (TCAB)

Held at Grand County, Utah Commission Chambers
125 E Center
Moab, Utah 84532

 **11/14/24 Travel Council Advisory Board**

MINUTES

November 14, 2024 | 3:00pm

****Time stamps (HH:MM:SS) correspond to the video****

Members in Attendance: Brian Hunnings, Alex Borichevsky, Lori McFarland, Sharon Kienzle, Ben Fredregill, Cassie Oliver, Mary McGann

Members in Attendance Remotely: Rebecca Monceaux

Non-members in Attendance: Ali Harford, Ben Alter, Mick Soleta, Bega Metzner, Pete Gross (citizen to be heard), Stephen Stocks

Non-members in Attendance Remotely: Tammy Howland

Welcome

00:00:50

Citizens to -be- heard

00:01:05, Pete Gross

Introductions

00:06:15, Ali Harford, Assistant Marketing Director

Conflicts of interest, disclosures, ex-parte communication

Presentations, if any

Discussion and Action Items:

Board Member Reports (00:07:10)

- a. Rebecca reported that October at the Element was “great” and that November had been better than expected, adding that the hotel was planning to wind down in December with the exception of some holiday parties.
- b. Alex said that despite some record-setting days at his restaurants, customer volume was still down when compared to the same period in 2022. He also noted the Moab Folk Festival and the outdoor dining area’s positive impacts on business.
- c. Sharon noted that visitorship was slowing at the Moab Information Center (MIC), adding that most of her seasonal employees had finished their terms. She discussed the Arches National Park timed entry pilot for 2025 which would break briefly in the summer during the park’s slower weeks.

- d. Cassie discussed the success of the chamber's banquet and noted the upcoming electric light parade.
- e. Lori shared that business at High Point Hummer was down in October as expected.
- f. Mary discussed work occurring in the Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (EOAB) to ensure the department's Trail to Tomorrow Strategic Plan was made actionable. She added that having the participation of a TCAB member would be beneficial, and that eventually, it would make sense for both boards to have a joint session regarding the plan. Brian expressed interest in working with the EOAB on their priorities when a TCAB representative's participation was warranted.
- g. Brian shared updates on renovations now underway at Red Cliffs Lodge. He also noted that though occupancy at the lodge was down in October and November when compared to 2022 and 2023, revenue was up. He discussed the successful engagement the lodge has seen in response to its recent press and the resort's official changeover to the Marriott ecosystem. He noted that the Bronco Off Rodeo was having its best November ever and discussed county-wide occupancy and revenue trends.
- h. The group briefly discussed the success of the New York Times' "36 Hours in Moab" piece.

Director's Report (00:26:50)

- a. Ben F. discussed his recent European sales mission trip with the Utah Office of Tourism (UOT). He discussed his efforts to promote extended stays with European visitors and tour operators, suggesting dark skies and non-National Park activities could serve as boons to prospective travelers. He noted that European visitation models are making similar considerations to Moab's, with stewardship and traveler volume at the center of their strategies. He also discussed work with Canyonlands Regional Airport to better promote flight services.

Approval Of Meeting Minutes From October 8, 2024, Travel Council Advisory Board Regular Meeting (00:43:00)

- a. Cassie noted an incorrect detail in the minutes' adjournment time.
- b. Cassie made a motion to approve the meeting minutes pending the correction discussed. Sharon seconded the motion. No discussion, passed unanimously.

Finalization Of FY25 Budget Advisory Letter To The Grand County Commission (00:44:05)

- a. Brian introduced the item and presented former advisory letters as a guide for the board's decision-making process. Stephen discussed discussions with the state auditor's office regarding allowable tax funding. The group discussed funding improvements and upkeep at the Moab Recreation and Aquatic Center (MRAC).
- b. The group began discussing funding recommendations for the MIC, law enforcement, solid waste services, and emergency medical services (EMS). The group discussed EMS' funding history and request for funding to the board. Brian noted that many counties similar to Grand used some mitigation tax funds to support water services infrastructure.
- c. Lori requested that the group review balances of unspent promotion tax funds before going further into the advisory process. Mary and Stephen discussed Gabe's report on

these funds, which was recently submitted and made public. Ben A. shared this report with the group ("2023 TRT Expenditure Report - Grand County").

- d. The board discussed funding amounts for different public services and local law enforcement. Lori motioned to fund Grand County EMS with transient room tax (TRT) mitigation dollars at the level of \$350,338 and fund the Grand County Sheriff's Department the remaining balance. Rebecca seconded the motion. No discussion, passed unanimously.
- e. Sharon requested that additional funds be appropriated from the tourism, recreation, cultural, convention, and airport facilities tax act (TRCC-A) to support an additional full-time equivalent staff member at the MIC and renovations for the facility's bathrooms. Lori motioned to reduce the support of technology improvements at Star Hall to \$50,00 and to fund the MIC for a total of \$310,000, of which \$110,000 would be used to hire two full-time equivalent positions and \$200,00 would be used to complete facility bathroom upgrades during the fiscal year 2025. Lori withdrew her motion.
- f. Cassie motioned to fund technology improvements at Star Hall at a level of \$100,00; to fund the MIC for a total of \$310,000, of which \$110,000 would be used to hire two full-time equivalent positions and \$200,00 would be used to complete facility bathroom upgrades during the fiscal year 2025; to fund paid advertising at a level of \$900,000' and, to use remaining TRT balance funds to fill the gap for a total spend of \$2,000,000 in advertising in 2025. Lori seconded the motion. No discussion, passed unanimously with Sharon abstaining.
- g. The group discussed the Grand County Fair's funding request, the MRAC, and upcoming film trail installations. Alex motioned to fund the MRAC from TRCC-A tax dollars at \$200,000 and to leave paid advertising fund allocations unchanged. Sharon seconded the motion. No discussion, passed unanimously.
- h. Brian motioned (**01:58:50**) to make final the following budget advisory items, based on the estimated tax intake of \$8,071,230 as provided by Clerk Auditor Gabe Woytek:
 - Of "Mitigation" expenditures, projected at \$5,084,875:
 - Emergency EMS - \$350,338 for the purchase of a new ambulance and medical equipment
 - Law Enforcement - the remainder of the \$5,084,875 for the Sheriff's Department and Search and Rescue.
 - Of "Establish and Promote" expenditures, projected at \$2,986,355:
 - Of "Recreation, Film Production, and Conventions Expenditures," projected at \$597,271:
 - Salaries and Overhead for the Grand County Active Trails and Transportation Department and Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission - \$387,000
 - Additional items for the Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission Budget
 - Updated production resource directory - \$5k
 - Familiarization Tours & Industry Travel Representation - \$20k
 - New Vehicle Capable of Site Inspections - \$80k

- Film Trail Installation - \$10k
 - Old Spanish Trail Arena/Grand County Fair rodeo funding, fair rides, fairway games, and larger rodeo circuit organization - \$100k
- Of Tourism Expenditures, projected at \$2,389,084:
 - Salaries and overhead for the Tourism division of the Economic Development Department - \$400k
 - New Branding for Moab - \$775k
 - Creative Video Assets - \$100k
 - Paid Advertising specific to targeting Weddings - \$300k
 - Billboards - New Creative and Leases - \$80k
 - International Paid Media - \$90k
 - Crowdriff - \$35k
 - PR Firm and Paid Social Posts - \$105k
 - Travel Trade B/b - \$40k
 - Moab Guest Guide- \$8.1k
 - Printed Materials - Adventure Guide & Moab Guide - \$40k
 - Professional Services to include: Go Utah Leads, Tourism Economics, GOV OS - \$120k
 - Data Gathering Tools to include: STR Data, Symphony, Zartico or other GEO Fencing Data, Visa View, Eproval - \$153k
 - Professional Memberships and Industry Subscriptions to include: UTIA, UADMO, Grand Circle, IITA, TTRA, EDCU, Wall Street Journal, Travel & Leisure, Conde Nast, Outside Magazine, Etc. - \$7k
 - Travel Trade Shows to include all Professional Membership organizations as well as International Conferences - \$76k
 - Familiarization (FAM) Tours - \$15k
 - Website - \$45k
- Of TRCC-A funds, projected at \$1,406,021:
 - For the Moab Information Center \$200k to improve restroom facilities
 - Two (2) Full Time Equivalent Employees for the Moab Information Center - \$110k
 - Moab Recreation Center - \$200k for operational support
 - Support improved technology at Star Hall - \$100k
 - Paid Advertising - remaining balance, estimated at \$796k in advertising and promotion, with the caveat that TRT reserve balances be used to reach a level of promotion spend equivalent to 2019 levels (\$2M)

Sharon seconded the motion. No discussion, passed unanimously.

Consideration of future agenda items - none at this time

Brian motioned to adjourn the meeting. Cassie seconded. No discussion, passed unanimously.