

Board of Directors

Bruce Spangler, President (Oroville)
Brooke Isenberg, Vice President (Chico)
Analise Uhrig (Chico)
Mohammad Billah, Treasurer (Chico)
Kiran Paragji, (Oroville)
Haroon Saddique (Paradise)
Nicole Johansson, (At Large)
John Pearson, (At Large)



Advisory Board

Victoria Anton, Oroville
Melanie Bassett, Chico
Evie Feldman, Paradise
Chris Constantin, Chico
Jennifer Leonard, Unincorporated
Ben North, Oroville
Melissa Schuster, Paradise
Audrey Taylor, Unincorporated
Heather Ugie, countywide

EXPLORE BUTTE COUNTY REGULAR BOARD MEETING

May 14, 2020

Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Call in information

Dial in: 669-900-9128

Meeting ID: 815 4595 3246

MINUTES

PURPOSE: The purpose of this corporation shall be to promote Butte County tourism through the development and operation of a tourism business improvement district and other programs and initiatives.

- 1. Call to order and roll call – Meeting called to order by President Spangler at 12:05 p.m. Introductions made.

Present – Directors: Spangler, Isenberg, Uhrig, Billah, Paragji, Saddique*, Johansson, Pearson. Advisors: Anton, Bassett, Feldman, Constantin, Leonard, North, Schuster, Taylor, Ugie.

*arrived late

Guests – Aaron Wright, State Parks; Pat Macias, MONCA; Scott Dowell, City of Chico

Staff – Denero, Baer, Salas

- 2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

2.1 Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2020 and Special Board Meeting of March 23, 2020.

2.2 Approval of March and April 2020 Financial Reports

A motion was made by Director Pearson and seconded by Director Billah to approve the consent agenda items.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Spangler, Isenberg, Pearson, Johansson, Billah, Paragji, Uhrig

NOES: None

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ABSTENTIONS: None

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is invited to address the Board regarding any non-agenda items at this time. Time is limited to 3 minutes per speaker. The Board may not take any action on public comment.

Jennifer Leonard: Almendra is still making hand sanitizer. Interested parties can fill out the request form online; it is also available by individual bottle sales.

Heather Ugie: Slater & Sons donated 5,000 face masks thru 5th Sun and the Chico Chamber has been working to distribute those to businesses who need them.

Regarding face coverings: Mohammad Billah mentioned that he has been sourcing face coverings for \$0.50/piece; Nicole Johansson has a local source at \$0.79/piece; Melissa Schuster mentioned that SprayChem has industrial supplies as well.

4. REGULAR AGENDA

4.1 CONSIDERATION OF ANALISE UHLRIG TO FILL CHICO LODGING BOARD SEAT

Board member, Dori Franklin, representing Oxford Suites for one of three Chico lodging board seats, is no longer working at Oxford and had to resign from the Explore Butte County board of directors. Dori has recommended that Director of Sales for Oxford Suites, Analise Uhrig, be considered by the board of directors to fill the now-vacant seat.

A motion was made by Director Isenberg and seconded by Director Johansson to appoint Analise Uhrig, representing Chico lodging, to Dori's vacated seat. Her term will begin immediately and end March of 2022.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Spangler, Isenberg, Pearson, Johansson, Billah, Uhrig, Saddique (Paragji call dropped for this vote.)

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

4.2 CONSIDERATION OF CHICO ZONE MARKETING PROPOSAL BY CHICOSTART

Chicostart submitted a proposal for \$50,000 for Chico zone marketing funds to support various projects for the current year. The funding would support multiple projects in 2020 including: growTECH Fest, expanding Grow with Google

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workshops with promotional videos, creation of a poker run-style tech tour, and downtown crawl centered around start-up companies. Funding the proposal would allow Chicostart to reach a broader audience and elevate the experiences participants would have and associate with Chico and Butte County.

The BOD had many follow up questions regarding the amount of money requested and the possible results. Direction was given to Eva to re-write the proposal with updated information with direct marketing costs, potential overnight stays, estimate on the value of inviting people into the area. They would like to see more value and better results. Once the proposal is update the BOD would consider revisiting the proposal.

A motion was made by Director Johansson and seconded by Director Billah to table further discussion until the next board meeting.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Spangler, Isenberg, Pearson, Johansson, Billah, Uhrig, Saddique, Paragji

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

4.3 FINANCIAL UPDATE DUE TO COVID-19

Effective March 23 all EBC marketing efforts were paused as more information regarding COVID-19 was being reported and the State issued a stay-at-home order. This board made the decision to quickly adjust the operating budget based on a worse-case scenario with the understanding that if our lodging properties did not have visitors, the TBID budget would be significantly impacted. Conversations were had at the jurisdiction level regarding deferments of TOT, which did not take place in any jurisdiction, and the potential for adjusting the current management district plan should there be a need to defer TBID payments, which did not happen. Based on reduced expenditures and reduces income, this is a review item of our current cash flow and cash assets.

Financial status update was given. No questions asked, no direction given.

4.4 MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT AND CONSIDERATION OF ALLOCATING \$300,000 TO FUTURE RECOVERY CAMPAIGNS

The marketing committee reviewed potential pivots for marketing plans when it is time to begin advertising Butte County again. The current marketing plan, and allocated budget, have been stopped and the committee reviewed different ideas that would drive overnight stays directly. With reduced income to EBC this year,

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the new activations and campaigns would require \$300,000 be allocated from reserve funds.

A motion was made by Director Johansson and seconded by Director Pearson to allocate \$300,000 of reserve funds to recovery initiatives that will include immediate, mid-term, and long-term campaigns to be directed by the marketing committee.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Spangler, Isenberg, Pearson, Johansson, Billah, Uhrig, Saddique, Paragji

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

4.5 AD HOC TBID RENEWAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The updated management district plan was submitted to Butte County for County Counsel to review. Counsel review took longer than expected because of shifting priorities due to COVID-19. On Friday, May 8, the management district plan was approved, and the petition drive can commence. The proposed renewal timeline has been extended because of the extra time at the County. The district renewal is still scheduled to take place prior to the November termination date.

Update was given. No action necessary.

4.6 CALIFORNIA TOURISM MONTH AND 2019 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

May is California Tourism Month, a time when tourism leaders remind local leaders of the economic impact travel and tourism has on our local communities. This year is it more important than ever as travel and tourism is one of the most hard-hit sectors of the economy due to COVID-19. The total direct travel spending in Butte County in 2019 was \$338.7 million, up from \$312.2 million in 2018; transient occupancy tax collected was \$4.75 million, up from \$3.85 million in 2018 (23% increase). Infographic information of the 2019 impact can be found at

<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact?sort=county®ion=Butte>

Update was given. No action necessary.

4.7 CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

EBC is currently funded solely by the BCTBID; all funding comes from Butte County lodging properties. As occupancy rates dropped dramatically as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the operating budget was also dramatically reduced.

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Fortunately, EBC has reserve funds that will allow the organization to maintain operations and create recovery campaigns in the near future. It has been recommended by industry leaders that DMOs secure multiple funding sources to strengthen revenue streams and not be as vulnerable to changing markets. As a non-profit organization, EBC may have opportunity to secure sponsorships as well as grant funding for specific projects.

A motion was made by Director Isenberg and seconded by Director Johansson to keep abreast of additional funding sources for EBC activities, and to create a committee that will oversee these opportunities.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Spangler, Isenberg, Pearson, Johansson, Billah, Uhlig, Saddique, (Director Paragji's connection was dropped for this vote)

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

5. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

5.1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT** *Carolyn Denero*

All non-voting members were asked to leave the meeting for closed session.

6. **CLOSED SESSION**

6.1 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Review given and agreed upon by E.D. and BOD.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Carolyn Denero