

## CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAU ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Monday, June 17, 2019

The regular meeting of the Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) Advisory Board was posted Thursday, June 13, 2019, before 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held Monday, June 17, 2019, at Guthrie City Hall in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room.

**Members Present:** Tommy Wageman, Kailyn Swonger, Kristen Dahlin, Rebecca Pittman, Jeremy Maker

**Staff Present:** Justin Fortney, Tourism Director; Verla Raines Cline, Tourism Assistant

**Guests Present:** Tom Webb

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order with a quorum on Monday, June 17, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. by Tourism Director Fortney. Five board members, two Tourism staff members were present.

**Public Comments:** No public comments.

**Minutes from February 25, 2019 meeting:** Swonger moved to approve the minutes as presented. Maker seconded the motion. All voted aye.

**Discussion and possible action on event support application for Oklahoma's International Bluegrass Festival:** Tom Webb, OIBF Festival Coordinator addressed the board regarding the history and relationship of the festival with the city of Guthrie, and the current application for event support for the 2019 festival. This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> year for the festival, which has drawn many participants from all over the United States and the world. Webb expressed thankfulness for the goodwill, effort and means from the city. In the past months two major events had an impact on the organization: the fire at Byron Berline's Doublestop Fiddleshop, where much of the OIBF administration materials were kept, and the flooding of the Cottonwood Flats building, used for volunteers and storage for the festival. In both situations, things are looking fine for the October festival. The board has plans to improve the bathrooms at the volunteer building, to be ready for the festival. Webb said that their board has always tried to be frugal and forward-thinking, and to be a festival that continues to provide an entertainment experience, and also encouragement and youth scholarships to upcoming generations.

Board member Maker asked about the number of overnight stays in Guthrie motels and B&Bs. The number of 1500 is an estimate, based on surveys and years of seeing that accommodations fill up quickly. The festival and the city council have recently renewed the lease for the grounds for the next five years. Webb thanked the city for their support through the years, for the recent help with infrastructure, including recent improvements in electrical and water hookups for RV camping.

Fortney asked for a motion

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Fortney asked if there was a motion to approve the request for \$2,500 in event support for O.I.B.F, Maker made a motion, Wagerman seconded, all voted aye.

**Discussion and possible action on chairperson position.** Mike Monahan has resigned as chairperson since he is moving out of the city of Guthrie limits. Maker nominated Kailyn Swonger for Chairperson of the CVB board. Dahlin seconded, all voted aye.

**Discussion and possible action on vice-chairperson position.** This position is also open, due to resignation of H.C. Patel a few weeks ago. Wageman nominated Kristen Dahlin, Maker seconded, all voted aye.

There was discussion that there are two open positions for the CVB board. Board members were asked to think of someone they may know that would be interested. The city website and the city newsletter (in each month's water bill) both announce that there are openings for volunteers on city advisory boards. Applications are online and at city hall.

**Budget update:** Fortney presented that revenue from hotel/motel tax is down this year, compared to last year. When compared to the year before, it is not down. Last year was fantastic for revenue, possibly having to do with oil and gas activity which was high at that in our area.

June-September, the last several fiscal years:

FY15 – \$29,695

FY16 - \$37,147

FY17 - \$43,544

FY18 - \$41,809

Fortney stated that we need \$14,486 (June-September) in order to meet the FY19 budget. The budget year lasts to the end of September. Swonger mentioned the coming festival at the end of September, called Oklahoma Born & Branded, which will probably bring revenue. There are no more event support applications to CVB at this time. There is now \$1,000 left in the Special Events category of our budget. The Marketing category can be used to cover some event support requests.

Swonger asked if Air BnB establishments pay hotel/motel tax, and if not, why not. More research is required to answer this question, some cities have looked into the issue and decided to collect the tax. Some of the traditional Bed and Breakfasts are also signing up with Air BnB.

**Offsite Tourism Office update:** At some point in time soon, the Tourism Office is relocating to the building just south of Hoboken Coffee Roasters shop on South Division. This should make us more easily accessible to visitors to Guthrie. The Tourism Department includes Justin Fortney- director, Verla Cline- assistant, and Aaron Ryburn – media specialist. Aaron will maintain his office and equipment at City Hall.

**Staff comments:** Fortney said that the “Hit the Bricks” podcasts, produced by Guthrie Tourism and Guthrie News Page, can be accessed on most podcast outlets, in addition to the links on the Guthrie Municipal facebook page and the blog on [www.guthrieok.com](http://www.guthrieok.com). The videos can also be viewed on YouTube, as well as on Cox channel 20.

Filming has begun on a project to feature “Weekend in Guthrie” ideas, short pieces on ways to enjoy what Guthrie has to offer to visitors. Each short clip will have 3 recommendations for a restaurant, lodging and an activity. Activities include the festivals, Guthrie Maker Days, the Beacon Drive-In, Pollard shows, disc golf, etc.

New things coming up: several businesses that offer art training and crafts have created Guthrie Maker Days, which is promoting a make-and-take event at various businesses on the first Saturday of each month, coinciding with Red Brick Nights on those evenings. Tracy Biggs Hayes has helped coordinate the effort to advertise with flyers, logo, and social media announcements.

A biking event organizer from OKC is planning a 3-race series in Guthrie, with 60-mile bicycle races on 3 dates: September 21, Oct 5 and October 19. Each race will start downtown in front of the Kent’s Bicycle Shop, and will increase in difficulty with each race. Fortney suggested that the second weekend (Oct. 5) race participants could be interested in combining their race day with the Bluegrass Festival that weekend, which already welcomes bike riders to attend the weekend enjoying music and camping.

Verla Cline mentioned that upcoming events offer volunteer opportunities for board members and other Guthrie citizens to be the friendly faces and greeters of Guthrie. Some dates for welcoming tourists/visitors: Little Britches Rodeo at Lazy E, July 2 -6; July 6, Red Brick Nights; July 20, a Memorial Car Show, downtown at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Cleveland, will welcome registrants from Texas and other places; July 27 & 28, Byron Berline’s grand re-opening music shows at the new location; September 7 cross country track meet that brings families from around the state; Bike race series in September and October; September 27-29 three day festival Oklahoma Born & Branded, music and activities in downtown Guthrie.

**Board comments:** No comments

**Adjournment:** Motion for adjournment by Swonger, Maker seconded, meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.

CHAIR: 