Joplin Convention & Visitors Bureau
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JCVB Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

December 17, 2019

Attendees:	Attendees: Mike Wilson, Kevin Greim, Miranda Comer, Denise DuBois, Bob Kluth, Lynn Weathers, Jeremy Nienkamp, Mike Greninger, Crystal Albright, Councilwoman Melodee Colbert-Kean, and Traci Palmer
Absent:	Erin Slifka
Staff:	Patrick Tuttle and Kerstin Landwer
Guests:	Pete Hall, Residence Inn, Christopher Beyer, Hilton Garden Inn, and Clifford Wert, Connect2Culture
Location:	Joplin City Hall, 5th Floor Informal Chamber

I. The board gathered at 3:00 p.m. for its year-end Appreciation Gathering with food. The formal meeting was called to order by Chair Mike Wilson at 3:19 p.m.

Mr. Wilson thanked the board for participation, dialogue, and consistently meeting quorums.

II. Approve of October & November Minutes:

Mr. Greninger made a motion to accept the revised October 22, 2019 minutes, Ms. Weathers seconded, unanimously approved. 10-0-1

Mr. Greim motioned to accept the November 19, 2019 minutes, Mr. Greninger seconded, unanimously approved. 10-0-1

III. Tabled Proposed Changes to CVB AB:

Chair Wilson shared that the whole intent of the proposal was to reach a 2% increase in the lodging tax for the specific intent of building a tourism venue. He reported $27 million dollars has been collected since the inception of the lodging tax from his personal research. He shared that the funds are used for the CVB, sports marketing, event promotions (grant program), and entryway beautification. He offered that a fifth use could be a tourism venue.

He voiced concern that we could improve as a board, and as a CVB. Offered a comparison of Joplin to Cape Girardeau. Estimating that the additional 2% lodging tax could generate over $750,000 in revenue and move tourism forward.

He asked if everyone understood the municipal code, there was no discussion. He brought up specifically that the JCVB AB was to prepare the budget and review the historical budget information and to form a plan for its use. He said that we weren't doing this. He showed a 10-year history of the CVB budget (sharing information he was provided upon request from the City Finance Director) and over that over the 10 years, 6 of those the CVB Reserve Fund Balance has been over $1 million.

Referring to Item 6 of the proposal, he said, "There is money available (referring to the historical data) for software to help improve accountability". He referred to a meeting of the board leadership in which Ms. Comer shared a suggestion that the JSA seek software for collecting RFPs from hotels versus using paper collection (similar to what the CVB has used for 3 years). Ms. Comer said this would improve the bid process and perhaps increase the number of hotels that participate. Mr. Wilson supported this suggestion and offered it would also help accountability.

Mr. Wilson referenced proposal item 7 of the proposal and again reinforced the need for a feasibility study to show what type of facility is need in Joplin. Again, he wanted to encourage unity amongst the three groups to work better together and move forward.

Mr. Wilson stated the continual change in leaders (city manager, mayor, city attorney, etc.) naturally creates different interpretations of the municipal code and that it needed to be defined again. He mentioned that the unappropriated funds, overflow, that goes into the general fund is not being utilized (outside of tourism), which is a good thing, even though this goes against the municipal code as it currently reads. Chair Wilson expressed his concern for the overall economy in Joplin and it's decline. In his opinion, the current opportunity is a move forward.

Mr. Wilson opened the discussion to the board.

- Mr. Greninger asked if Mr. Tuttle could speak to the unusually high numbers in the past in the Grant and Sponsorship revenue column in the document presented by Mike Wilson. Mr. Tuttle noted that the funds were raised from sponsorships and vendor income from the Route 66 International Festival during the 2012 & 2013 planning.
- Mr. Greninger shared that he did not have issues with the seven items in the proposal, but in lumping them together he did. He shared that he felt that number 7 is the most important. He shared that it was necessary in order to have a plan to move forward, to direct where the lodging tax would be designated. He said he had no opinion really on reducing the board seats, that the Chamber seat has been in practice of having term limits, but the code has not changed. Mr. Greninger felt that items 3 and 4 could be addressed in a separate session with the city attorney, but the independent feasibility study is most important. He shared that the study should be truly independent and free of bias, including that of the CVB. Creating a group of JSA, CVB AB, etc. members to lead the charge would promote this. He asked if the board could agree today to request that City Council allow us to move forward with number 6 and 7.
- Mr. Greim shared that a proposal from this board to City Council implies to council that this board is requesting the changes. That we need to be able to explain why we are requesting each of these things (if the letter is coming from us). For example, item 1, why would this be including other than to appease the SWMLA? Item 4, we are asking City Council to publicly question their own attorney to gain an opinion on these codes listed below? He offered that we ask, as Mr. Greninger suggested, Mr. Edwards to come to our meeting to discuss these items with us first. He agreed with items 6 & 7, and that those items are what needs to happen.

- Mr. Wilson remarked that item 1 was not to make the SWMLA happy. He said he would suggest reducing the board even further, as the fewer people on the board, the easier to ensure that board members are well educated in the proper processes. That reducing the board is comprised of members who have a vested interest. Chair Wilson addressed Mr. Hall. Mr. Hall offered to explain that the lodging tax is comparable to a CID. That those collecting the tax represent and make up the board that oversees those dollars. He stated that initially the governing of the lodging tax was made up primarily by hotel representatives. Mr. Tuttle added that the use of the lodging tax state wide, as shared by the Speaker of House's office, that the tax is the only one of its kind because the greatest impact to promote tourism comes from the hotels. This is why the revenue in Statute reads dedicated to "Tourism Promotions". Mr. Hall rebutted that the lodging tax is set up as an occupational license fee. Mr. Greninger offered that Mr. Hall has his opinion, while others may have a different opinion, and that items 3 & 4 of the proposal should be discussed with an attorney (or someone who is well versed in municipal code) whom could educate our board. Mr. Greninger again stated that in his opinion items 3 & 4 did not need to be included in this proposal to City Council. Mr. Greim reiterated that the board needs to provide justification as to why each of these items are included in the proposal and why we are asking for them to be changed.
- There was discussion on how many seats the initial CVB board had and how it grew, over time, to its current status. Mr. Greninger again asked if it was the intent to create a majority of the hotels on the board. Mr. Hall was addressed and referred to Councilwoman Colbert-Kean to share how long it has been requested of City Council to provide clarification on item 3. Mr. Hall expressed that the letter from the city attorney in the response to the last request of the SWMLA for clarification on these items stated that again there was no need for changes. Councilwoman Colbert-Kean asked Mr. Hall how many requests there were in the letter from the SWMLA. He responded that there were several (items 1-5 of the current letter).
- Focusing on item 3, section C, Mr. Hall stated that the City of Joplin currently has control of appointed board members, not the board (the citizens). Mr. Hall voiced that he felt that Ms. Comer's suggestion of the formal RFP for a computerized reporting system for the JSA should be included in the proposal to council and added that it should be a unified system with the CVB to save on costs.
- He offered that we could all agree that we need a tourism facility, and that where we disagree is the amount of the increase of the lodging tax with no formal plan on where/how the funds will be utilized. Mr. Hall offered that we recall that the prior study conducted did not provide a return of investment, and that Mr. Tuttle had previously explained that the ROI was not a part of that study at the last meeting. He voiced that the new study would be accepted, whatever the outcome, and that we should not focus on the specific type of facility we think would be best. Mr. Hall stressed that we needed to bring in more industry for the City of Joplin to continue to grow, and that it starts today (again referring to the suggestion of including the restaurants in the tax). Mr. Tuttle spoke to the point that he felt that the (2017) Tourism Study this board supported was

putting Joplin on the right track to move forward and defended the JCVB AB as knowing the steps needed to move forward to grow tourism.

- Mr. Greninger brought discussion back to item 3, that the board does elect officers, and that by questioning item 3D, is asking to be a governing board. He expressed that this board would be conflicting by becoming a governing board (that we would need to separate from the City and be run independently. Mr. Greninger felt that this was a separate issue from moving tourism forward. Agreeing to the results of the study would move us forward, and that keeping item 3 in the letter/proposal could keep this process from moving forward (through Council).
- Ms. Comer offered that this letter was being presented to City Council as a letter from this (JCVB AB) board, however, it is not. She expressed the letter was shown to the board in October and asked for a vote on it, without the opportunity to add to it. She stated only at the November meeting were the members afforded the opportunity to contribute. Mr. Wilson asked if there was any other discussion. Ms. Albright agreed with Ms. Comer.
- Councilwoman Colbert-Kean offered that whatever was presented to Council would just be presented, and that whether it moved forward would ultimately be the decision of Council. She asked if item 3C was coming from Mr. Tuttle, and was the board consulted regarding nominations? Mr. Tuttle said the board was consulted as to nominees. Mr. Hall was not addressed, but asked if Mr. Tuttle offers the appointed members, or does this board make those suggestions? Mr. Hall then posed this question directly to Mr. Wilson, who responded that we (the board) did not.
- Mr. Greninger suggested that items 3 & 4 be removed and considered as a separate letter/proposal - Proposal B, and that the remaining items (1, 2, 5, 6 & 7) stay together and be voted on to move forward to present to City Council as Proposal A. Mr. Greim agreed with Mr. Greninger. Mr. Greninger stressed that we would not disregard items 3 & 4, and that they would be addressed separately, in the near future.
- Mr. Tuttle offered that using wording on item 5, like "must be," should be changed. This board cannot tie council's hands in this way. Councilwoman Colbert-Kean offered that semantics could be adjusted, that council would respond to such a change is necessary, like "must" to "may."
- Mr. Greninger made a point of clarity in regard to reducing the board seats. This would be done as terms end, and the seat would not be refilled at that time. Mr. Tuttle suggested that due to these kinds of details, one of the advisory board members should make the presentation of proposals to Council.

- Mr. Greninger motioned to move forward with 1, 2, 5, 6, & 7 as Proposal A. Then a Proposal B would be soon to follow, regarding items 3 & 4. Mr. Greninger suggested any discussion around items 3 & 4 include all parties (JSA, SWMLA, City Attorney, the mayor, JCVB AB, and any other parties deemed necessary). He further added clarification that the independent study in item 7 would be paid for through CVB budget or the reserve fund.
- Ms. Palmer asked what was really going to come from the independent study. Offering that this board has approved/conducted several studies in the past, and nothing has come from them. Mr. Wilson added, there was discussion that this was necessary, and it would unite the three groups - JSA, JCVB, and SWMLA.
- Ms. DuBois asked if there was anyone at the table willing to move forward with the proposal fully as written? None spoke up. Mr. Tuttle suggested for clarity, each of the seven items be voted on separately. Proposed for vote as follows:

Motions & Vote on the Proposed Changes to CVB AB:

1. THE JCVB AB SHOULD BE REDUCED TO 9 BOARD SEATS WITH 4 OF THOSE SEATS REMAINING DEDICATED TO HOTELIERS. *SEC. 30-271.*

   Motion: Item #1 be forwarded for council's consideration as written.

   - The current board is made of 11 members. If this change is approved, it is recommended to attrite two (2) members as their terms expire (one in 2020 and one in 2021), unless vacated early. The future board would include 4 hoteliers, 1 chamber rep, 1 restaurant rep, 1 at-large.
   - One of the two existing at-large positions would be eliminated. It was not determined by this vote which of the existing positions; media, attraction or retail would be eliminated to bring the count to 9 members.
   - Motion by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Kluth. Vote was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

2. THE JOPLIN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD SEAT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO ITS PRE-2009 REQUIREMENTS AND THAT THE INDIVIDUAL APPOINTED TO THAT SEAT MUST BE HELD TO THE SAME LIMITS AND REQUIREMENTS AS THE OTHER BOARD SEATS. *SEC. 30-271.*

   Motion: Item #2 be forwarded for council's consideration to return the Chamber position back to the same term limitations as all other board members. The placement of the existing Chamber representative did comply with how this seat was filled in the past, but the language in the Joplin Municipal Code (*Sec. 30-271*) requires a change to secure this practice in the future.

- *The chamber member shall be the President of the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce or his/her designee who shall be subject to confirmation of the council. Any such designee shall be an employee or board member of the chamber. All members shall be appointed for a term of three years. The member of the chamber may serve more than two consecutive terms. The board shall elect from its membership a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.*
- It is recommended that the last line, "*The member of the chamber may serve more than two consecutive terms.*" should be stricken and that person follow the same terms as all board members.
- Motion was made by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Nienkamp. Vote was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

3. THE JCVB AB BE ALLOWED TO PERFORM ITS REQUIRED DUTIES AS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE MUNICIPAL CODE. THESE INCLUDE:

   a) AUTHORITY TO ELECT THEIR OWN OFFICERS. *SEC. 30-271.*

   b) AUTHORITY TO CREATE ITS OWN RULES AND REGULATIONS AS IT DEEMS NECESSARY FOR ITS OPERATION. *SEC. 30-272.*

   c) ABILITY TO FULFILL ITS DUTY TO PROVIDE THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY MANAGER AND THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE ALLOCATION OF THE FUNDS. *SEC. 30-273 (A) AND SEC. 30-257 (B1).*

   d) ABILITY TO FULFILL ITS DUTY TO PROVIDE THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY MANAGER AND THE CITY COUNCIL VARIOUS METHODS, INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL OR PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACTUAL RELATIONS, IN ORDER TO PROMOTE TOURISM, CONVENTIONS, AND OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES. *SEC. 30-273 (B).*

4. THE CITY SEEK AN OPINION FROM AN INDEPENDENT HIGHER LEGAL AUTHORITY WITH MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT BACKGROUND TO INTERPRET SEC. 30-273 (A), SEC. 30-257 (B1), AND SEC. 30-273 (B) TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES IN HOW THEY ARE CURRENTLY BEING INTERPRETED. THIS DETERMINATION WILL BE ACCEPTED BY ALL AFFECTED PARTIES.

   Motion: Items #3 in total and #4 were tabled until a meeting with the City Attorney can be arranged. Such meeting, attended by the entire board, would be to learn his interpretation of these items within the structure of the Municipal Code to clarify member misunderstandings or misinterpretations once and for all.

   - Following a meeting as motioned the board will consider what action, if any to take on all the items.
   - Motion by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Nienkamp. Vote to table was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

5. NOMINATIONS FOR OPEN JCVB AB SEATS MUST BE RECOMMENDED TO THE CITY COUNCIL BY THE JCVB AB.

   Motion: Item #5 was forwarded for council's consideration as written.

   - The board desires a voice in filling vacancies on the advisory board to assure it continues to advance tourism interest.
   - Motion by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Greim. Vote was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

6. AN INDUSTRY ACCREDITED PERFORMANCE REPORTING PROCESS BE IMPLEMENTED FOR BOTH THE CVB AND THE JSA AND IS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ON A MONTHLY, QUARTERLY, AND ANNUAL BASIS.

   Motion: Item #6 was forwarded for council's consideration as written.

   - It is recommended that the CVBV and JSA share tourism software that makes their jobs more efficient, track leads, communicates better with the hotel partners and can evaluate ROI.
   - Motion by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Nienkamp. Vote was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

7. THE CITY CONDUCTS A VALID TOURISM FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STUDY PERFORMED BY AN ACCREDITED INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL TO DETERMINE THE VIABILITY OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TOURISM FACILITIES. THIS STUDY SHOULD PRIORITIZE THESE POTENTIAL PROJECTS BASED ON THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT, ECONOMIC, AND TOURISM IMPACT. THE STUDY IS TO BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE JCVB AB FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY MANAGER AND CITY COUNCIL. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE TYPE OF TOURISM FACILITY AS A RESULT OF THIS STUDY WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED.

   Motion: Item #7 seeks city council's support for the CVB advisory board to form a 10-member Tourism Feasibility Committee made of two members each from the CVB, JSA, Lodging Assoc and Parks & Rec boards, plus two members at-large, to write an RFP, interview candidates, select a provider, then conduct a Tourism Venue Feasibility Study to determine the best tourism venue(s) that would serve the Joplin market, to include but not limited to type of venues, potential locations, funding sources, private/public partnerships, operation costs and short and long-term sustainability, to include prioritization based on the return on investment, and economic and tourism impact. This study would be completed in CY2020.

   Following this study, the committee would report the findings to council to include a Plan of Action and Timeline. Funding for this study would come from the CVB budget and/or tourism reserve fund.

   - Motion by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Mr. Greim. Vote was 10-0-1 -- 10 in favor – 0 opposed – 1 absent.

IV. Update on JLN/ORD Subsidy:

Mr. Tuttle presented a document the airport manager presented to council last month showing passenger numbers for both DFW and ORD are strong but there is room to grow. An initial payment of $377,000 of the $600,000 revenue guarantee has been requested.

V. 2020 Officer Elections:

Chair Wilson asked for any nominations. Mr. Greninger recommended for Chairman Mr. Greim, for Co-Chairman Ms. Comer and for Secretary Ms. Albright. A motion to accept was made by Ms. DuBois and seconded by Mr. Nienkamp. Motion carried, 10-0-1.

VI. Other Business:

Mr. Nienkamp expressed concern with an Open Records Request all board members had received earlier in the day from the City Clerk. A request from Christopher Beyer for correspondence between the CVB director and the board. He asked for clarification on how to respond. Councilwoman Colbert-Kean offered this is a Sunshine Law Request. She offered that if information requested is available, they are to be forwarded to the City Clerk. If there are none, reply to the Clerk as such.

VII. Motion to adjourn was made at 5:11 p.m. by Mr. Greninger, seconded by Ms. Albright. Unanimously approved.

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Submitted respectfully, Secretary Comer.

Kevin Greim
Chairman

Miranda Comer
Secretary