

**Minutes of Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau Meeting
Held on February 20, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Call to order at 12:08 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Erin Galla, Vice Chair Brenda Schwartz-Yeager Caitlin Cardinell, Chris Bunes,

ABSENT: Mya Delong

STAFF: Kate Thomas, Matt Henson

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: NONE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of the Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau regular meeting minutes from January 16th, 2024

M/S CB/BS move to approve the regular meeting minutes of the Wrangell CVB from January 16th, 2024.

5. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD: NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Economic Development Department 2023 Annual Highlights

Director Thomas provided report.

- b. February Coordinator Report on Marketing

Henson provided report.

Schwartz asked that occasional work sessions be scheduled for specific topics. Mentioned that future travel or trade show opportunities or partner content review. Schwartz also stated that she would like to see a smaller formatted visitor survey for in-person responses. Schwartz suggested an alternate mechanism than a QR code. She stated that the Tongass management plan is currently open for review and made available. Stated that its importance to the board surrounds the recreational opportunities and our ability to conduct visitor industry business and making sure that the USFS implements our needs to their plan. Stated that JEDC is currently tasked with providing comments on this plan. Director Thomas stated that she will forward correspondence from Economic Development Board Chair Bob Dalrymple that was drafted on behalf of the borough providing input on activities happening on the Tongass as well as feedback on SASS-FM.

- c. Rain Coast Data Wrangell Visitor Industry Report (covering 2023 season's data)

Bunes asked that after looking at the reports, how would the CVB be able to increase the number of yachters. Continued discussion will be had on the angles for retaining and growing that population of visitors.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Wrangell Tourism Management Plan public engagement and consulting services discussion

Thomas provided another update on the Tourism Management Plan. Stated that staff has identified the steps needing to be taken to drive the plan as shown in the previous discussion item at the last meeting. Thomas had discussions with staff from McKinley Research group on how the plan could be structured. Thomas stated that while the department could develop this plan on its own, it may be a better option to have a consultant take on part or all of the development of the tourism management plan. A third-party agency could manage all parts of outreach. McKinley stated that it would be best practice to educate the public before the tour season, allow the season to pass, and then poll the public after the season. Thomas also stated that staff is beginning the development of "bite-sized" packages of information to begin to inform the public about the industry. This would then lead to a comprehensive presentation and then general public outreach. Schwartz stated that she likes the approach, and it is important to make the topic palatable. She asked if CPV funds can be used for industry research. Thomas stated that she will confirm with the state department of commerce about fund usage but can confirm that other communities have utilized these funds to conduct industry research. Schwartz stated that she would prefer to see CPV funds be used for this industry research, preserving transient tax funds for marketing. Thomas stated that she would not recommend conducting research if CPV funds were not accessible. Thomas detailed a summary of the current events in southeast Alaska and procedures of neighboring communities.

Cardinell stated that she was present of the conversations with Thomas. She stated that collection of data is critical and recommends staff find a contractor to assist in the development process of the tourism management plan. Bunes agreed. Stated that ensuring community awareness of our plans is critical and stated that the CVB can work to help alleviate staff pressure by helping communicate the plan and process to the public. Schwartz stated that she would like to see the community go through another season before making changes due to the dynamic landscape.

Galla stated that she fully supports hiring a contractor and allowing another season to pass but collecting data this season.

Thomas stated that she will begin to prepare an RFQ and ask for an aggregate cost summary for us to ala-cart needed items or services.

Cardinell states that she would like to see the infomercial idea be developed from now to the peak season of this next summer.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and discussion of the methods and execution for the 2024 Wrangell Visitors Survey

Members of the CVB have been asked to review and provide comments on the draft visitor survey. Any feedback should be provided in writing to staff so adjustments may be made prior to the start of the season. Thomas emphasized the importance of deploying proven methodology for surveying visitors to ensure the at outcomes meet the objectives of good quality data. Staff expressed concerns about who and how those surveys will be conducted because they themselves do not have the capacity to dedicate that time.

b. Discussion on FY25 Transient Tax and CPV Budgets

CVB members were provided with past years approved budgets for comparison. A work session has been set for February 27th, 2024, to review and discuss the FY25 budget for transient tax, Marian Glenz and commercial passenger vessel tax.

- c. Review and audit of the Travel Alaska Website creative content for Wrangell

Summary of process was shared with CVB members. A work session to review the Travel Guide draft design, media and content has been set for March 7th, 2024.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:31 PM.

Next scheduled regular meeting is March 19th, 2024.

Next scheduled work session will be held on March 7th, 2024, at 12:00 PM pertaining to the Wrangell Visitor Guide and February 27th, 2024, at 12:00 PM pertaining to the WCVB FY25 budget.

_____ Chair

ATTEST: _____
Secretary