



## **SCWA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday September 14th, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.**

**Meeting Place:** Face-to-face meeting at the California Welcome Center in Anderson, via Zoom or phone.

### **Meeting Participants**

Dave Gowan, President (Tehama County) – In Person  
Matthew Doyle, Vice President (Shasta County) – Zoom  
Jeff Titcomb, Treasurer (Plumas County) – In Person  
Ed Rullman, Past President (Shasta County) – In Person  
Carolyn Denero, Butte County Board Member – Not in Attendance  
Patricia Hagata, Lassen County Board Member – In Person  
Lorissa Soriano, Modoc County Board Member – Zoom (joined at 10:12am)  
Tina Peluso, Shasta County Board Member – Phone  
Richard Dinges, Siskiyou County Board Member – Zoom  
Niki Brown, Siskiyou County Board Member – Not in Attendance  
Kelli Gant, Trinity County Board Member – In Person  
Maggie Alvord – Trinity County - Not in Attendance  
Laurie Baker, SCWA General Manager – In Person  
Lisa May, SCWA Director of Tourism – Zoom

**1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Dave Gowan at 10:04am**

**2. Quorum is confirmed.**

**3. Approval of June 2021 minutes**

- a. Kelli motions to approve the June 2021 minutes. Richard seconds.
- b. All in favor. Patricia abstained. Motion passes.

**4. Financial Update**

**c. Year-end Budget-to-Actual**

1. Laurie reviewed the 2021-2022 year-end budget.
2. Revenue - the PPP loan came in and will be forgiven without required payback.
3. Expenses – international marketing ended the year lower than planned due to international borders closing with COVID restrictions. Less UpState CA Visitor Guides were printed due to pandemic and business not handing out brochures.
4. Rollover ended a little higher than previous year.
5. Matt asks about possible grants Laurie is working on. Laurie shared she is looking into getting a grant for solar for the CWC from McConnell Foundation or through the EDA-American Rescue grant. The Cares Grant was received. Laurie is working on a \$8k grant with Jeff. Laurie applied for the \$5k Redding Rancheria grants but she doesn't think they were approved, still waiting for formal notification. The Fire

Recovery grant from the State/Federal Government went to Visit California which they plan to use for statewide marketing. A State/Federal Competitive Grant is a possibility for funds but can only be used for infrastructure. Kelli suggests contacting PGE for a solar grant. Reese suggests the Community Fire Resilience Grant. Dave suggests going after any grant that will cover staff costs. Kelli suggests looking under the topic of Disaster Recovery for grants.

6. Matt motions to approve the year-end budget-to-actual financials. Ed seconds.
7. All in favor. None abstained. Motion passes.

**d. Amended 2021-2022 budget**

1. Laurie reviews amended budget.
2. Laurie notes there is a change in rent with RTMG now paying rent to SCEF. SCWA needed to pay July and August rent to SCEF until RTMG was able to get out of their previous lease/building and move to the CWC. Laurie clarified the CWC building is owned by SCEF but the land is owned by the City of Anderson.
3. Kelli motions to approve the amended 2021-2022 budget. Matt seconds.
4. All in favor. None abstained. Motion passes.

**5. General Business:**

**e. County Partnerships for 2021-2022**

1. Invoices were mailed in August for renewal of the same partnership options each county had last year. Advise Lisa of any changes.

**f. Marketing Update – PowerPoint Presentation given by Laurie Baker**

- **2021/2022 California Road Trips ad**
  - Annual lead generating publication with all eight counties represented in the ad.
  - Board discussion around publication distribution of 1 million copies and leads generated that are sent to SCWA. SCWA mails an UpStateCA Visitor Guide to all lead requests.
- **2022 California Visitor Guide**
  - UpState CA will have a full-page ad in the 2022 California Visitor Guide. No county partners wanted to pay the co-op cost of \$8k for the top half of the ad, so RTMG is paying for the space.
  - Distribution is 500,000 copies with lead generation going to co-op partners and SCWA.
- **Visit USA Parks Digital Inspirational Story Campaign**
  - The campaign was pushed out in 7 countries and 4 languages
  - 57k engagement and retargeting. Top market was Mexico
- **Visit California Social Media (Instagram) influencer April Davidson**
  - April has 99k followers
  - Good engagement - Likes/Views: 35,579 - Comments: 402
  - April's itinerary included overnight stay and sightseeing in Shasta, Trinity, Siskiyou

- **Brand USA Global Marketplace Virtual Tradeshow Booth**
  - Audience is predominantly tour operators, travel trade, and media.
  - Advise Lisa if counties will be paying for our County Marketing Bundle for \$3k so we can update collateral accordingly.
  - Laurie explains how the booth is accessed by tour operators. Lisa covers info for all counties in meeting.
  - Kelli gives commitment for Trinity County to renew the SCWA County Marketing Bundle.
  - Siskiyou County has paid for the County Bundle renewal.
- **Shasta Cascade's Social Media Marketing –**
  - SCWA posts on behalf of members choosing a social media package or social media a la carte option.
  - 17 members purchased social packages. 225 posts were made on behalf of members January – August 2021.
- **ShastaCascade.com website update**
  - Laurie shared screenshot of the updated look of the SCWA website.
- **Marketing Discussion –**
  - Ed asks how much of this marketing that SC and RTMG are doing is being shared with the Redding Chamber. Ed reminds the board that the Redding Chamber is now doing marketing with the City of Redding TOT. Ed shares that he discussed with Danny (an employee at the Redding Chamber that is new to marketing) how Redding has marketed in the past with a focus on the marketing the funnel – Brand USA, Visit CA, SC.
  - Ed emphasizes that it is Important for all counties to know there is an entity focusing on bringing tourism to the area - SCWA. Ed is willing to travel to the out areas with Laurie to share what SCWA does.
  - Laurie says is trying to reach Matt Pontes but has not been able to connect with him yet. The SC team has started working on a presentation for Laurie to take on the road.
  - Patricia acknowledged the challenge of training new staff that are not familiar with tourism that are new to their tourism roles.
  - Ed suggests an event other than the Tourism Summit for the counties to send their key people to share what SCWA does.
  - Ed comments no one from Shasta County has been open to listening to and contribute funds to SC. Now that Matt is involved in with Shasta County Board the communication doors are opening wider.
  - Patricia shared the challenges Chambers of Commerce are facing trying to get younger business owners involved.
  - Dave points out that consistency in staff is key in building relationships within the community. Community involvement builds momentum and it is important for SCWA to tell everyone that SC is doing a good job.
  - Dave asks about visitors coming into the CWC, if visitation has increased. Laurie confirmed visitation is picking up
  - Kelli asks about having better Google presence using key words to build better search results. Laurie said we did find some money to do some SEM from November through February.
  - Ed suggests TikTok videos to attract a younger demographic of traveler. Laurie shares that TikTok is part of the plan for RTMG moving forward which is why we purchased a company phone for the next social media employee.

- There is further discussion around the younger demographic not spending as much on travel with more camping type vacations. Laurie shares there is a young market with money to travel and this is why target marketing is important and TikTok is a good platform to use. Ed's approach to marketing to the younger generation without as much discretionary income right now is with the thought they will have more money to spend as they grow in their careers and higher income levels. Discussion continues about the younger generation changing jobs more frequently.

**g. 2022 Tourism Summit**

1. Visit California's Digital Optimization program training on Google My Business, Yelp, Facebook, and TripAdvisor may be a possibility for presentation at the Tourism Summit. Laurie and Lisa share the goal of the program and information given by Visit California.
2. Laurie shared Carolyn Denero representing Butte County resigned from our board but still wants to partner with Shasta Cascade. Laurie has asked Carolyn if she still wants the summit in Butte County in March/April.
3. Ed and Dave want the Tourism Summit to come back to Redding. The board agrees it is more convenient to have the event in Redding.
4. Laurie agrees to start working on a venue in Redding for the Tourism Summit coordinating with Visit California's availability to present their Digital Optimization Program.

**4. Questions/Comments: 3-minute county share time**

- a. Kelli - 3 fires currently burning in Trinity County. Coffee Creek Ranch is gone, Strawhouse Resorts and Indian Creek Lodge were saved. The lodge hired ex Cal Fire personal to keep the fire under control on site. Junction City to Willow Creek burned. Trinity Lake is okay. Trinity Alps wilderness - all trails burned around all the lakes except Trinity Lake. Weaverville and Lewiston have not burned. KIXE will be making a video for Trinity County.
- b. Jeff – Plumas County update. Lake Almanor visitors will hardly know there is any fire damage. Greenville and Indian Valley has been destroyed. Jeff and Bink lost the Hideaway, Sterling Sage, and their home has been lost and will not be rebuilding. None of the Greenville businesses are planning to reinvest/rebuild. Quincy has a music event that is a success on Friday nights.
- c. Patricia – Lassen County drastically hit by fires with damage and smoke. The car show in June was a success with high attendance. Over 60% of LVNP has burned and it has been very smoky. The state prison in Susanville has closed effecting 3800 employees out of work as a result of the closure. The prison closure has a triple effect for area businesses and suppliers closing. Many prisoners are being released to their original communities which creates a concern for increased crime. Patricia has submitted her resignation to the Lassen Chamber of Commerce. Patricia will stay on at the chamber until the end of the year training someone to replace her. Patricia will stay on our board until she thinks the time is right to turn over the board position to the person replacing her as the director of the chamber.
- d. Ed – The worst Shasta County has been dealing with is COVID and the smoke from the fires. Shasta County has not had as many fires as some past years. Even with lake levels down and the smoke, occupancy has been about 98% at the BW Hilltop Inn starting back in April 2021. There is considerable growth with construction in the area, both residential and commercial. Ed is seeing potential for future growth in Shasta County with people moving from the surrounding fire effected areas. Ed is forecasting his business to be busy for the remainder of the year.

- e. Dave – Red Bluff/Tehama County update. Majority of tourism coming through Tehama County is heading to Mt. Lassen. With the fire devastation tourism will be affected. Highlands Ranch Resort survived the Dixie fire. Red Bluff Chamber has been sending many visitors to the Lake Shasta Caverns. Records are being broken with new businesses opening, ribbon cutting ceremonies and overall growth. The area's general tax fund is up \$1.6 M this year. All events have been record breaking with the weekly Farmer Markets bursting at the seams with attendance.
- f. Richard – Siskiyou County Fair had good attendance as well as the car show with smoke from the fires being light on those days. Siskiyou didn't lose many businesses through COVID. The county is seeing a lot of travelers on Hwy 5 and 97. Hwy 97 closed for a couple weeks but has reopened. Light smoke and air quality hasn't been too bad. Lake Siskiyou is still full and remains regulated. Everyone was back in their homes after the Lava Fire evacuation of 3 day. Several new businesses have opened in Siskiyou County.
- g. Reese – Modoc County is seeing a big influx of people moving to the county. Housing shortages are happening now as a result of the increase in population. Most RV parks were full all summer with Modoc County kind of being a *state within a state*. The Dark Sky festival was a big success even though the skies were smoky. Modoc District Fair had the most attendance they have seen in many years. The forest is closed right now but will hopefully reopen in a couple weeks. The water shortage situation is of concern for the county. Modoc Outdoor Recreation is working on getting a travel center in Alturas.
- h. Matt – Shasta Lake has had the most unique year in the past 20 years Matt has been there. As a comparison to other low lake level years, in 1976-1977 the caverns had 48% of visitation. This year's gross income is up 41% even with lake levels low and smoke. The caverns are getting Lassen Volcanic National Park and Lake Tahoe guests with those areas being closed due to fires. Lake businesses didn't shutdown with exemptions to stay open from the forest service. The caverns is seeing visitors from the Pacific Northwest in the last couple weeks with school back in session which is the norm for this time of year. If the lake shoreline continues to drop, requiring visitors to walk 2 miles to get to the boats, the caverns will need to shut down until rain comes and increases Shasta Lake levels. Matt will be working with USFS getting low lake drone footage and good photos of the terrain with the shoreline down. Even with the lake levels way down, Shasta Lake has more water right now than Folsom Lake has when it is full. \$400k is coming to the forest that will be spent for grants to help with projects near the national forests. Applications closing October. Tourist are looking to experience and support small local businesses right now. Business-to-business recommendation is strong. Matt would like to get a California travel impact report which will be beneficial to the region for getting funds by showing tourism increase to the area during and after COVID.
- i. Laurie – meeting wrap up. Laurie acknowledges the RCVB team doing an amazing job marketing the area as a great place to visit. The marketing efforts of the RCVB team impacted the increase in visitation to the area when other areas throughout the state and country chose not to advertise during COVID.

Adjournment at 11:50am by Dave Gowan – Board President with a motion from Jeff and second by Patricia.