

Tourism Wells Gray
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
Tuesday April 11th, 2023

MINUTES of the meeting of the Tourism Wells Gray Board of Directors held in person and via Zoom in Clearwater, BC on Tuesday April 11th, 2023, from 1:40PM – 3:20PM in Clearwater, BC at the Best Western Hotel meeting room.

PRESENT:

Chair M. Larose – Via Zoom	MRDT
Vice Chair H. Wadlegger	Director at Large
P. Bradstock – via Zoom	Clearwater Chamber of Commerce
L. Frizzle	District of Clearwater, Councillor
V. Gat – via zoom	BC Parks
T. Houghton – via zoom	BC Parks
H. Louwerse	Guiding and Activities
W. Robinson	Accommodation and Food

STAFF:

Amber Benoit	Executive Director
Amanda Svenson	Visitor's Centre Manager
Michael Ruttan	TRU Co-op Student

REGRETS:

Treasurer T. Govaert	MRDT
A. Green	Simpcw First Nation
K. McKay	Parks Permit Holder
R. Vesak/U. Tsao	TNRD Area A

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- a. The meeting was called to order by Chair at 1:40PM.

2. INTRODUCTION OF ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- a. Amber Benoit introduced herself to the board as acting director of Tourism Wells Gray while Claire Hanna is on maternity leave. Amber brings a background in travel trade tourism as a former accounts administrator for inbound tour operator Discover Holidays over the past 8 ½ years. She is also active within the community as a Volunteer Firefighter and lead medical First Responder for the Clearwater Volunteer Fire Department. Amber thanks the board for the opportunity to serve them, Wells Gray Country, and Clearwater in the coming year.

3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

MOTION: That the agenda for the April 11th, 2023, Regular Board Meeting be approved.

Moved by H. Wadlegger

Seconded by H. Louwerse

CARRIED

4. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:
MOTION: That the minutes of the meeting from February 6th, 2023, be accepted as presented.

**Moved by W. Robinson
Seconded by H. Louwerse**

CARRIED

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. CEBA Loan Repayment - Amber confirmed with bookkeeper that the 30K owing on the CEBA loan (10K was forgiven) is sitting in the TWG account ready to be repaid.

MOTION: That the 30K remaining on the CEBA loan be repaid now.

**Moved by H. Wadlegger
Seconded by M. Larose**

CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. ***CLOSED MEETING - The Tourism Wells Gray Board of Directors went into "in camera" executive session at 1:45PM with unanimous consent to discuss updates for the following agenda items:***
- ***Grant applications***
- b. Next AGM Date – As per the BC Societies Act, the next TWG AGM needs to be within the 2023 year. Since the previous AGM was in Dec 2022, and AGMs prior to this were held regularly in April, the ED proposes that the 2023 AGM be held at the end of September (tentatively Friday, Sept 29th) and that TWG returns to April AGMs in 2024. ED to check on Chamber of Commerce AGM to ensure no overlap.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- a. Budget report – Visitor Centre Expenses are at approximately 50% of the yearly budget; however, this high amount is due to the two travel shows that were attended in Feb and Mar. When excluding these costs, monthly expenditures have been roughly \$300/month. Amber to review budget with Amanda ahead of VIC opening to ensure we keep in track for the year.
- b. Visitor Guide – 2023 Visitor's Guide have been printed and received at the Visitor's Centre. Distribution has begun and a Google Sheets document has been created for the ED, VIC manager, and VIC staff to track distribution through a live document. L. Frizzle suggests that we request placement of guides at the Kamloops airport.
- c. Spring ad campaigns – Campaigns for Paddling Magazine and the Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) to begin in May/June. ED to create a blog post with content sourced from local rafting companies to cross-reference with Paddling's website content, piggybacking on the campaign to maximize exposure. MTBA organizing an influencer (Ruby Hogg from Valemount) to implement an itinerary

between Kamloops-Williams Lake-Clearwater that showcases a reproducible experience for travelers.

- d. RFP – RFP has closed for the lower-level retail space with no applicants received. Decision was made to post on info board as rental space. Discussion was also broached on exploring a realtor or businesses in Kamloops who might want a seasonal, high traffic space.
- e. NTCF Spring Grant – Still waiting on letter of support from TNRD, Amber to go ahead with application by this Friday regardless of receipt of letter, with qualification made that the letter can be provided once received.
- f. Visitor's Centre Hiring – Question was raised on if it would be beneficial to add hiring information to the TWG website for future hiring campaigns. ED agreed, with plans to add a banner to the TWG website for the 2024 season when hiring resumes.

8. Visitor Centre Update and Report

- a. Hiring – one additional person left to hire for the 2023 season – potential candidate has been sourced – Amanda to review candidate and scheduling with Amber next week prior to an offer being made.
- b. Hours of operation – Tentative hours of operation have been set at 9AM – 5PM for the season, apart from Jul/Aug being 9AM – 6PM. Discussion was had about the potential for 9AM – 7PM hours, but the staff levels are not sufficient to support this.
- c. Landscaping – RFP to be sent out for landscaping contract for the 2023 season. Several board members endorsed MAC River as exceptionally reliable. Hazel to ask Rotary to prepare the flowers for the centre, with the VIC staff to maintain them during season. Tod mentioned a desire to have landscaping added to the BC Parks contract renewal in a couple of years.

9. FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. nothing to report outside of CEBA loan, VIC expenses, and grants already discussed.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Meira suggests a season opener social for the TWG, VIC, and BC Parks staff/board to allow for introductions ahead the 2023 season. Suggested date is Wednesday, May 17th. ED to check if there is funding in the budget for this event. Will offered to provide food through the Hop n Hog as a marketing event. Special event licence will be needed ASAP – Amber to investigate this.

11. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS -

a. **BC PARKS: Tod Haughton/Vladi Gat**

- Introducing Aurelie as the seasonal ranger – she expresses her enthusiasm for working with BC Parks and says that there are lots of staff for the park this year.
- Big thank you to Roland Neave for sponsoring two staff positions this season – one trail supervisor and one naturalist position.
- A new staff house has been purchased for the season.
- Upgrades are planned for the Trophies trail/campground.
- River Road 11km washout – decision on repair is still with the Minister.

- The issue of illegal firewood harvesting has been mostly addressed – Tod asked if TWG could post on this topic. Consensus was that we could post on how to purchase firewood safely and ethically, but that TWG would be careful not to denounce anyone in the process.
- Questions arose on how the proposed quarry might have an impact on trails – Tod was unaware but would investigate further.
- Simpcw is organizing grizzly bear studies this summer in the park.
- Addition of student rangers for the 2023 season to cover Wells Gray and the Caribou. This should total approx. 30 days of help for our area.
- Cross-country Trails were groomed at King’s Hut.
- Moul Falls project – 10K received from Roland Neave. Project is anticipated to start Sept/Oct 2023 and include closures that will be announced through BC Parks and TWG.

b. MRDT: Meira LaRose

- N/A Nothing to report.

c. SIMPCW: Alison Green

- Regrets

d. PARKS PERMIT HOLDER: Kenneth McKay

- Regrets

e. ACCOMMODATION & FOOD: Will Robinson

- N/A Nothing to report.

f. GUIDING & ACTIVITIES: Holly Louwerse

- N/A Nothing to report.

g. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: Peter Bradstock

- N/A Nothing to report.

h. DISTRICT OF CLEARWATER: Lynne Frizzle

- Triple Decker Falls upgrade project – bridges have been designed, trail upgrades still to be designed by Megan Scallion. There will be North and South section improvement stages to be completed Aug 7th – Oct 31st, 2023.
- Boomers Expo has been cancelled, updates on how TWG can organize retired volunteers for VIC to be discussed between Lynne and Amber at later date.

i. DIRECTOR AT LARGE WGOC: Hazel Wadlegger

- Birchleg was a success – more attendees from Kamloops this year than in previous years.
- Trail conditions: currently, there is some snow still on the mountains, and some mountain biking trails ready to go.
- Half marathon at the end of August is going ahead as planned.
- May Day Parade going ahead with the local Pride group. The theme will be “What’s your heritage?” The route will be much shorter this year, on a small stretch of the Old North Thompson Highway, as a “test run” for

future years. This is a separate event from the Pride designated events likely to happen in June.

- j. **TNRD: Rob Vesak**
 - Regrets

12. CORRESPONDENCE – none to report.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next regular board meeting tentatively set for Thursday May 4th at 1:30PM in the Best Western Hotel meeting room. ED will send out a Doodle poll to determine a new regular meeting time for future board meetings.

14. ADJOURNEMENT:

- a. **M. Larose moved to adjourn meeting at 3:20PM.**

CARRIED