

Wind River Visitors Council (WRVC) Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 28, 2024
Shoshoni Senior Center, 214 E 2nd Street, Shoshoni

PRESENT: Helen Gordon—Hudson; Owen Sweeney—Lander; Hal Herron—Riverton; Frank Welty—Dubois; Joel Highsmith—Shoshoni; Erika Yarber—County; Kip Post—County (Zoom)

ABSENT: Ben Barto—Dubois; Julie Buller—Riverton; Krista Lobera—Lander

WRVC STAFF: Helen Wilson, Brad Christensen

GUESTS: Anne Even—Lander (Zoom); Kyle Butterfield—Riverton; County Commissioner Ron Fabrizius; Sarah Squires—Riverton Ranger; Tiffany Cortez—Riverton

CALL TO ORDER: President Owen Sweeney called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

REVIEW & APPROVE AGENDA: Hal moved to approve the Agenda. Helen Gordon seconded the motion. Kip made a motion to add an item to the Agenda to discuss Board responsibilities. Joel seconded this motion. Kip, Joel and Hal voted in favor of the motion. Helen Gordon, Erika, Frank and Owen voted against the motion and to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion to amend the Agenda failed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 25, 2024 MINUTES: Frank requested that “public vote” be changed to “a vote in public” in the Minutes. Helen Gordon put forth a motion to approve the Agenda with Frank’s adjustment. Erika seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

A. Approval of Submitted Financials and Bills

Hal and Frank had questions about the submitted financials and bills. Helen Gordon and Helen Wilson explained. Owen moved to pass the Treasurer’s Report. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Proposed Joint Powers Budget (Budget Committee: Helen Gordon, Hal Herron, Kip Post, Owen Sweeney and Helen Wilson)

Helen Wilson presented the proposed budget.

Frank asked if the Wind River Visitors Council had ways to measure the impact of

spending on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Erika pointed out there are not many ways to stop money from leaving the Reservation and that the money from tourists winds up in the surrounding communities. There was further discussion about hotels on the Wind River Indian Reservation, including rates, lodging tax (which the Reservation does not collect), occupancy rates and the Reservation's relationship with hotels in Lander.

Helen Wilson highlighted several changes to the budget from the current fiscal year, including the move from a Simple IRA to the Wyoming Retirement System and a move from Wyoming Chamber Health to the Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM) Blue Cross Blue Shield. She also highlighted a change in international marketing efforts, which will create more exposure at a lower cost.

Joel voiced concern that the five percent salary increase will be difficult to pass in Shoshoni. He said three percent would be better. Helen Wilson stated that it wasn't a five percent increase, but "up to" a five percent increase. This is down from the current "up to" 10 percent. Erika pointed out the cost of living was up four percent. Hal requested that Joel put his concerns in writing, and Joel agreed.

At 11:05 a.m. Hal put forth a motion to pass the budget. Helen Gordon seconded. Helen Gordon, Owen, Hal, Frank and Erika voted in favor. Joel and Kip voted against.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Helen Wilson presented the Director's Report which included an update on Wyoming Office of Tourism Board vacancies, upcoming conventions, a status update on public officer trainings, National Travel and Tourism Week activities, Destination Development Program project updates and recent ads and media exposure.

Helen Gordon, Helen Wilson and Erika Yarber attended the Wyoming Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Convention. Helen Gordon shared some resources that resonated for her, and Erika pointed out how well Fremont County shined at the Convention.

Erika stated that Helen Wilson has been doing a great job building connections and collaboration with both tribes and that she improved the Wind River Visitors Council's relationship with organizations on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Hal gave an update on the Riverton Art Banner Project, which is nearing completion.

SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT—UPDATE:

Riverton City Council

On Tuesday, March 5, Owen and Helen Wilson presented at the Riverton City Council Meeting. No votes were taken, but the Council did not seem in favor of adopting the Amendment the way

that it's written. The Council understood the Wind River Visitors Council's challenges and seemed open to working with us on a solution. It was suggested that we submit the budget earlier (April 1 was used as an example—it currently needs to be submitted by May 10). It was suggested that we could then give the Governing Bodies until May 1 to approve it, and if that date passes without approval/non-approval, then it would be considered approved. In addition, it seemed that the Council was not in favor of having FCAG approve budget amendments.

Lander City Council

On Tuesday, March 12, Helen Wilson presented at the Lander City Council Meeting. No votes were taken, but the Council understood the need to adopt a Second Amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement. They suggested that instead of a unanimous or majority vote, perhaps it could be four out of six, or five out of six. They also liked the idea of an earlier submission date, and suggested April 1 to May 15, as one month may be tight for getting the required approvals.

Hudson Town Council

On Tuesday, March 12, the Hudson Town Council approved the Second Amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement.

CONTENT CREATOR/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT—UPDATE: August Vanderford starts as the Content Creator/Administrative Assistant on April 15.

BOARD RETREAT (RUDLOFF SOLUTIONS AND YOUNG STRATEGIES, INC.): Helen provided an overview of the board training/retreat, which takes place on May 23. The day will be scheduled in Lander to shorten travel time between the Wind River Visitors Council's Board Meeting/training and the Fremont County Association of Governments meeting.

TAD PROGRAM—UPDATE: Helen is working on creating a uniform application and reporting system for the TAD program. This will go into effect on July 1.

ADJOURNMENT: Owen Sweeney moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Helen Gordon seconded. The motion carried at 11:57 a.m.