

Wind River Visitors Council (WRVC) Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 23, 2025
Lander Library, Lander

PRESENT: Helen Gordon – Hudson; Krista Lobera – Lander; Owen Sweeney – Lander; Hal Herron – Riverton; Bryce House – Riverton; Erika Yarber (Zoom, joined at 11:21 a.m.) – County; Maralyne Middour – County; Frank Welty – Dubois; Dave Furman – Dubois

ABSENT: Joel Highsmith – Shoshoni

WRVC STAFF: Helen Wilson, Kelsey Ball, Alex Watts

GUESTS: Cindy Olson Roden - Riverton; Anne Even - Lander; Chris Konija - Shoshoni

CALL TO ORDER: Board President Owen Sweeney called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA: Hal Herron moved to approve the Agenda. Frank Welty seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBER, MARALYNE MIDDOUR (COUNTY): Maralyne Middour took the Oath of Office and was welcomed as a Wind River Visitors Council Board Member.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 21, 2024 MINUTES: Hal Herron moved to approve the November 21, 2024 Minutes. Helen Gordon seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Helen Gordon and Helen Wilson presented the Treasurer's Report. The Board asked a few questions about the Statement of Activities in the Financial Report, and Helen Gordon and Helen Wilson answered. Frank Welty asked about increasing Lodging Tax Collections versus inflation, and Helen Wilson said that she would provide some data.

Hal Herron moved to approve the Financial Report. Helen Gordon seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Appoint New Signer: Due to Kip Post's resignation from the Wind River Visitors Council's Board of Directors, the organization is down a signer. Current signers are

Helen Gordon, Krista Lobera and Owen Sweeney. Helen Gordon moved to add Bryce House as a signer. Maralyne Middour seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Audit Update: Helen Wilson announced that the Wind River Visitors Council had a clean audit, aside from the unavoidable “segregation of duties” finding. Hal Herron moved to approve the audit provided by Summit West CPA Group, P.C. Frank Welty seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Hal Herron questioned whether the board could stagger funds into a Certificate of Deposit. Helen Wilson will check on this.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (PERSONNEL): Helen Gordon moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel at 10:37 a.m. Krista Lobera seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

At 10:55 a.m. the regular session resumed.

Hal Herron made a motion, which was consistent with the budget, to provide the Executive Director, Helen Wilson, a five percent salary increase. Dave Furman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Helen Wilson presented the Executive Director’s Report, which included updates on Lodging Tax Collections; The 2025 Fall Hospitality & Tourism Summit, which takes place in Riverton; her appointment to Destinations International’s Advocacy Committee; the Wind River Visitors Council’s podcast; the Wyoming Governor’s Hospitality & Tourism Convention, which she’ll be attending with Dave Furman and Maralyne Middour; Board Leadership for Destinations, which she’ll be attending with Krista Lobera and Owen Sweeney; International Roundup; Destination Development Program projects (the Discover Dubois TravelStorys audio tour, wayfinding signage in Dubois, Lander and Riverton and an Art Banner Project Expansion); and Celebration: Powwow on the Wind River Indian Reservation (an informative and fun video that dives into the powwow circuit).

TAD REPORT (RIVERTON): Hal Herron presented the Riverton TAD Report, which covered all of 2024. \$152,193.92 was requested, \$86,500 was awarded, and \$81,240.10 was distributed. The carry-over balance was \$4,759.40.

TAD REPORT (SHOSHONI): Chris Konija presented the Shoshoni TAD Report. \$17,100 was requested, \$6,850 was awarded and \$5,714.43 was distributed. The carry-over balance was \$5,525.57.

ATTORNEY RECOMMENDATION: Dave Furman and Helen Wilson have been interviewing attorneys to represent the Wind River Visitors Council, as the current attorney also represents several of the municipalities, which presents a conflict of interest. They recommended that the Wind River Visitors Council switch to Hathaway & Kunz. Hal Herron moved to proceed with Hathaway & Kunz. Bryce House seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: The TAD Program Committee reported that they met and discussed some of the challenges of the Tourism Asset Development (TAD) program. Their concern is that the Wind River Visitors Council is responsible for these funds, and if recipients are not using them correctly, then the Wind River Visitors Council is liable. The committee has discussed hiring a TAD program administrator to work with the TAD program's advisory committees and bring the administration of the program in-house. The Wind River Visitors Council could then help with marketing efforts and answer advisory committee questions as needed. Hal Herron expressed that he was not in favor of such changes. The TAD Program Committee will merge with the Budget Committee to discuss the matter further.

The Resident Sentiment Survey Committee reported that the Wind River Visitors Council will be working on the resident sentiment survey with the University of Wyoming. The survey will launch during National Travel and Tourism Week, which takes place from May 4 to 10. This will increase marketing opportunities to get people to participate in the survey. The committee presented two options for the survey, a "Basic Mailed Survey" and a "Basic Mailed Survey + Door Knocking." The Board opted to move forward with the "Basic Mailed Survey."

Helen Wilson requested the formation of a Semiquincentennial County Committee. She explained that Commissioner Jones has asked the Wind River Visitors Council to take the lead on this committee, which the County Commissioners will form with an official proclamation. Once the committee is formed, they can apply for up to \$10,000 to support semiquincentennial projects. Helen Gordon, Erika Yarber and Cindy Olson Roden (from the audience) volunteered to serve on the committee. Community leaders from various organizations will also be asked.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Cindy Olson Roden asked additional questions about the proposed changes to the TAD program.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, Helen Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting. Frank Welty seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kelsey Ball