

**Feather River Tourism Association**  
**Minutes of the February 10, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting**

In attendance (via Zoom) are board members Karen Kleven, Sharon Roberts, Susan Bryner, Josie Litchfield, and Janice Haman. Also in attendance were Executive Director Joe Niesyn and Contractors Ellie Hinrichs and Katherine Sansone. Board member Riccardo Jacobus and Contractor Vanessa Vasquez joined in later.

**The meeting was called to order by Karen at 10:05 a.m.** She reviewed the Purpose of the meeting and the Desired Outcomes. Sharon adds the nomination of a Lake Almanor area board member to the agenda.

**Minutes:** Sharon motioned to approve the [9.30.22 Minutes](#). Susan seconds. All in favor.

**Agenda:** Susan motioned to approve the amended [agenda](#). Janice seconds. All in favor.

**Executive Director Report**

- Joe discusses branding and narrowing down new logo options, but Katherine will share more.
- He discusses his meeting and correspondence with the **Tax Collector**, which they say software issues are still the culprit. He plans to meet in person with Julie White (and Jennifer Tuck) on 2/20 to follow through on their questions for the County legal council. He will follow up every two weeks through June regarding **Microzone data**.
- **PR/Stakeholder Activity:** He is actively canvassing Quincy, Bucks Lake, and Greenhorn, but no one followed through with inputting the data to our website, so he is setting up meetings to bring his laptop and do the process with them. He started in Quincy because of the number of hotels still open this season and will move to Almanor and Indian Valley within the next couple weeks.
- **Civic Orgs:** He is joining Quincy Chamber and Quincy Rotary and attending the others as needed, which he finds valuable to integrate himself in the communities where a lot of people don't know him. He is working a little bit with the Dixie Fire Collaborative and also Clint at the SBDC, which could be a valuable tool for any of our stakeholders looking for financing or advice.
- He met with the **Marketing Team** (Vanessa, Sharon, and Katherine) and got a lot of feedback from Sharon on how he can get a better understanding of it.
- **Chamber Coalition:** We (Karen, Janice, Joe) met on 2/3 with a team in Eastern Plumas led by Richard Aiple of Nakoma Resort who have presented a .75% increase to the existing 9% TOT to fund Visitors Centers. They've presented this to the Board of Supervisors 4-5 times and are proposing it to go on the ballot. Karen says we do need to have a discussion about this at a later date.
- **Events:** Attended Groundhog Fever Festival, Longboards, and will continue attending other local events such as the Chilly Chili Cookoff and ice skating rink in Chester.
- Joe discusses his **action plan** for the next three months, including understanding and implementing the FRTA master plan, Marketing Team meeting in March, attending a seminar

to better understand the ED/board hierarchy, attending Visit California outlook forum two day seminar in March and can stay with relatives in that area to avoid lodging expenditures.

- Sharon wants Joe to look further into the Visit California seminar and evaluate whether it's the best use of funds at this time, and Karen says it also needs to be part of a discussion later about the budget.

## **Administration/Operations**

10:25

### **Approval of Board Members and Terms**

- Karen and Susan are each in their third one-year term. Sharon nominates Karen and Susan each for a renewed two-year term starting this year, all agree. Sharon wants to research the number of renewals.
- Sharon and Janice are starting the second year of their two-year terms and they can renew up to three times.
- Riccardo and Josie's terms are discussed, it is decided that they were elected after two-year terms were in place.
- A Lake Almanor area board member is needed.
  - Sharon really pushed to get Timberhouse involved but they are too busy but maybe down the road can work as an ambassador to help us recruit. We just don't have any lodging providers in this area that can be actively involved.
  - Sharon nominates Katherine Sansone to the board. She has been very involved with FRTA marketing.
  - Karen has reservations about staff members or contractors being board members. It can make things difficult for supervision.
  - Susan agrees we've had trouble finding anyone and that it's really hard to find good, strong board members in this entire county. People are few and far between that have the time and skill sets that we're looking for. When we needed help with our website we used Sharon, and Civitas told us there wasn't a conflict. Katherine has the same reservations but is willing to do this for us because of the need for representation and leadership in the area. We are still hoping Timberhouse will step up later. Katherine is the chair of a community foundation and understands boards well. We have a lot going on in this Microzone and could use an extra hand.
  - Karen agrees that Katherine has great skills and expertise, and she could just recuse herself from certain votes. She needs to turn in a board application or send a letter of intent, but we can vote now since she is very qualified.
- **Karen calls for a vote for Katherine Sansone as a board member, all approve.**
  - Susan will train Ellie on FRTA website to update board member bios and photos, and meeting agendas and minutes.
- Janice suggests sending Todd a letter of thanks, Joe will write and go meet him in person.
  - Susan confirmed Todd sent an email resigning from the board.

### **Nomination of Officers**

10:39

- Susan clarifies that the Secretary should review, approve, and sign the minutes (can be done via DocuSign) before they are posted to the [website](#).
- Susan requests to add to the desired outcomes of the agenda that the Treasurer needs to be given the outcomes of anything voted on (important for auditing purposes).

- Janice motions to approve Sharon as President, Karen as Vice President, Susan as Treasurer, and Josie as Secretary. Susan seconds. All approve, no oppose.
- Susan thanks Karen for all of her work getting us started, moving us forward, and is happy to have her be able to step into a lesser role.

### **Quarterly Meetings**

- Karen suggests setting quarterly meetings (February, May, August, November) but that we should probably add a meeting in March to discuss some important things we don't have time for today. Riccardo joins in at 10:43.
  - Susan motions to approve quarterly meetings with ability to call meetings in between if needed. Sharon seconds. All approve. The next meeting is set for Thursday, March 16th at 1:00pm.

### **Plumas Bank Account Changes**

- Susan motions to add Board President Sharon, Board Treasurer Susan, and Executive Director Joe to Plumas Bank account signature card (remove Karen). Janice seconds. All approve, no oppose.

## **Finance**

10:52

### **Approval of Financial Report**

- Janice motions to approve the 2022 Financial Report. Karen seconds. All approve, no oppose.

### **Budget Review**

- Susan discusses the 2023 budget and the 2022 available carry-over:
  - 44% for Marketing, 12% for Admin, 37% for Microzones
  - The gentleman who loaned us \$30,000 two years ago for startup operations needs it back this spring.
  - The "Print and Web Advertising" line item was approved by a Marketing Team in January.
  - "Dues and Subscriptions" were taken out at the last minute in order to make the cash flow balance. A CRM may need to be put off until 2024. Upgrading Mailchimp another \$20/month could do a lot of what a CRM could do.
  - Lake Almanor microzone will fund Susan going to the Visit California conference (\$1,100) and she has people she can stay with.
- Budget Questions:
  - Karen says [Weekend Sherpa](#) is a \$37,000 investment and they will provide us with six videos and lots of photographs, so she thinks we can lower the \$15,000 **Visual Asset Development** budget.
    - Katherine agrees for videography, but thinks we need to hire professional photographers to go to events to get shots we need besides wildlife and nature.
    - Josie has used local photographers that charge around \$200-300 per shoot for a couple of hours.
    - Sharon would like to research the photographers and really plan out the images we want to get with Vanessa's help and where we have weak photos on the website. We will have to budget money for marketing every year but hopefully we can get our visual assets in line and drop that amount next year.
    - Joe will be getting together with Rochelle (TMH) early march so she can put together photography bids. He says her work is amazing and will connect her with Katherine.

- Karen wants to know who is responsible for leading the Weekend Sherpa project and Susan says the Marketing Team will be.
- Susan asks Sharon about the **Influencer Campaign**. Josie has used some influencer campaigns before. The amount is from Carl's Strategic Plan proposal. We might be able to drop it in half and try to get one influencer instead of 2-3. The Shasta Cascade meeting last year indicated that influencers are having less influence now. Sharon has not personally had much luck with influencers. It will take some research in order to spend that money.
- Susan notes that we do have room for these things in the budget, but not all of it in our cash flow. If it's not in the budget there has to be a special meeting to raise the budgeted amount before it can be spent.
- Karen asks for clarification of the **Content Strategy/Social Media** \$15,000 under Marketing Notes. It appears to be carryover that is included above in Vanessa's contract.
- Karen asks for clarification of the **Website Content, Improvements & SEO** under Marketing Notes. Sharon said to remove the word "content" and that it is Kory's fee suggested by Carrie. Sharon would like to look for someone to do some strong SEO on the site or do it herself. Karen suggests we pay Sharon if she is the one to do that since she has already volunteered so many hours, and that she should work with Susan to determine the amount.
- Karen reminds everyone that one of our main responsibilities as a board is financial oversight and that it's really important that we really understand this spending.
- Karen wants it to be corrected that Zoom is \$150/year, not \$50.
- Karen agrees with Sharon that Joe should take a closer look at the **Visit California Conference** to see who is speaking and the benefits he could get from going. We want him to help us with long term vision and connecting with State people. Susan agreed that he could get a good feel for the profession in general even if some of the workshops are over his head at this time. Joe will take a look and give an honest assessment within a day or two. It is discussed whether it should come out of general Microzone funds.
- Karen and Riccardo think Joe's Rotary fee (\$750 includes lunches) should come out of general Microzone funds but are okay with it coming out of Quincy's Microzone because it may benefit Quincy more than the others.
- Sharon asks about **Rent** and Karen explains that there is a private office available at [Quincy Collective](#) for \$325/month, which she would be willing to pay for half of. She indicated that Joe needs a space to be able to meet with people, including Ellie for admin assistance, and also because he does not have decent internet at his home office. It includes printing and all utilities. Joe adds that meeting at Carey Candy has not been an ideal meeting place.
- Janice asks about **Shasta Cascade**, a tourism organization representing seven or nine counties in Northern California. The amount could be anywhere from \$1,000-5,100 for a marketing bundle (rack cards, Facebook posts, business listings, travel write ups, features, media kit, etc.) but Sharon thinks \$2,000 is a good estimate. The marketing team will have to look at the a la carte options and we can also see if the County will fund any of it. Janice is willing to go to their summit and pay her own way.

- Sharon motions to pass the budget with Susan's adjustment to 100%. Janice and Riccardo second, all approve.

## **Annual Report**

- Susan will write an executive summary for the front of the report. Joe can share with stakeholders and we can send it out in our newsletter. Now that the budget has been approved she can move forward with that next week and get it to the Board of Supervisors soon.

## **Marketing Report**

- When Katherine came on board, the big push was for press releases and feature releases (ice skating, longboards, tree cutting...) that were sent to regional and travel/recreation magazines. A big one was done about The Spot (Greenville) but it was right before elections and then Winter. Katherine does stay in touch with the reporters she spent the day with and sends them updates often. She also sends out calendar releases and updates digital boards with events. She found that many people thought we just burnt up and there was nothing left here, which is why she put a big emphasis on the 2023 advertising budget. She researched five publications and we voted on Weekend Sherpa and Sierra REC for this year (digital), perhaps Mountain Valley Living or other print publications down the road. We ran an ad this month in Visit California. Food and Travel Magazine was supposed to do something for us last fall, then this winter, but they still didn't do it. So we'll be getting \$11,000 in free advertising from them this year.
- Katherine and Vanessa are working together on **Blogs**. They've put together a calendar for the year and each write one, though it is fluid. They are stories to intrigue and invite people in, and a secondary type of selling.
- We decided to bring someone in for logo design. Katherine will narrow it down to two options and share with the board, hopefully by the end of the month.
- Vanessa introduced herself and shared a bit about her skills and her background in digital content creation. She was brought in to write specific website pages, including destinations and activity pages during website development. A second contract was given for social media posts (Facebook and Instagram) along with additional content pages as needed. She presented a few of her web pages and blog posts. She echos that we do need photo assets for Awesome Autumn and the Bloom Blog.
- Vanessa has been managing our **Social Media** since June of 2022.
  - Instagram followers are up 40%, could be over 1000 by April 2023
  - Facebook is at close to 4000 followers
  - That could increase with targeted ads to Reno, Chico, Sacramento. Vanessa doesn't manage the ads but will work with Sharon and Joe on a strategy.
  - Vanessa spends about 6 hours/month (\$390) on social media with more focus on the website.
  - Vanessa thinks more video content like that from Weekend Sherpa will help.
  - Josie Walker Litchfield in the chat:

Thanks for the info Vanessa! Susan, we can pull 'engagement rates' for your report, we have a very engaged page which is much more impactful than having a lot of

followers. That said, a targeted ad campaign would get more of the right kind of followers. With a direct spend of \$150 a month we could gain about 300-400 followers each month on FB, and about 50 on IG (it's more expensive to advertise there). Hope that's helpful.

### **Website Report**

- Sharon reviews the website summary, Google Analytics. She needs to lower our toxic links, which are
- Karen asks why the users are down and Sharon explains that it's basically a new site, even though it's the old url.
- A lot of the old traffic was garbage. The new traffic is going to be a lot more targeted.
- The information we need to share with stakeholders is that we had over 3,500 clicks on a book now button on our website leading to a lodging provider (7/1/22-2/6/23) and 2,877 individual lodging providers were looked at.
- Get Outside is the most viewed page. The home page is the highest landing page. Our blog does not have a lot of traffic.
- We need to do the marketing and point people to our website.
- Karen: and we need our lodging providers to link to our website on their websites.
- Sharon agrees, but not every provider is going to want to point you to the competition.

### **Other Business**

- Karen: We'll hold off on the Eastern Plumas County update, and there is no public in attendance to comment. Are there any other questions or comments before we adjourn?
- Katherine will share her page of links to all of our ads and stories.
- Riccardo asked how much the proposal is to raise the TOT tax and all answered. Many answers are given and it is decided that Joe will forward him updates from Nakoma
- Riccardo also would like to be able to promote the Cinco de Mayo kickoff to their summer music series, where he will be having a band from High Sierra who has a big following. He will send Katherine the information and she'll draft a press release. Kaline from The Drunk Brush will post it to our events page.

[Susan motions to adjourn the meeting. Janice seconds, all approve.](#)

The meeting is adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Submitted by Ellie Hinrichs