

**CALL TO ORDER** Community Marketing Commission Chair, Tom Dwyer, called the regular meeting of the City of Loveland Community Marketing Commission to order on the above date at 6:00 PM at the City Council Chambers.

**ROLL CALL** Roll was called and the following responded: Albers, Coale, Clark, Dwyer, Erion, Forster, Roth and Ziglin.

**MINUTES** Minutes for the February 15, 2017 Regular Meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** None

**REPORTS**

Council Liaison Report Councilor Dave Clark presented the following:

- The Loveland Food Bank is going to repurpose an existing building for their distribution.
- Work is currently being performed on the Foundry project on both Lincoln and Cleveland. An appropriation for roadwork was brought to council a couple of weeks ago and was not approved, but it was brought again last night and was approved. Southbound Cleveland at Third Street is going to become a two-lane road plus a left turn lane into the Foundry project.
- Both the LDP and DDA agreed to go back on the ballot for the election. One of the property tax issues will not be included. The election will instead be regarding debt without the tax collections.

Financial Report Staff Liaison Cindy Mackin presented key highlights from the financial report:

- March collections were \$54,861, which is 2% lower than in 2016. Total year-to-date collections are \$151,996.
- Visitors Center traffic was down 48% for the month of March, from 1,002 in 2016 to 521 in 2017, but the year-to-date percentage remains about the same.
- The US 34 Big Thompson Canyon will be closing for a year longer than anticipated. It will be open for the summer but then close again in the fall until summer 2018.
- A Johnstown hotel wants to be included in Visit Loveland's marketing and advertising by assessing a 2% marketing fee. Chair Dwyer stated concerns about discounting it from 3% to 2% for Johnstown properties.
- Staff is currently also working with Finance and Legal to hopefully begin collecting lodging tax from Airbnb properties. There are about 70 properties in Loveland alone.
- Chair Dwyer recommended looking at the budget in detail and cutting where needed, including the Fire and Ice Festival. Visit Loveland's only income sources are lodging tax and Visitors Center sales and staff cannot transfer any monies from within the general fund as other departments can. Chair Dwyer recommends doing a coupon at the hotels on receipts or confirmation pages for the Visitors Center for the visitors to use.

PR Report

- See PR/Social Media report for details

Staff Liaison Report

Staff Liaison Cindy Mackin presented key highlights from the Staff Report:

- Staff received 37 applications that met the requirements for the new Group Sales Coordinator position. June 1st is the targeted start date for this position.
- The Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) approached staff to apply for grant monies related to the flood. More details are available below.
- Staff attended the MIC Conference, along with the Embassy Suites, in March to meet with meeting and event planners.
- Staff also attended the Travel and Adventure Show in Denver. It was the first consumer show that Visit Loveland has attended. The target audience was the Denver weekender. Breweries, art, horseback riding and water activities were the main points of interest.
- One Tribe has been easy to work with, providing advertising and marketing collateral at a high-level with fast turn-around times.

**DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS**

Fire and Ice Recap – Presentation by Nate Webb of Blazen Illuminations

Blazen had a professional video created for a 2017 event recap. The event had another year of consistent growth. PR value was over \$860k, 4.09 million impressions, and 18.3k social media shares. Attendance was estimated at over 40k. An app was implemented as a new option. 35 to 44 was the prominent age group, with 25 to 34 next and 45 to 54 the third largest group, and 55% of the attendees were women.

Website demographics showed views by many countries and cities, with Dallas being number five. Denver and Loveland were the top two cities. UK and Canada were the top countries after the US.

The Brewing and Distilling Arts tent was new to the event in 2017. Tokens were pre-sold and the experience was very positive. The selection was not where they expected but the logistics were difficult. Companies are already looking to sign up for the 2018 event. Chair Dwyer recommends a competition in the future.

The mobile app had over 2,100 downloads with an average of 30 page views per user. Users mostly accessed schedule and maps, with ice carving and fireworks being the top interests. The game component had two winners. For the ice carving, it was more of an interactive exhibit rather than the competition.

Sponsorships were better this year than in the past. 12 Downtown businesses participated, up 122% over 2016.

A survey was sent out to vendors and sponsors. The overall rating was 4.5 out of 5. All vendors are interested in participating in 2018.

Flood Grant Application – Presentation by Cindy Mackin with City of Loveland

OEDIT has \$750,000 in grant monies that can be used for flood relief to give to communities as a grant. The funds would be reimbursement payments. 80% has to go to Boulder and Larimer counties. The holiday season is the slowest time of year so a holiday event made the most sense. Winter Wonderlights is the grant concept that staff developed.

The grant application included historical data showing damages within the city, including the sales tax decrease for retail, as well as a decrease in lodging tax. 17 various spreadsheets and informational reports were provided along with the ten-page grant application.

The project would incorporate programmed holiday lights at Chapungu Sculpture Garden to bring people to the retail hub with the Promenade Shops, Outlets and Marketplace all being right there. The event would run November until the first week in January and there would be programming (concerts, Santa, etc) each weekend. Everything related to this project would have to go out to bid before any work can be performed.

April 28th is the award date. The amount staff is requesting is the maximum of \$150,000 because it would be paid back - staff would need to go to Council to ask for the \$150,000 up-front.

*A motion to approve \$150,000 from Lodging Tax reserves for the CDBG DR Grant Winter Wonderlights project as recommended by Staff, contingent upon Visit Loveland being awarded the grant with the understanding that these monies would be refunded by the State of Colorado upon proof of receipt, was unanimously approved.*

2018 Draft Budget – Presentation by Cindy Mackin with City of Loveland

Finance will have the core budgets available next week. This meeting requires that the budget be presented, modified and approved in the May meeting for budget meetings taking place in June.

Staff took lodging tax collections and visitors center sales for 2016 and decreased both by 5% due to trends. The 2017 budget was \$1,235,918 and included Wayfinding signs and airport marketing. Staff benefits went up 60%, and staff will be adding a new person. The City is self-insured and health costs have gone up dramatically for employees. Some of the costs cannot be controlled - salaries, benefits, FICA, cost allocations, etc.

Chair Dwyer recommends that events start becoming ticketed to increase revenue, but is open to pulling money from reserves to make up for the deficit in spending allowance from the increased costs in benefits.

To reduce some of the budget, staff removed the state vacation guide ad but kept the summer vacation guide, decreased Certified Folder distribution, and removed Colorado.com video hosting, the Colorado Eagles sponsorship, seasonal target radio ads, and the Budweiser Events sponsorship. Councilor Clark believes that the print advertising can go away as more should be put towards social media. International marketing and trade missions were also removed. Destination and community events were kept in the budget. Each year \$25,000 of the budget goes towards the Rialto Theater to help their marketing.

A breakout of the draft budget is shown below.

- **Community Marketing - \$328,227**
  - Advertising, supplies, travel, utilities, postage, telephone, food, alarm monitoring, etc.
- **Visitors Center - \$72,407**
  - Hotel studies and research, along with the US 34 banner program, were cut from this bucket. Website updates, visitor guides, photography, and website/social media marketing are remaining.
- **Product Improvement - \$29,800**
  - Includes salaries, benefits, FICA, retirement, and cost allocations.
- **Personnel costs - \$416,000**
  - No items were cut but some were reduced. This bucket still includes travel, supplies, telephone, liability, printing, etc.
- **Administrative - \$57,774**

**TOTAL BUDGET - \$905,809**

Councilor Clark recommended bringing this budget with a few supplemental requests (items that were cut that staff would ideally like to keep) for discussion for the next meeting. Chair Dwyer recommended lowering the Eagles sponsorship significantly. Commissioner Forster stated that the Budweiser Events Center has a low return on investment.

**NEW BUSINESS**                      None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**                      None

**ADJOURNMENT**                      Having no further business to come before the Commission, the April 19, 2017 Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

**OTHER NOTES**                      None