

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

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The Gardiner Chamber of Commerce serves our community through developing local tourism while endorsing stewardship of the Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Meeting date: **Thursday, December 14th, 2023 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce 216 Park St. Gardiner, MT & [Virtual via Zoom](#)

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1 Roll Call & Introductions

Amanda Hagerty, Mike Keller, Debbie Mackey, Sarah Ondrus, Mike Skelton, Trina Smith, Billie Taylor

Excused Absence: Chelsea Deweese

Unexcused Absence: Brian Koski

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Hagerty motioned to approve the minutes from November 2023 Closed Executive Session. Ondrus seconded. 7 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

2. Committee Updates

2.1 Mary Wilson– Yellowstone NPS

Not Present. Wilson later shared the following notes via email:

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce Meeting, Thursday, December 14, 2023
Notes prepared and emailed to Terese Petcoff by Mary Wilson

Visitation

November 2023 visitation was up 13.69% from November 2022.
Recreation visits YTD are up 25.55% from the same time in 2022.

Interior Park Roads Open for Winter

Interior park roads and facilities opened Friday, December 15 for the winter season.

Northeast Entrance Road Winter Driving Safety

The road from the North Entrance to the Northeast Entrance remains open all year conditions permitting.

- Is open to Cooke City and usually snow packed and icy (winter driving conditions).

- Use pullouts - do not stop in the middle of the road.
- Snow plows cannot stop quickly on snow-packed/icy roads when they come around a curve and find a vehicle in the road.

Park road updates can be obtained by texting 82190 to 888-777, calling the park's Public Road Report Line at 307-344-2117, and/or by visiting the Park Roads page on the park's website.

Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and Albright Visitor Center

- Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and dining room, gift shop, coffee and beverage service, lobby and ski shop are open. Regularly scheduled tours and snow coach services between Mammoth, Old Faithful and other park locations are available.
- Mammoth Campground will remain closed this winter.
- Albright Visitor Center at Mammoth Hot Springs is open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. including Christmas and New Year's!

Check the below link for most current operating dates and seasons information:

[Explore in Winter - Yellowstone National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/visiting-yellowstone-in-winter.htm)

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/visiting-yellowstone-in-winter.htm>

Here is a link to more information about visiting the park during winter:

[Yellowstone National Park's winter season begins Dec. 15, 2023 - Yellowstone National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/news/23042.htm)

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/news/23042.htm>

We've been in low snow situations before in December 2021, 2018, 2017, and 2014. So think snow!

Thanks for all your hard work helping keep visitors safe and better informed!

2.2 Mike Thom – USFS

Various roads in the national forest close January 1 for cross-country skiing. USFS has ski maps for the Chamber to give out to visitors.

A contractor is selected for work on Cinnabar, which is expected to be done by April high water.

Brogan's is still in discussion with MTFWP regarding the feasibility of that site.

They're battling beavers at Eagle Creek Campground. Beavers are building dams upstream and causing flooding in parts of the campground.

Mike Skelton recognized the USFS for their work in the past 40 years of grizzly bear recovery. The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee celebrated 4 decades of progress on December 12 at the Museum of the Rockies.

Bison hunting is open. Eight tribes exercise treaty rights to hunt and additional tribes coordinate with the State of Montana in order to hunt. Always feel free to reach out to the Gardiner Ranger District with any questions or concerns.

2.3 Terese Petcoff – Director's Report

Petcoff presented changes to the Membership Application based on feedback from the board, including feedback regarding member-to-member solicitation.

She presented an update regarding lodging tax revenue.

Gardiner Q3 Compared

- Q3 2021: -3.79%

- Q3 2020: +49.49%

- Q3 2019: +33.84%

Other YCMI CVBs Q3 2023

- Belgrade: +90.46%
- Big Sky: -78.57%
- Bozeman: -81.54%
- Livingston: +53.34%
- Red Lodge: +105.72%
- West Yellowstone: -79.59%

2.4 Maria Koppelberger – Operations Manager’s Report

The Christmas Stroll was a huge success! 389 people came through the doors of the Chamber. Eighteen different businesses donated over \$500 worth of merchandise and giftcards to the grand prize for the stroll passport.

Koppelberger received great feedback about the stroll; one long-time resident saying they didn’t know there was so much community left here in Gardiner. Another resident called the event “magical”, reflecting on the music, the crowds around town, and the community spirit.

Several businesses gave feedback that they did better than ever sales-wise during this stroll. Christy, with the craft fair, said her vendors sold more than past strolls and a handful even did double the sales of previous years.

Member of the public Sabina Strauss commented via Zoom that Eat Café and DN Gallery did not do as well as others during the stroll and so offered a possible change to the stroll passport: visitors receive a stamp for the business only with a purchase. Koppelberger appreciated the feedback, saying she looked at other towns and what they do for their holiday strolls. Each does something different so there are many options for the stroll going forward.

Skelton and others commented that the purchase option would depend on the purpose of the stroll: to make money or to build community?

Properties and Facilities

The rodeo grounds were popular during hunting season with boarding horses. A couple of truckers who live in the area parked their semis there during Thanksgiving.

Snow, or lack thereof, is a concern for recreation in the area. Petcoff and Koppelberger heard from CVBs around the state last week that they are partially opening ski hills, postponing and canceling ski events, and overall worried about the impact of low snowfall. Oversnow travel in the park has changed a bit since snowmobiles can’t take off directly from Mammoth, but fortunately, the snowcoaches are still running since they travel even on the pavement.

This started a general discussion about snowfall. Keller commented that lodging in the park is quite full during the holidays.

3. Outstanding Business

3.1 FY24 Gardiner Chamber of Commerce Budget for Approval

Petcoff presented the FY24 Chamber of Commerce Budget for approval, which was previously sent to board members via email.

Mackey motioned to approve the FY24 Gardiner Chamber of Commerce Budget. Ondrus seconded. 7 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

3.2 FY24 Gardiner CVB Budget Increase for Approval

Petcoff presented the FY24 CVB Budget Increase for approval, which was previously sent to board members via email.

Mackey motioned to approve the FY24 Gardiner CVB Budget Increase. Keller seconded. 7 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

4. New Business

Skelton thanked Petcoff for working through the projected deficit last year, securing additional funding, and ultimately coming in under budget regarding expenses.

Skelton thanked the board members who voted on year-end bonuses for staff.

Smith shared that B Bar does not anticipate opening the coming week for skiing, due to the low snow levels.

Election of new officers will occur during the January Annual Members Meeting.

5. Public Comment

None

Keller motioned to adjourn the meeting. Taylor seconded. 7 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18th, 2024 Annual Meeting, Yellowstone River Lodge, Time TBD