

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, May 20, 2021, 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

Present: Kelly Burns, Chelsea Deweese, Amanda Hagerty, Mike Keller, Debbie Mackey, Alex Roberts, Mike Skelton, Sabina Strauss

Excused Absence: Sarah Ondrus

1.2 Approval of April Board Meeting Minutes

Deweese made a motion to approve the April Board Meeting Minutes. Roberts seconded. Minutes approved without discussion.

1.3 Previous Action taken by the Board

Skelton stated for the record that the Board approved additional funding for VIC seasonal staff to cover the month of September of the amount of \$1,045.00 per an email vote. The Board also approved the modification of hours for the summer season that will now be 9:00am – 6:00pm, Monday through Friday, 10:00am – 6:00pm on Saturdays, and will be closed on Sundays.

The second item for which the Board took previous action is the replacement of the roof on the Chamber. The Chamber received the insurance settlement of \$18,000.00 that is almost matching the exact amount it will require to complete the replacement. The roof should be intact for 30 years. There was brief discussion regarding shingles. The project should be complete by next week.

1.4 Mike Tranel, Deputy Superintendent – NPS

Tranel introduced himself as the recently appointed Deputy Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. He has been in the position since February and provided his background.

Committee Updates

2.1 Mary Wilson – Yellowstone NPS

Wilson opened with stating that the Park is already busy that need the community's help with sharing the following messages.

- Reservations are not required to enter Yellowstone this summer but visitors will continue to need an entrance pass which can be purchased on-line beforehand or at the park entrance upon arrival.

What visitors to Yellowstone should expect:

- Initially, some [NPS and partner services](#) will be limited and/or modified, especially in early Spring. They suggest you bring your own food, water, snacks and a variety of clothing including cold/wet weather gear.

These services (limited and/or modified) will be available through:

- [Yellowstone National Park Lodges](#)
- [Delaware North General Stores](#)
- [Yellowstone Forever](#)
- [Yellowstone Park Service Stations, Inc.](#)
- [Medcor at Yellowstone](#)

Visit each partner's website for details. The Park and its partners will continue to evaluate and adapt to changing COVID-19 guidance and adjust operations as needed.

Recreate responsibly

- The park asks each visitor to [recreate responsibly](#) and reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you are sick, do not visit the park. Self-quarantine to avoid exposing others.
- Consistent with CDC recommendations, people who are not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks indoors and in crowded outdoor spaces. More details are available at www.nps.gov/coronavirus.
- Before visiting, please check the park's website to determine its operating status.
- Respect the park, other visitors, and wildlife. Keep at least 100 yards (300 feet) from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards (75 feet) from all other wildlife. Bison have started calving and elk are not far behind! Slow down, use pullouts, never approach, and stay required distances from wildlife.
- Elk calving has begun, a special reminder to keep your distance...cow elk are especially dangerous this time of year.

Know current conditions

- Weather conditions can change rapidly, especially in the spring. Many areas of the park are still experiencing winter conditions. Visitors should understand the park's [current conditions](#).

Stay informed

- Reduce wait times at park entrances. Buy a pass [online](#) ahead of time.
- Spring/early summer road conditions can change quickly. Find updated [road status](#) on the park website and by calling (307) 344-2117. To receive Yellowstone road alerts on your mobile phone, text "82190" to 888-777 (an automatic text reply will confirm receipt and provide instructions).
- The road between Canyon Junction and Tower-Roosevelt will be closed for the 2021 season. There will be no access to the Mount Washburn trails. Check locally, at www.nps.gov/yell or download [Yellowstone's App](#) for current information.

2.2 Terese Petcoff – Executive Director’s Report

Petcoff opened with announcing the Chamber has two new members join since our last meeting including: TrailQuipt (Bear Spray Rental Kiosk at the Big Rock inn) and the Yellowstone Carriage Company has officially joined.

Events are beginning to roll out, that include the Horse Drive and the Gardiner Rodeo coming up in May and as usual the Rodeo will take place Father’s Day weekend. These events will take place as they normally would and for the Rodeo, we will be providing masks to the Upper Yellowstone Round up Association for anyone that would like one for free at the gate.

GRAD will resume in person meetings meaning they will be using our conference room once again.

Bathroom Advertising is still available.

Food truck update: Petcoff spoke to Lisa Curtis yesterday and they will be moving forward with having food trucks on their property. There is not a set open date but believe some are hoping to be open by June 1. They will also be having a Blue Goose pop up and will be serving drinks.

CVB

The website updates that Petcoff touched on in the marketing presentation have begun to happen. The online dining guide is live, and staff are excited to provide this reference for visitors and this service to restaurant members.

The State of Montana is creating a Recreate Responsibly Toolkit adapting creative from the Recreate Responsibly national campaign, adjusting for the Montana brand and Montana messaging emphasis. This toolkit is like the toolkit that was developed for the CARES Safety Grant program and contains creative artwork and sample materials. The toolkit will be available on MarketMT.com for all partners as well as other businesses and organizations to use.

Along with this there was a micro grant program for tourism regions and regional CVB’s to assist in creative. Once the Tool kit is live, we will be updating our website with the language, creating social media posts, stickers, flyers, and posters with the creative. We will distribute these items to members for visitors to have as well as make them available in the visitor center. Hopefully, this will help in getting the whole state on the same page when it comes to messaging and education for recreating responsibly and destination management.

2.3 Sara Fleming – Office Manager’s Report

Fleming opened with discussing the Gardiner Travel Guides. She has so far distributed them to this side of the bridge. Will attempt to complete distribution on other side next week.

The VIC Seasonal Staff will begin staffing starting on May 31, 2021.

Fleming is gathering content for the Goodness Grows in Gardiner Social Media Initiative. She’s still seeking participating businesses to be featured in the initiative.

Destination Management social media content has so far been fairly successful, garnishing particularly good reach and engagement.

Outstanding Business

3.1 Policy & Procedures Manual Discussion

Petcoff updated the Board on the progress of updating the Chamber Policy & Procedures Manual and the pending edits to finalize soon regarding the Chamber Capitalization Threshold Policy. Skelton expanded on

additions needed regarding a decision needed for depreciation thresholds by the Board. Keller believed the threshold should be at \$1,000.00. Discussion followed and Board agreed on the \$1,000.00 threshold.

Petcoff will email the updated Policy & Procedures Manual and Employee & HR Handbook for their review by the end of day Friday, May 21st. The Board will take action of both items at the June Board of Directors Meeting.

3.2 Building Repair Update

Skelton reiterated the updates for the roof repair that is set to begin on 5.24.21 and should be complete within two days. The repair is weather dependent. Discussion followed.

Public Comment

4.1 Sabina Strauss – Committees and Rails to Trails

Strauss inquired regarding the status of the CVB Committee and requested for updates regarding other Chamber committees. Skelton asserted that these committees will be updated in the Policy & Procedures Manual.

Strauss also asked if the Chamber would like to participate in the Rails to Trails event. Skelton said that the Chamber will be happy to disseminate the opportunities to participate to Chamber Members. This event is promoting changing old rail beds to biking and walking paths.

Meeting Adjourned.

Date of Next Meeting: June 17, 2021, 12:00pm – 1:00pm