

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES TO
QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
VISIT BOERNE ADVISORY BOARD
RONALD C. BOWMAN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
447 North Main Street
Boerne, TX 78006
October 10, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.**

Present: Tommy Mathews, Brad Wilson, Guy Sanders, Nicole Chapman

Late: Emily Carvalho arrived at 4:23

Absent: Ross Partlow, Paula Lay

1. CALL TO ORDER – 4:00 PM

[2024-524](#) a. Announcements

Chairman Tommy Mathews made the announcement that there had been a change to the hierarchy of the board in that he (Mathews) had been appointed to Chairman of the board, Guy Sanders had been appointed to Vice-Chairman, and Nicole Chapman, the GM from The Kendall had been appointed to the board as approved by City Council.

2. CITIZENS COMMENTS:

There were no citizens present at the meeting, and therefore, no citizens comments.

3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING

[2024-525](#) a. Approve Minutes from Regular Quarterly Meeting of July 11, 2024

Chairman Mathews entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2024 meeting. Guy Sanders made the motion, Brad Wilson seconded, all were in favor, the motion passed.

4. RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON HOTEL PERFORMANCE

[2024-526](#) a. Fair Market Share Report - Hill Country Competitive Set
2nd Quarter Ended 6-30-2024 and Comparative to 6-30-2023

Larry went through the Fair Market Share Report for the 2nd quarter ended June 30, 2024, pointing out that Boerne beat their fair market

share of 6.19% at 6.32% and with an average daily rate of \$129.39 which was the 2nd highest just behind Fredericksburg. He went on to review how the other hill country communities fared for the 2nd quarter.

Larry then reviewed the Fair Market Share Report as compared to June 30, 2023, pointing out that we were up in 2024 whereas we were a little bit down in Q3 of 2023. He went on to talk a little bit about expectations for the future and that the opportunities for growth lies in the average rate, and sharing industry forecasts and his communications with other cities. Tommy mentioned he noticed that our competitors were down from last year, to which Larry referenced the short term rentals and asked Brad if he was seeing a downturn. Brad agreed that from an occupancy standpoint, they were down 10-20% and also said it was due to lower discretionary spending. They both agreed that the new laws and ordinance may have something to do with the downturn and continued a brief discussion as to the reasons behind the downturn in the short-term rental business.

[2024-527](#) b. Smith Travel Research Overview for January - September 2024
w/ Comparative

Moving on to the Smith Travel Research reports. Larry went through the slide drawing attention to the occupancy and average daily rate and demand for the quarter which were up over last year and adding that we should finish the calendar year around 62.5% occupancy for the year, whereas the state average is at about 60.5%. Moving on to the January through September 2024 report, Larry gave an update on the fiscal year information, reiterating that we are doing well and all numbers are ahead of this time last year with an expectation to beat our revenue budget of \$1.1 million, and that revenue goals will continue to grow year-over-year.

[2024-528](#) c. Datafy Traffic Summaries
2nd Quarter Ended 6-30-24 and Comparative to 6-30-23

Tori moved on to the Datafy reports. Starting with the Hotel Report, she reminded everyone that these were traffic reports and did not account for occupancies or revenues, but of people who entered the hotels and

stayed for a specific amount of time. She also reminded the board of last quarters reporting that reflected a down turn in hotel traffic, but that we knew why those reports reflected the downturn. Tori shared that, again, for this past quarter, our Datafy numbers show that hotel traffic is down, which does not coincide with the reports we are seeing from Source Strategies, Smith Travel Research and our own finance department. Larry interjected that our other sources for hotel reporting were more closely inline with the actual hotel visitation and where those sources receive their data from in comparison. Tori is in contact with our representatives at Datafy to investigate the discrepancies and the irregularities in the trend reports. Guy asked if we were in contact to other Datafy customers to see if they are showing the same irregular trends, to which Tori responded that she had not, but was working with Datafy and also with our hotels directly to review what they are experiencing as far as group and leisure traffic. Larry also added that the hotels are all reporting that they are doing well and went on to share some individual conversations he had with several hotel GM's. Tori then continued through the various hotel reports including visitor and trip data and trends, where our visitors are coming from, and also visitor demographics. All of which are captured through cell phone data.

Moving on to the Datafy reports for the Hill Country Mile, we are showing our numbers to be up from this same period last year for the visitor trip data. She continued through these Datafy slides pointing out various changes over last year's reporting as well as the comparisons to 2nd quarter 2023. Tori then introduced a new chart for top spending and biggest traffic to the mile reminding the board that this included locals, employees and everyone who spends time in the HCM foot print. This report shows which markets were spending the most while in Boerne suggesting that this information could be beneficial to anyone doing target marketing.

[2024-529](#) d. Destination Comparisons

Tori reminded the board of comparison questions that were asked of us at last quarters meeting in that how do we (Boerne) compare to other cities of our same structure and similar make up. Having asked Datafy for reports on other cities, they were able to provide overall reports that

included the whole city demographics for the whole year, but were not able to narrow down the information to only include their downtown or tourism districts as we do. Tori explained that we received information on Georgetown, Round Rock, Seguin, Spring, and Grapevine, as these were all cities that were near larger feeder cities and were markets that were similar in that tourism was a large part of their makeup, and that much of the demographics were the same. She went through these slides to show that while Boerne's traffic is smaller, so is our population and footprint. Emily pointed out that Boerne's square mileage is significantly smaller than these other communities, and Guy noted that if compared in percentages, Boerne was actually doing as well or better than some of these cities on a percentage basis. Tommy asked if we know why Grapevine's visitor numbers were so high? To which Larry responded that Grapevine has always done very well with their sporting events, shopping, and wedding venues.

5. RECEIVE UPDATE ON MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

[2024-530](#)

a. Current/Recent Advertising Creative

Tori moved through the advertising slides and shared each one and what it entailed and how we came about them. She shared examples of print ads, digital items, social media and e-mail marketing ads and also their reach, click through rates and explained how search numbers are calculated. She added that Boerne always performs very well on hill country searches; we tend to pop up even on very generic searches to the hill country which helps in those performance numbers. Tori pointed out a new vendor partner - Travel, Taste & Tour print magazine and also talked about marketing campaigns with Texas Monthly and 6AM City, which is a daily newsletter in Austin, Dallas and Fort Worth. She reviewed the social media campaigns and noted that our average click through rate was 2.54%, whereas the click through benchmark is .9%, so we were 182% over benchmark. We sent out two media wires since we last meet: one for the Hill Country Mile Rod Run and the other on wine tasting rooms in Boerne. The potential reach for these wires is always in the billions, which is very, very good.

[2024-531](#)

b. Influencer Status Report

As for our influencer advertising, Jessica Serna of My Curly Adventures came back again, along with her husband, Ismail who has My Culinary Adventures - we signed a dual contract with them and they just left last week. They stayed an additional 4 days more than originally planned, which included 33 stops on this trip and was our most ambitious itinerary yet. These two always work very well with us and are so generous as far as deliverables. For this contract, we paid for two reels, but we received 8 reels, so we will be able to spread them all out over several weeks instead of the original two week agreement. Tori also reviewed other influences that had come to Boerne, summarizing each one and their postings.

6. RECEIVE UPDATE ON DEPARTMENT

[2024-532](#) a. Tourism Industry Update

For the tourism industry update, Larry reviewed the Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (TACVB) meetings and his position and participation on the board and gave a quick update on activities within the Association. He mentioned the Texas Hotel Lodging Association, saying he was still on their board and may be joining another board in connection with that organization. As for Texas Travel Alliance, Tori and Jeanette will be attending this annual meeting in Houston and he (Larry) will stay behind. He went on to say that he wanted Tori to start attending these conferences as their will be a lot of information on AI and other marketing and advertising sessions. He also mentioned Tori's continued board position on the Texas Hill Country Trail Region.

[2024-533](#) b. Groups/Collaboration Update

Moving through the groups slide, Larry went through some of the groups that had been here and are coming to Boerne. He mentioned the Living Church of God who has held their annual conference in Boerne for the last 8 or 9 years, and would be arriving in the next day or so for the 2024 meeting. He went on to say that they had not signed a contract with the Bevy for 2025 and 2026, as of yet, but was hoping to visit with the organizer of that group next week to work it out.

Larry talked about the Governors Office of Tourism and an opportunity

to bring a group of travel writers from the UK to Boerne for a quick visit. Larry summarized their visit that had just happened last week and how positive the feedback and experience had been. He is continuing to work with Tommy Woods (no relation) of Travel Texas on future partnership opportunities for international writers and influencers.

Under the Collaboration and Participation slide, Larry mentioned some of the groups that Val Anderson (Visit Boerne's Group Coordinator) has worked with and talked specifically about the German Linguist, Hans Boaz and her (Val's) involvement in heading up a presentation he (Hans) gave at the Patrick Heath Public Library.

Next, Larry spoke about his involvement with TACVB as a speaker and instructor on strategic planning and workshops that he had attended in various cities, including one recently held in Early, TX that had been attended by about 40 directors of other CVB's and DMO's. He reiterated his intention to have all of his staff become industry leaders in the tourism industry and that each were well on their way to becoming just that.

7. RECEIVE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2025

[2024-534](#) a. 2025 Regular Meetings Schedule

The 2025 Advisory Board Meetings dates were reviewed.

8. COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF

There were no additional comments from the board or staff.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

s/s Larry Woods_____

Visit Boerne, Director

s/s Jeanette Teague_____

Secretary