

NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAIN TRAVEL ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING

July 11th

Wendell's Restaurant – 10:15 am

Attendees: Tobie Chandler, Margaret McLean, Teka Earnhardt, David Zunker, Jerry Brown, Hilda Thomason, Regina Dyer, Cheryl Smith

Guest: Rachel Steinberg – intern, Dahlonega Chamber and Visitors Bureau

Meeting Minutes

President Tobie Chandler called the meeting to order at 10:15 am with the first order of business being review and approval of the May minutes. A motion was made by Hilda Thomason and second by Margaret McLean and **approved** through acclamation, so the minutes will stand as submitted.

Treasurer's Report

Teka Earnhardt, Treasurer, reviewed the financial reports noting that current total assets are \$29,992.72. There was discussion about perhaps going up in rates for annual dues. Final decision was to keep annual dues at \$100 for now. Teka reported that membership numbers are holding strong and Winter Chautauqua final accounting showed a profit. Motion to approve Treasurer's report by David Zunker and second by Margaret McLean. **Approved.**

Committee Reports

Education: Tobie reported that the webinar was "a big 'ol bust". Despite practicing the presentation, the event was a disappointment on the day-of. The webinars were designed to provide continuing education without leaving the office, but Teka pointed out that people come to meetings to see people. Cheryl Smith reported that of all the state's tourism regions, NE continues to be one of the strongest in terms of attendance. The value of regional association meetings, in addition to providing information and updates is to continue to tell the story of the association itself. It was suggested that the meetings should continue and try not to force the issue of webinars – but do a better job of communicating the work of the region to Explore Georgia, and especially to Lisa Love. Vote in favor of no webinars – **unanimous**. Future meeting topics discussed included: group travel, events and regional co-ops.

Marketing: Margaret reported that the Southern Living coop is complete, and next is GPB TV followed by GPB Radio and working in digital. GPB provided 3.2 million impressions. All coop projects will be "put to bed" by the end of the month.

Membership: It was reported that membership numbers are holding steady, but that the reprint of the regional brochure in the fall is expected to spark new membership. Margaret recommended not increasing dues, but instead explain the value of membership and work to show increased value of the organization – motion by Margaret to keep membership cost at \$100, second by Hilda – motion **passed**.

New Business:

- Discussion of **new board members** centered around making sure that all 17 counties are adequately covered. There was also discussion as to whether to move location of meetings around or have a central location. No decision was made, but Regina and Tobie will set meeting sites for August and beyond.

- It was noted that **Google** will begin charging for maps on websites, based on number of clicks. Options for the Association website include: 1) leave the existing Google map as is; 2) change providers; 3) make the existing map clickable to the website.
- It was noted that **website** has been stagnant, although visits are above 2,500 per month, recommendation was to add video from members. The website has a low bounce rate, but it was noted that the bounce rate for July was higher than June.
- **Regional brochure** – discussed three bids received for the new brochure: Lifesprings Media, Matthews Printing and Phoenix Printing Group. After much discussion it was decided to accept the Phoenix Print Group bid for the regional brochure.
- **Facebook** needs creative content – some posting is taking place, but not enough to represent all member counties. It was suggested that the whole year next year needs to be about social media – with a focus on highlighting members, events and thematic posts. As plans develop for meetings topics for next year, it was agreed by all that social media will be atop the list of themes and presenters will be sought out for their expertise.