

Feather River Tourism Association

Minutes of the 10/11/2023 Board Meeting

In Attendance:

Sharon Roberts, President
Karen Kleven, Vice President
Susan Bryner, Treasurer
Riccardo Jacobus, Board Member
Lee Anne Schramel, Board Member
Lynn Wimer, Board Applicant
Katherine Sansone, Marketing Contractor
Tom McGowan, Plumas County District 3 Supervisor
Anne Kassebaum, Lake Almanor Area Chamber of Commerce ED
Ellie Hinrichs, Office Administrator
Rene Tuchscher, Advisory Committee (via Zoom)

Absent:

Janice Haman, Secretary

Sharon called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM.

Susan motions to approve the previous minutes, Riccardo seconds, all in favor.

Lee Anne motions to approve the agenda previous minutes, Susan seconds, all in favor.

Lynn Wimer was introduced and discussed her Chester business, [The Elegant Farmer](#), which opened in July 2023. She stepped out of the room for the discussion and vote.

Lee Anne motions to approve Lynn, Susan seconds, all in favor.

Market the Region

Karen discussed what she and Ellie have been doing with the fall colors [blog](#). They are posting on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and it is very time consuming. Ellie added that

she is finding it difficult to keep up with her administrative work because the blog and social media are taking up so much of her time.

Katherine gave an update on our [California Fall Color](#) banner ads. During October, California Falls Color expects 17,000 visitors to their blog. Besides blog views information goes out to about 500 media outlets weekly.

Sharon updated that we've only gotten 8 QR scans from the Awesome Autumn tent cards and posters.

Bliss Branding reported to Sharon that we are gaining social media followers. We are paying them \$1,500/month for sponsored ads targeting our [Places to Stay](#) page. Our search engine rankings have improved slightly but we are still not on page one often. Our click-through rate is under 3% for most pages. Rene suggests asking Bliss to retarget our click-throughs.

Sharon has been contacted by WordPress about upgrading. The cost would go from \$300 to \$1,040. She suggests doing some more research and waiting to vote on it closer to our renewal date in June.

Marketing Report – Sansone+/Katherine:

- Advertising:
 - Using headline "Destination Plumas County" in most advertisements with new logo.
 - Shared the proposed Ad for the Visit California 2024 guide. No comment from board.
 - Still looking for a hero image for the Shasta Cascade Visitor Guide, with a deadline of two days. Consensus did not like the kayak image. We discussed our marketing message and the types of images to use. Riccardo will check with SBTs for a mountain biking image. Lee Ann suggested general image such a wedding.
 - Shared research on several new publications to possibly advertise in 2024—San Joaquin Magazine, City lifestyle Reno, NorCal (digital & print), Hemisphere (United In-Flight Magazine)
 - She recommended Sierra Rec to continue next year. Charlie has been great at designing ads.
 - Checking to see if Weekend Sherpa can reduce costs for two sponsored stories in 2024.
- Public Relations:
 - Sending weekly fall photo releases to Sacramento Bee, East Bay Times, Reno Gazette, San Francisco Chronicle, Cico Enterprise, Redding Searchlight

- Katherine shared information on the photographer used for Big Band Boogie. Suggested we use a photo release form and create a policy for photos used with people in them. Shared difficulty in finding photographers good at taking photos of people. **Lynn** will share her daughter's contact as a possible photographer. **Lee Anne** may have some leads also.

Karen suggested we need a new, two-year strategic plan through 2024/2025. Things like Covid and the Dixie Fire have changed our issues and priorities since we worked with Carl Ribaldo of SMGConsulting to create the last one. She thinks we need an objective person in the field to help us with strategic marketing. His fee would be \$7,000 and not due right away, because he wants to work with us and wants us to be successful. He could help us identify things like:

- What is the next important staffing position?
- What are the marketing priorities based on our budget?
- How do we proceed with the renewal process (by the end of 2025)?
- Do we include Eastern Plumas next time, and how?

Karen added that much of our daily operations are run by board members, and that is not sustainable. We need a clear plan on how to get there. She is proposing we contract with Carl again by this December so that it can be included in next year's budget. He could also help us with gathering information for the next annual report.

Susan questioned if we have the ability to implement a plan or would it be a waste of money. Sharon thinks that it would be more important to hire an Executive Director and Marketing Director and work with Civitas on the renewal process. Carson Lambeth (of Civitas) suggests we start sooner.

Sharon suggested we put together a committee to review the [strategic plan](#) before January. We only have two years left to prove to our lodging providers that we're getting things done. We've had some great successes and also some failures.

Supervisor McGowan suggested bringing in ideas from them now, before the two years are up. Susan was really impressed with Eastern Plumas as an organization. Marketing is hard without their assets.

Sharon proposes people volunteer for the **Strategic Plan Committee**. Karen, Lynn, Lee Anne, Susan, Riccardo, and Sharon all volunteer. A meeting is set for **November 14th from 9am-1pm at Plumas Bank in Greenville** (pending Bank availability—**Lee Anne** will find an alternate site in Indian Valley if necessary). **Susan** will create an agenda.

Sharon discussed [Placer.ai](#) software that tracks cell phones in a geo-fenced area. It costs about \$17,000 but would be an amazing tool for tracking where visitors are from and other data about them at events. Supervisor McGowan said that the County has invested very little in economic development. If there was grant money to pay for it, there could be potential to cross-use the program with the Chambers and FRTA. Tom requested that **Sharon** send him additional information about it.

Operations/Policies/Procedures

Karen and Susan are up for term renewal.

Lee Anne motions to extend Karen and Susan's terms for two more years, Riccardo seconds, all in favor.

Sharon provided an update on where we're at with the Tax Collector and CAO. They say their Megabytes software is not working properly. We still haven't been able to make any progress with AirBnB. Plumas is one of the only counties that does not require AirBnB owners to have a TOT certificate. Julie White has refused to require their TOT certificates. Supervisor McGowan recommends no activity with Julie, and to instead address a letter to both Debra Lucero and the Board of Supervisors. He requested a letter from FRTA prior to next County Board meeting, laying out problems with tax collector's office. **Sharon** will work on the letter.

The following agenda items were tabled due to time constraints:

- Discussion—How will the board operate?
- Use of by-laws and organizational structure
- Preparing for succession of directors
- Steps needed before hiring permanent Executive Director
- Establishing a hiring committee
- Establishing a committee to determine if it is viable to add Eastern Plumas County to FRTMD

Treasurer's Report

Susan reported that the third quarter was down 17%. We are \$15K behind where we hoped to be at this point, so we need to be careful in our spending.

Riccardo added that everything is down, even alcohol sales, because people just aren't going out as much due to inflation.

Susan shared that we started 2023 with about \$107K in the bank, and our monthly expenses are about \$37K. She later clarified via email 10/13/2023:

I mis-stated our financial position when reading my notes at the meeting. My intent was to share that our monthly outlay for the next 3 months is well covered by our cash in hand. However, I remember saying that our outlay was \$36 - 37K per month. What I intended to say is that it is \$13 - \$13.5K per month outlay = \$36 - \$37k for the next 3 months.

Microzone Reporting

For Quincy Chamber, Karen reports that Sparkle and Groundhog Fever Fest have each been approved for \$1,000 for marketing. Mark at Bear Creek Frames has been approved for \$2,800 for regional marketing of the 2024 Plein Air Festival.

Susan said that on the [Holiday Shopping Tour](#) in Almanor passport there will be a space asking where visitors are staying. Sharon said that the Holiday Shopping Tour would be a great event to use the geofencing technology if we could get it.

According to the [FRTA website](#), our grant application closed September 30th. Ellie asked if we should leave the Grant application period open year-round or if we are going to have two open periods (spring and fall) as previously discussed. It was decided to leave it open for now.

Supervisor McGowan said that the County should be collecting TOT for camping at the Fairgrounds and will work on that.

No public discussion. No decision on the next board meeting.

Sharon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:05 PM.

Sharon Roberts
Sharon Roberts (Oct 27, 2023 20:32 PDT)




Board Minutes 10.11.2023

Final Audit Report

2023-10-28

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