

**eXplore Lawrence
Board Minutes
January 15, 2020
Carnegie Building Conference Room**

Members Present: Mike Logan, Derek Felch, Stephen Horton, Charlie Persinger, Rachel Black, Sally Zogry*, Hugh Carter*, Porter Arneill*

Members absent: None

*ex-officio members

Staff: Michael Davidson, Andrea Johnson

Guests: None

Meeting Materials Provided: Board of Directors Packet (provided digitally and at meeting)

Meeting began at 3:33 p.m.

- Approve minutes of December board meeting. Charlie moved; Stephen seconded – Approved
- Staff Year End Reports
 - Michael presented information about sales for the year from the staff report and the following:
 - Talked about Google impressions and video views
 - For every marketing dollar spent, we are seeing a return on investment of \$40
 - Top content was for Snoop Dog and Civil War story about the gravestone found in the County
 - 6709 walk-ins to visitor center, up 3x from 2018 at Union Pacific Depot
 - Website – Andrea Johnson
 - Presentation – Why redesign now?
 - Launched UL page in May 2015
 - Engagement has steadily decreased since 2015 – more organic visitors, people find what they need faster or referring to partners
 - Increase of mobile traffic to 63%, and when you include tablets it is 70%
 - Need a mobile first web site
 - Gain more engaged users
 - Mobile first strategy
 - Content personalization
 - Dynamic content and related content based on tagging
 - Simpleview database integration – all listings coming through API to web page, seamless integration
 - Reduces Simpleview cost by \$5000
 - Automatic updates

- SEO strategy – minimize negative experiences
 - Mike Logan asked about the selection process and why only five firms submitted. The call was targeted and 3 of the 5 firms have direct DMO experience.
 - There were questions and discussion about web uses, benefits to staff, and reduction of staff time required to manage the site, bounce rates, etc.
 - Concern was raised about the cost of the Simpleview system versus other web page options.
 - Andrea pointed out that they also refer directly to local businesses.
 - Charlie asked, how we will take advantage of all the aspects of this to ensure we get “heads in beds?” What are we doing to make this sales-oriented, rather than marketing oriented? Will sales and marketing work together to focus on putting heads in beds?
 - Simpleview includes both leisure web site and meetings sales, etc. and is most efficient in the DMO realm.
 - “Experience” is the hot commodity today.
 - Michael Davidson, Simpleview is a comprehensive tool that can do this better than we can now.
 - Andrea pointed out that measuring the engagement is challenging. Was the person coming to Lawrence anyway or did EL move the needle on their visit?
 - Mike Logan pointed out that this is a unique resource for Lawrence with limited other opportunities for marketing, etc.
 - Staff was asked to conduct more research and comparisons and bring that information to the board in February.
- Finance Report – Mike Logan
 - Still in transition from Stephen. Will have updates once the audit is complete.
 - Department Core Functions – Mike Logan
 - Tabled to next meeting.
 - Executive Director report – in the interest of time, Michael will distribute his report via email.
 - Operating agreement. Just a change in number this year. Will seek more changes in 2021.
 - Lease agreement for 5 years. City budgeted \$30K this year but that’s not guaranteed. Suggestion of asking for one year lease with 5 annual renewals.
 - TSA 2018 Report – Highlights
 - 2023 National Senior Games bid in partnership with Visit Topeka
 - Held a conference call with Visit Topeka and board members last week.
 - Mother Earth News
 - New Board Members - update

Derek offered that he's willing to relinquish his seat on the TGT Grant Advisory Board as the board liaison. Open to further discussion.

Charlie moved, Mike seconded to adjourn the meeting.
Adjourned meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting February 19 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.