

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
June 30th, 2015  
The Aspen Square Hotel**

**Call to order:** Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

**Attendance:** Present: Donnie Lee, Debbie Braun, Corey Enloe, David Perry, Warren Klug, Rose Abello, Charlie Bantis, Dan Bonk, Simon Chen, Jeanette Darnauer, Nina Eisenstat, Lisa LeMay, John Maloy, Beth Mobilian, Tim Perry, Steve Skadron, Kenny Smith, Heather Steenge-Hart, Riley Tippet and Bill Tomcich. Absent: Adam Fortier, Cristal Logan, Maria Morrow, Michael Owsley, John Sarpa and Laura Smith. Staff present: Jennifer Albright Carney, Dorothy Frommer, Erik Klanderud, Nicole Heronemus and Julia Theisen.

**Approval of prior meeting minutes:** The board unanimously approved the May minutes.

**Disclosure of Conflict of interest:** none

**Presentation: Nan Sundeen with Pitkin County Health & Human Services:**

Pitkin County's population was 17,626 as of 2014. The median household income is \$72,745. 25% of the population in Pitkin County is in poverty as of 2015, in 2013 the poverty rate was 10.1%. The tourism and resort economy support a strong second home market which contributes to high real estate values and lower paying retail jobs. Approximately 4,525 residents live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

*Q-Charlie Bantis:* It almost seems like the newspapers are understating the poverty level.

Since 2008, our welfare enrollees have quadrupled. It is estimated that there are about 2,500+ individuals who are uninsured. Approximately 1,480 individuals are on Medicaid (which is for individuals with disabilities or they have to be under 200% of poverty), 2,767 individuals are on Medicare (for seniors over 65 years old of which about 500 are also low income) and 110 children on Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+).

*Q-Warren Klug:* What is the participation of undocumented individuals?

*A:* There are no benefits for undocumented individuals.

Physicians are paid regardless of the individual carrying insurance or not.

Medicaid expanded its coverage to include single adults as of January 2015 resulting in a dramatic increase.

There are no dentists in Pitkin County that take Medicaid. Aspen Valley Hospital reports three times as many Medicaid enrolled patients in the ER in 2014 from 2013. Few Pitkin County primary care practices accept new patients on Medicare or Medicaid. Annually, it is estimated that more than 1,500 low income residents may not be accessing consistent primary care. Mountain Family Health Center in Basalt does all primary care for the low income population and they do take insurance as well. They also have locations in Rifle, Glenwood Springs and have just expanded to Edwards. They had to get special permission to open in Basalt. In 2012 they had 402 clients and now have 2,000 clients mid-year 2015. Pitkin County's low income individuals and seniors need primary care providers that are accessible, affordable and high quality. If individuals had primary care providers, ER room visits would be reduced. These issues impact our ability to maintain a healthy community and healthy workforce.

Some potential solutions include:

Encouraging physicians to accept public insurances and uninsured individuals.

Establish a part time Aspen low income clinic.

Expand the Basalt MFHC to serve 3,000 patients a year.

*Q-Charlie Bantis:* Has there been an increase in the amount of students that qualify for free lunches?

John Maloy: Depending on the year, it is anywhere from 8%-12%

The total cost for public health care is around 3 million a year.

**Chair's comments:** It's important to remember that it is a privilege to be at Food & Wine.

The success we as a community have had, goes a long way to help the community be successful. The summer season really is the end of May to October and we are very busy. It will be interesting to see how June materialized. Feels this summer is going to be very strong. Remember to smile to visitors and customers.

**President's comments:** Jennifer and Julia have been working almost 24/7 for weeks on end. The office is bustling with the 4th of July coming up as well. One new thing we are doing this year is a video presentation during the 4th of July which will start at 9 p.m. at Wagner Park. Fireworks will start at about 9:20 p.m. If you plan on coming up this weekend, be safe! Thank you to Julia and the DM team for their hard work on the Aspen Sessions video presentation for the Food & Wine Luncheon. There are 4 of the Aspen Sessions videos so far. They will be on the YouTube channel, Artsaspen.com and on Aspenchamber.org.

Both Julia and Debbie are now Certified Destination Management Executives from DMAI.

The parking garage has been full almost every day so far this summer. We have Jr. Ambassadors out front of the Rio Grande office and also helping at the pavilion.

Meeting with John Kinney later today to renegotiate our Airport Guest Service contract for 2016.

Maria has been working with Jim True on the Chamber's lease. The city has indicated that they might not renew the lease, although Jim is recommending that we play it by ear right now until further information is available. We need a bigger policy discussion for what the city wants of our visitor center.

**Old Business:** At the last board meeting, Steve brought up the parking for Aspen employees. Erik and Debbie have been working on a parking specific member benefit for restaurant/retail employees. They will then go to the Aspen Transportation Department with their plan.

**New Business:** None.

### Directors' Comments

**Adam Fortier:** Absent.

**Beth Mobilian:** Did a restaurant survey and would like discuss to get a better understanding of how to present it. The restaurant community appreciated being surveyed. The two biggest issues that were heard from restaurant owners was the feeling that events shut them down and conflict with outside vendors. Some other issues included restaurants opening in non-restaurant spaces and too much saturation.

**Bill Tomcich:** Did research on what happens when holidays fall on Saturdays and found that employers typically treat the Friday before as a holiday. Banks are exempt from this as they are open on Fridays but may be closed on the following Monday although they cannot be closed for three consecutive days. We have plenty of rooms open starting Saturday through next week. The rest of July after next week is very strong. September is very strong as well as October. SAS has been booking more winter business at this time than summer business. Is very pleased to see American Airlines stepping up in a significant way with their performance and added flights. American Airlines will start operating one of their Australian flights. Now that we have the flights we have to work very hard to fill them.

**Charlie Bantis:** Has a complaint about the Saturday market being on Friday this week. The bank is open and it will cause problems for them. No one asked or discussed it with him before planning it. Lack of communication is the issue.

*Riley Tippet:* They looked at seven years ago to see what they did with the 4th on a Saturday, and it was moved to Friday like this year. It was the only real available day that they could reschedule. Perhaps next time we should do it on Sunday instead. Is this a test run to see if making Aspen more pedestrian is beneficial?

We have a big issue of people leaving the area due to the poverty level and living costs. The real issue is how do you raise wages? The only way to raise wages is to expand our tourism and resort economy. Thinks this is a Public Affairs issue and would like to discuss more in the next PA meeting.

**Corey Enloe:** There were only 2 days in Aspen that beat last year's occupancy numbers for the start of June. Chuck Frias has initiated a conversation with Dawn at the city about vacation rental inventory which is making a significant impact

on the lodging community. We need to see what the real impact is with the private rentals. He is a proponent for more strict policy on vacation rentals. Feels there needs to be more enforcement of registration of private rentals. Has been traveling as well lately and has heard similar comments about Aspen losing its top spot in the ski industry.

Kishi Bashi will be coming to the Belly Up the end of the July and the Sky Hotel will be hosting a party for the event.

Corey is departing The Sky Hotel but will be staying in the valley and has accepted a position with the Aspen Club & Spa as the CFO and Development Officer. Wants to stay involved in the community in his new role.

**Cristal Logan:** Absent.

**Dan Bonk:** The hospital is on schedule. They have had to take down the helicopter landing and they have come up with a plan to transport patients. The new heliport will be on the roof instead of the parking area so it will be much safer. Hoping for completion in October of 2016. They have recently won an award for Medicare. It's an award that is based on overall service, how well nurses and doctors respond to patients, manage pain, how they feel about the care they are given and cleanliness/quietness, and whether or not patients will recommend the hospital to other friends/family. They are one of the top 20 practices in pain management.

**David Perry:** The discussion of the views of Aspen from other destinations Corey and Simon shared is a great discussion. It's a great reminder that we cannot relax and assume business will just keep coming. We've been targeted aggressively by other resorts. For example, Vail is buying the largest ski resort in Australia and will be offering their Epic Pass to include Australia's resort. Most of the promotions we've introduced over the years have been copied shortly after by other resorts. We do have loyal visitors but there are better deals elsewhere.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** Thank you for the hard work with Food & Wine.

**Jeanette Darnauer:** Noticed there was a lot of new people in the seminars at Food & Wine. Found that about half of the people in the seminars and lines were at Food & Wine for their first time. Julia did a great job on the Aspen Sessions videos.

Obviously traffic during 4th of July is always a challenge, is there more that we can do to improve that situation?

*Jennifer Albright Carney:* Has been communicating with RFTA to try to address the situation and try to get more buses on schedule. There is a challenge with the Rubey Park construction. They have hired additional security to help point people in the right direction after the fireworks as well.

*Jeanette Darnauer:* Can they do extra signage perhaps?

Jennifer: Will speak to RFTA about that as well. RFTA is aware of the activities and timing.

*Warren Klug:* The signage at the construction site of Rubey Park is horrible. Probably needs improving not just for the 4th of July. They need bigger signs.

**John Maloy:** They have hired a national search firm to find candidates for principalship. They will be vetting the applications and sending the names to them this week.

The Board of Education is looking to create a 5-10 year financial plan to carry on our exemplary schools. They need to incorporate Snowmass in some way to support the students coming from that area. The Board is meeting in July to put in a plan of action to move forward.

*Jeanette Darnauer:* Pitkin County is not part of the tax?

John: No, the hard part with Pitkin County is that a percentage goes towards the Roaring Fork schools. July 24th is the date to give notice with legal counsel to get the tax renewal on the ballot.

**John Sarpa:** Absent.

**Kenny Smith:** In recent conversation with retailers, everyone seems to have great confidence leading into the summer.

**Laura Smith:** Absent.

**Lisa LeMay:** To comment on the eventual moving of the ACRA space, it needs to be accessible to the visitors.

*Debbie Braun:* Being attached to the parking garage has been beneficial.

Feels that part of our poverty level problem comes from the seasonal employees that are only employed part of the year. Filling in the shoulder seasons is critical to keep people employed all year long could help the poverty level.

**Maria Morrow:** Absent.

**Michael Owsley:** Absent.

**Nina Eisenstat:** The Aspen Sessions videos are very fresh.

**Riley Tippet:** What is the larger issue we are facing with poverty? Is there a large market crash that has to happen to bring home prices down? They're really just going to keep going up. What is another industry that we can bring in that Aspen can be known for to bring the non-service/non-retail service jobs in? Do the subsidies allow for costs and prices to stay higher? As we make decisions, are they in line with not making the poverty/wage gap bigger?  
The BLM recently began a scoping process to feel out the possibility to give BLM land to state's discretion. This generally leads to BLM land being used for the oil and gas industry. Feels that would be a terrible option for this area.

**Rose Abello:** The rodeo has started in Snowmass. Thursday night concerts have started as well. This coming weekend is Wanderlust which celebrates body, mind and spirit. They will have yoga classes and performances. Moby is performing Saturday night on the 4th of July. They'll also have a BBQ and hops on Fanny Hill on Saturday. They are not doing fireworks in Snowmass.

**Simon Chen:** Has been travelling a lot. Aspen is seen as too expensive especially with the currency exchange. Aspen is looking tired compared to other resorts that cost less with similar products. People are moving away from Aspen and looking for something else. France and Europe have lifted their gain to match the ski market. The Vail resorts have gotten people thinking about coming to the U.S. mainly due to online resources. A lot of people who are cost conscious are going to other countries and resorts.

**Steve Skadron:** At the end of the month, council has its retreat. The retreat is where they establish their top 10 goals which sets the framework for the next year. He's going to be focusing on transportation problems. We need to start investigating and employ new generation technologies. As the mayor, we are dealing with major issues that bigger cities are dealing with.

Food & Wine was great and the weather so ideal.

Interested to see the progress on the parking issues as well.

The BLM land issue is important and is not getting much air.

It is important that whatever decisions we make at this point we have to be sure it maintains the health of our community.

The city is talking about repurposing City Hall.

**Tim Perry:** Looking at the week before Food & Wine with the construction, he expected to hear people complain about it. He was very impressed to see that the construction completed so quickly for the event. It seems like construction is going crazy but there is trickle down. Now the subcontractors are doing the bidding on the jobs and having to do much more and are struggling.

**Warren Klug:** June was on top of last year's numbers and July is up as well. He appreciates the visitors that are here and they are ready to be really busy. It's a good season ahead.

**Adjournment:** 10:50 a.m.