1. Regular Board Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Mr. Pearce
   a) Confirmation of a Quorum-YES

2. Consent Agenda
   a) July 2019 Minutes
      (1) No minutes because July meeting was conducted via email due to failure to have a quorum physically present. The July 2019 detailed agenda has been included in lieu of the minutes normally provided.

   MOTION BY Mr. Jackson seconded by Ms. Pearce that the July 2019 Minutes be approved and that each specific action on the July 2019 Minutes be approved as indicated. Motion was passed unanimously.

   b) Profits & Loss Budget vs Actual – no changes were made as this is the first month in the new fiscal year, Mr. Larson pointed out.

   c) Advertising and Grants – Mr. Larson reported that there were some big charges made as new programs such as Herman Global, Pay per Click, and MyEmma.com have been purchased to analyze advertising and process leads. Also, $5,000 went towards partnering with National Park Media where 10,000 copies of the Laramie Visitor Guide were sent out to be put into packets for travelers going to Wyoming National Parks. The contract with the WOT and USA Today were renewed as well. New cloth bags were purchased to use with the conference packets the visitor center distributes. Mr. Hammond thought giving away water bottles after how successful they were at Brewfest might be worth considering. Mr. McShane questioned the money spent on the USA Today ads as well and Mr. Larson said he would double-check and confirm.

   d) Administrative Transaction Detail Report – nothing to report here besides basic payroll and administrative expenses reported Mr. Larson.

3. Financial Reports
   a) Lodging Tax Collections 2019-20 – Mr. Larson reported that during the month of July the entire state neither increased nor decreased. Albany County was up 13% from 2018 at $13,000 greater. Other counties that saw increases were Natrona, Laramie, and Sheridan while Park, Teton, and Carbon were all down. Most of the Wyoming counties reported having a slow start to the summer though most hotels have stayed booked. Guest Rebecca Tuck-White reported most travelers staying at the Hampton were planning to continue to travel but not to Yellowstone, to Utah. Ms. Jones reported that the Women’s Ranch Tour was down in numbers also.

4. Old Business
   a) Laramie 60th Anniversary Reunion Recap – Mr. Gray reported that this event was three days of non-stop fun. Expenses totaled up to $41,876.44. Total ticket sales from the four events came to $21,815. Approximately 350 people came to visit and each stayed an average of 6 room nights resulting in an estimated $10,500 in lodging tax revenue. As of Aug. 19th we are $9,758.57 in the red. With the estimated lodging tax dollars, we are $750 ahead. We expect the economic impact in the town to average out to $262,500. Fandom members of the Laramie TV Show came from Italy, Canada, England, and all around the United States.

   b) 307 Film Festival – It was discussed whether or not to increase or decrease the grant amount of $1,600 to sponsor the film festival. Ms. Bertoncelj moved to approve the $1,600 amount, Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

   c) State Trap Tournament – Mike reported that the state trap tournament was held in Laramie recently. Many of them stayed in their camper trailers but spent a lot in the local economy while they were here. The event was considered to be a successful one.

   d) 2019 Wyoming Writers Conference – Judy Matheny and Marcia Hensley presented their recap of the event. A total of 145 members attended this year’s conference. In the past, the location wasn’t easy to access for some so attendance this year was the best so far. As a result of the location, the members of the Wyoming Writers, Inc. increased by 10% to 330 total members. Any writer of any genre or level can join the corporation as it is a great opportunity to network, critique, and
develop writing skills – the goal is to get their works published. When asked if they would host the event in Laramie again, Ms. Matheny stated that the group has been considering Cheyenne, Casper, and Laramie as places to return to every other year. The location of Laramie and the connection with the University of Wyoming has helped their organization grow.

e) Pilot Hill Project – Ms. Mathews reported that flyers will be going up this week and they will be advertising on the WPR about the Community Access Days on Sept. 7th & Oct. 5th from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. She also showed of the ACTB logo on the t-shirt volunteers will be wearing as well as the flyer that is being printed.

5. New Business

a) Marketing Report – Social Media, Google Analytics, Advertising - Mr. Gray reported that he is staying busy. As far as social media presence, Laramie will soon eclipse Casper’s followers on Facebook. Mr. Brian Harrington and his wife are busy blogging for Visit Laramie, their Curt Gowdy blog landed on the first page of Google search results when it came out. Posters that Mr. Gray made for Downey Days, the Big Boy train, and the Laramie TV Show were a hit and people are still buying the merchandise. Mr. Gray also won an award from the Wyoming State Historical Society for his work on the Commemorative Laramie 150 Years booklet. He worked on the pamphlet with Jessica Flock and Kim where the pamphlet won first place in its category and Mr. Gray was invited to the awards luncheon in Pinedale on Sept. 7th at noon. He cannot make it to the event, but Ms. Jones will be able to accept the award on his behalf.

b) Email Marketing – Mr. Larson reported that so far, we have over 120,000 contacts through MyEmma.com and that he is sending out an e-newsletter approximately every two weeks. Also, only 1% of emails were bounced back or had unsubscribed from the newsletter and there is a 12% open rate and 5% click rate meaning people are interested in what we have to offer.

c) Web Updates – Mr. Larson reported that since the new booking widget has been implemented the Visit Laramie booking page has seen double the traffic. There was also a change made to the site where travelers planning their trips can request a visitor guide online as well as other information and this has also increased traffic to the webpage. Mr. Larson also reported that we have made some changes with our SEO efforts to the website and that is playing out very well so far.

d) Blog Updates - Mr. Brian Harrington is one of the bloggers for Visit Laramie and targets traveling couples. The best post so far was centered on Curt Gowdy State Park and landed on the first page of search results on Google.

e) PR Hosting – Mr. Larson met with a woman from Sweden, Helena, who was on a grand tour of Wyoming. She came to us through RMI and the Wyoming Office of Tourism. She has over 13,000 followers on her Instagram and gets 7,000 pageviews daily so we are optimistic that she will send more visitors to Laramie and Albany County.

f) Groups and Conferences Update – Mr. Larson said a big thank you to all the hotels of Laramie and their staff. He is working with UW and hoteliers to place bids for other conferences to use Laramie as its next destination. He also shared a number of bids that he is currently working on.

g) Summit Update – The Summit Rest Center as well as other centers around the state have noticed a considerable drop in traffic. Even though the location had 25,000 visitors in July, the numbers were down from 2018. Mr. Jackson stated that he thinks that gas prices have a lot to do with lower traffic this year.

h) Board Executive Committee – The board members nominated Mr. Brad Jackson to remain the board Treasurer, Mr. Pearce seconded and the vote passed unanimously. Mr. Pearce nominated Ms. Kathleen Bertencelj to remain the board Secretary, Mr. Jackson seconded and the vote passed unanimously. After some discussion, Mrs. Malmstrom nominated Mr. Brady Hammond to take Ms. Tessa Cedillo’s place as Vice Chair, Mr. Jackson seconded and the vote passed unanimously. Mr. Jackson nominated Mr. Mark Pearce to remain the board Chair, Ms. Bertencelj seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

i) Board & Staff Retreat – Mr. Larson expressed his interest in hosting a board retreat as well as a separate staff retreat to help with laying out a strategic plan and prioritize for the upcoming year. Mr. McShane stated that the members of the director and staff should already have a plan and the board members simply approve or disapprove. Ms. Jones stated that in the past, a prioritized plan would have helped make decisions in the past so it would be beneficial to host a retreat to establish a plan. It was agreed upon that a board and staff retreat would be beneficial. Mr. Larson will be contacting the members later to determine what date would be ideal. It was proposed to hold the retreat in Oct. or Nov.

7. Grant Reports

a) None

8. Review of the Board/Staff Activities
a) July Office Stats – Ms. Johnston reported that the leads accumulated to 2728 over the month compared to 2571 in July 2018. Although this is still fairly low it was also reported that so far for August there are over 3000 leads and counting. All in all, things are looking good.

b) Weekend Staff Update – Ms. Taylor Thomas has been holding down the fort during the weekends. Her hours have been dialed back to 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. as travelers haven’t needed to stop in so late in the evenings.

c) Shared File Server – Mr. Larson implemented a shared file server for the staff so files can be accessed and shared easily. It was well worth the price of purchasing one.

d) Gray – Mr. Larson thanked Mr. Gray for all he has done during July

1) Downey Day, UW APPA Conference, Evening at the Ivinson’s – the UW APPA Conference is going to be held in Laramie in 2021. They have already confirmed 400 people. The Ivinson fundraiser event was a blast; Mr. Pearce also attended the event as the Tourism Board was a sponsor.

e) Larson

1) Leadership Wyoming – Mr. Larson helped out while this event was hear and presented on tourism with a few others from around town. He will also be helping out with MainStreet Wyoming when they bring a group through here in September to discuss the same topics.

2) New Event Brainstorming – Mr. Larson reported that he has been working with UW, Laramie’s Cathedral Home for Children, Rotary, and Mrs. Trey Sherwood at Laramie Main Street Alliance to organize an international food week in March 2020 and an international food festival next summer.

3) Networking - Dave Krause, Ivinson CHNA, Brand USA, Fourth Economy, Dan McCoy, WY Public Radio, UW APPA Conference, Vista de la Luna, Rotary, mixers, etc.

f) Rotary – Mr. Larson shared that he will be presenting with the morning group at their next meeting and members of the organization have asked him to join. Mr. Larson asked the board members if they would sponsor him by paying for the $900 admission fee to join the Rotary group. Mr. Hammond is a part of the group and explained that it is a group which focuses on “Service Above Self”. Mr. Jackson moved to approve the $900 amount so Mr. Larson can join the group and continue to network, Ms. Bertoncelj seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

g) Hiring & Staffing Update – Marketing Manager – Mr. Larson has expressed interest in expanding the staff and adding a Marketing Manager position while Mr. Gray will move into a role as the Design & Operations Manager. Mr. Gray and Mr. Larson will be co-interviewing the applicants and co-supervising him/her. So far 15 applications have been turned in for the position. Mr. McShane asked if Mr. Larson and Mr. Gray were planning on presenting their decisions to the board. Mr. Pearce also thought it would be a good idea to at least run the names by the board members since they are knowledgeable about the community. Ms. Malmstrom pointed out that there should be some confidentiality in case a current employee of the board members is applying for the position. The board members decided the names should not be reported to the board.

9. Public Comments – None

10. Adjournment – There being no further business…

Motion was made by Ms. Bertoncelj seconded by Mr. Jackson to adjourn. The motion was passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

The next ACTB board meeting will be at the ACTB Office at 4 p.m. on Monday, September 16, 2019

Minutes respectfully submitted by Director Larson and Lyndee Johnston, Office Assistant