

Main Street Advisory Board Agenda | Wednesday, June 19, 2024

8:30 am to 3:30 pm

Location: Downtown Sheridan Association community room

Board members present: Bonnie Gregory, Carly-Ann Carruthers, Derek Smith, Jenn Ford, Bruce Heimback

Staff/Guests Present: Kayla Kler, Amber Power, Brandi Harlow

Called meeting to order at 8:51 am.

Action: Approval of April 25, 2024 minutes. Jenn made a motion for acceptance and Derek seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

2024 - 2025 Work Plan Review

Kayla reviewed the work plan, and discussed working on the annual report with the Communications team to meet Legislative requirements.

The Board commented the Plan looked good and was well organized.

Best Practices Workshop Review

Kayla presented a Best Practices review of visiting LaFayette, Opelika and Monroeville, Alabama. 40 participants visited 3 communities and gave about \$37,000 in grants and scholarships to attendants. Feedback on survey – 16 respondents and 81% found funds helpful. 100% said they will attend again. Perceived Challenges included a long bus trip, less information provided ahead of time, small communities with limited shopping and meals. Intentional Improvements including the pre-trip, as it was helpful to meet in person during the planning. Board support and the WBC team was helpful as well.

How Do We Improve?

Continue to grow the Wyoming network, encouraging participation from outside the Main Street realm. The board talked about how it would be good to bring more elected officials to Best Practices.

Board members said it went well and Kayla should be commended for the work.

Board Development

Kayla reported it was a continuing conversation about having a liaison to represent local main street organizations and Advisory board. After conversations about Main Street Advisory Board structure, there are a few options: 1) Have a local person self-represent and will be required to pay for own travel. 2) Have Advisory Board members adopt communities to check in with a few times a year. 3) Have one Advisory Board member take on the liaison roll for all 13 local Main Street programs.

Kayla said all Wyoming Main Street agendas, minutes and meetings are public but she feels like the local Main Street programs are looking for a direct line of communication to Advisory Board Members. Board members discussed options, having a section on the Board agenda for local

input. They discussed having Advisory Board members attend Main Street monthly meetings after each board meeting to answer any questions.

Community Matters designated time (treat like public comment with not action) on the Advisory Board agenda each meeting. Discussion on any communications should be cc the Advisory Board chair.

Local Program Updates

Kayla reviewed the monthly/quarterly report requirements for local Main Street programs. The information is used in annual reports and submitted to National Main Street. Reporting is the weakest area in program compliance for all local programs. Most do not comply with the annual report requirement, and several are 2-3 months behind on monthly reports.

Amber Power talked about the Assessment to Action program. It is a two-day workshop to build community capacity. She gave examples of communities that have participated in the process and outcomes. Kayla reviewed a draft A2A workshop-like structure for local Main Streets to help them develop. Would like to require all local programs to work through the process to develop work plans.

Discussion on opportunity for Main Street managers, need to participate and should be prepared to complete their compliance requirements. Managers need to take advantage of this gift and work the process. Will need to discuss what inaction repercussions will be for those that do not participate.

Kayla estimated the A2A program would cost about \$20,000 total and could be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Kayla also talked about contracting with NMS to work with every accredited Wyoming Main Street to do a refresh on Transformation Strategy in May 2025. WBC staff will work with local MS affiliates in fall 2025.

The board talked about the importance of strategic planning. Evanston has done a good job of rebuilding their program and are close to being accredited again. Can see the opportunity of using the A2A framework to non-main street communities to grow into MS.

Action: Approval of workshop framework

Derrek made the motion to approve and Jen seconded to move the A2A Process forward for local main street programs to get into compliance and committing \$20,000.

Discussion –

Is participation in A2A mandatory? What are the repercussions to programs not taking advantage of the A2A program. What are the requirements by December 31, 2024? Offer the program, let them choose to come and hope they take advantage.

Meeting broke for lunch. Reconvened around 1:00pm Matt Ashby joined virtually

Alabama Inspiration for Wyoming Implementation

Kayla talked about Alabama Main Street Small Box Shop program. Using shipping containers to give businesses a space to test their business prior to making large investments in permanent space. They have 7-8 programs that used a USDA grant and placed the containers across the state. They have had good success in growing entrepreneurs through the program. Alabama estimated about \$40,000 cost for each container.

Board members talked about the opportunity to create incubation space across Wyoming Main Streets and an opportunity to co-brand local and state Main Street programs. It could offer direct economic development support to help entrepreneurs at a grassroots level. Potentially to use Placemaking programs to develop the sites with the temporary space and having criteria to move entrepreneurs to permanent space. Maybe looking at working with local building owners to ready store fronts may be way more viable. Feel like there are logistical challenges and make sure direct involvement in all four pillars. Have tried other new programs and with not much interest. Kayla would like to engage the local managers more on their needs and to also play a more active role.

Next steps Bruce will gauge the interest among local managers. If it is positive Derek will explore the concept and tie to the four points and will follow up at the September Board meeting.

Jen talked about sessions she attended at Main Street Now. A Community Revitalization session talked about Alabama partnered with Architecture Engineering students to assist with revitalization. Trying to bring students together with the community to think about space uses. Another session reported on Burn out and wanting it more than the locals.

Derek talked about the need to facilitate more conversations across the state. Thought sharing ideas among communities.

Developing Affiliate program further

Kayla talked about the Virginia Main Street program and thoughts on restructuring the Wyoming affiliate program. What technical services can we provide – organizational branding, strategic plan development, annual work planning session, board development training, policies, and procedures development. Milestones- focus on transformation strategy and hiring a staff person. Goal 3-4 years to become accredited. Timeline – Application due Feb 1st.

The board discussed the hurdles of communities moving from Affiliate to Accredited. Need to focus on developing organization, work plan and buy in from local boards and local governments.

20 years of Wyoming Main Street

Kayla gave an update on the phased approach on social media and storytelling. Working with the Communication team and PR firm 3 Elephant. Working on doing interviews with past staff, businesses owners, and Main Street champions. Board members will assist with lining up the interviews.

Phase 1 - History and overview of Wyoming Main Street. Phase 2 Outlining economic impacts and state and local relationships. Phase 3 -Local networks. Goal of transitioning the information onto the website.

Assignment to WBC Presentation in Fall 2024 (and legislative report)

The Advisory Board will meet on September 10th in Laramie. Kayla talked about developing a presentation from the Main Street Advisory Board to the Wyoming Business Council Board of Directors meeting on September 11th. Topics include the Blocks program. 20 years of statistics. Bruce will attend WBC joint reception and will present to WBC Board with Kayla.

Action: Adjourning the meeting. Jen made the motion, Derek seconded, and with that, the board adjourned at 2:42 pm.

Minutes submitted by Brandi Harlow