

BAGRS Board Meeting 7/20/2014

Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm

Board members and guests present:

- Russ Miller, Richard Murray, Mike Paterson, Jim Anthony, Jim Goss, Steve Smith, Bill Ralph, Karen Moe, Eric Moe, Bill Mead, Nancy Norris, Pat LaTorres, Don Watters, Sue Watters, David Meese, Dawn Mease, Sandy Ralph, Ron Geis, Jane Weisel, Bill Weisel

2015 Annual Meeting

Jim Anthony asked for Board ratification of his suggested date for the annual meeting of February 28, 2015.

Russ Miller made a motion to approve this date. Jim Anthony seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved

Open Houses Report

Mike Paterson reported on the South County tour organized by Dale Mcanally for next month. The information is just starting to come out from Dale on the event. Mike also noted that open houses will be switching from Sundays to Saturdays starting in August

Steamers Report

Richard Murray reported on the National Steamup that just wrapped up. He said there were a larger number of steamers than usual, perhaps 150 people steaming, plus additional onlookers. There were also a decent number of vendors, including a new Chinese company that is competing with Accucraft. Richard said that he was told that the Bay Area has the reputation of having the premier steamers group in the country.

2016 GRR National Convention Report

Russ Miller then opened discussion on the 2016 convention.

Richard Murray outlined the status of the arrangements with the Santa Clara convention center and the adjacent Hyatt hotel. He said the negotiations have been proceeding for 2 months.

The rate of \$149 / night at the Hyatt is the best that he sees us getting from the Hyatt. The only groups that get better rates that he knows of are Federal and State employees travelling on official business.

The issue of parking is unresolved due to the fact that the hotel does not know what the parking arrangements will be in two years. The hotel shares control over the parking and that negotiations between the hotel and the other parking lot owners have been going on for over 2 years and have not concluded. Therefore, we could not get a firm commitment on this issue. The highest rate that Richard has heard is \$20 / day. However, we have secured in and out privileges should our guests have to pay for parking.

With a \$20 parking fee and the current taxes, the all in cost per night would be approaching \$180. Mike Paterson also noted that the room taxes in Santa Clara could be increasing due to the newly opened Levi's Stadium there.

Richard noted that in 2006 when we last hosted the convention we filled 1500 room nights. For the 2016 convention he lowered the target to 1212 room nights. After some concern regarding our ability to fill 1200, he was able to lower further to 1092, with the option of increasing back to 1212 after we see the success of the Denver convention in 2015.

In terms of comparables, Richard and Russ reported that neither the 2014 Convention in Tampa (\$129 / night) or the 2013 Convention in Cincinnati (\$179/night) were good comps, although each sold out their room nights

Denver in 2015 is a good comp and has reserved 1100 room nights at \$99 / night for their convention.

Russ Miller commented on the choice of meeting space. He said that the Santa Clara convention center has offered the club better space than we had in 2006 due to the presence of loading doors and better other accommodations. He said that the space provided had enough room for a number of layouts to be set up. So far, there has been interest from the BAGRS steamers, the Del Oro group, the Diablo Pacific Short Line and the Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society.

Mike Paterson asked about alternatives, such as buildings at the old Alameda air station. Russ said they looked at a number of Bay Area convention centers, hotels and other meeting facilities to see if there was an alternative. The only other first class venue available would be Moscone Center in San Francisco, and that would be more expensive. Other venues were considered, but none had the combination of convention space and nearby lodging that the Santa Clara location did. Richard said that the contracts for the hotel and the convention center were a package deal and that they needed to be committed to together.

A discussion ensued with a number of comments and questions. There were concerns as to how much money was at risk if the room nights did not sell. There were other concerns as to the reasonability of the convention budget that has been proposed.

Russ and Bill Ralph answered that all of the costs on the proposed convention budget were doubled from what they expected the actuals to be. In addition, costs so far were running below 2006 rates. For example, the cost of the convention center was \$28,000 in 2006, but it is running at half of that, assuming we hit our room totals.

It was noted that union labor could be an issue, even if the contracts permit non-union vendors and help. Richard and Don Watters replied that this could be managed by using some union people as foremen.

Richard and Russ mentioned that we will be hiring out many key functions such as managing the loading dock, parking, staging and the vendor hall

At the conclusion of discussion Richard Murray made a motion to approve the contracts with the Santa Clara Convention Center and the Hyatt. Mike Paterson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The board thanked Richard for all his work negotiating the contracts.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm