

The following letter summarizes the collective perspectives and suggestions from the lodgers located within Pagosa Springs Township and Archuleta County.

In light of current situation where the Town of Pagosa Springs Council and Archuleta Commissioners will be working to revisit their joint MOU on Tourism, we as lodgers would like to share our feedback and suggestions. At the September 2023 Tourism meeting, lodgers were encouraged to unify and bring a collaborative message of what we would like to see from the tourism board. At that same meeting, the county informed the board of their intent to withdraw from the collaboration between the Town and County as there are questions as to how the monies are being spent. As the MOU will be revisited, please see the following recommendations from the Lodgers of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County.

Our businesses generate lodging taxes and sales taxes for both governments. We rely on effective and measurable use of lodging tax that we believe should be dedicated to marketing and promoting Pagosa Springs as a destination and bringing tourists to our town and county.

Please read the below items for our collaborative request from all of the lodgers whose signatures you will find at the end. We look forward to sending ideas and requests through our formal lodging representative, Anne Marie, until the seats of the board change.

In general, The Pagosa Lodgers would like to ensure maintaining strong visitor Center presence and business friendly and progressive Tourism organization through the following:

1. Engage a third-party expert to provide the following:
 - a. Benchmarks/Best Practices best suited for Pagosa Area Tourism - The establishment of clear benchmarks against which the tourism department should measure its performance in order to determine its effectiveness – ROIs, KPIs, website traffic, conversions attributable to tourism efforts, etc. using industry best practices. The expert should know these, and you have heard many of them from the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO).
 - b. Analyze past performance - A detailed review of the Town Tourism departments' performance over the past 5 years using the benchmarks established above. This provides a clear understanding of what, if any, adjustments should be considered. (For example, how have we performed compared to other Colorado mountain towns e.g., Buena Vista, Salida, Telluride, Crested Butte, Durango?)
 - c. Recommendations – recommend what, if any, changes, or adjustments should be made to optimize the tourism department performance, based on the analysis performed above.

(When selecting the third-party expert, they should have a demonstrated track record and expertise working with small-to-medium sized towns that have successfully grown their brand and tourism base.)

2. Establish a clear plan. The tourism department should then review these findings/recommendations with the community, specifically lodgers and other tourism-based businesses, to establish a plan for the tourism department moving forward that achieves its mission, with clear deliverables/outcomes.
3. Execute and communicate. Execute the plan created above and provide regular (at least quarterly) reports on the progress made relative to the plan created above, in a clear, cohesive manner. In addition to reporting on the execution of the Plan, the tourism department should provide regular (monthly) reports to the public using the performance metrics established by the third-party expert as being industry best-practices.
4. Greater representation on the tourism board by groups that actually generate lodging tax – lodgers and STRs. More than half of the seats on the board should be filled by people that directly represent businesses that generate lodging tax. The majority of seats should have designated roles directly related to tourism (STR, Motel, Hotel, BnB, Retail, Restaurant/Bar, Realtor, Recreation Activities, Wolf Creek Ski Area). Board duties and responsibilities should be clearly defined. Term limits should be imposed that are staggered to allow for partial turnover and consistency.
5. Finally, and perhaps most importantly to maintain the relationship between town and county, and for the purposes of accountability and performance review, the tourism department should report to an individual or organization that represents both the Town and County, and that has the authority to make changes to staffing at the tourism department based on performance – not just make advisory recommendations. The Tourism board could be empowered to do this (as opposed to being just an advisory board) or perhaps the tourism department could be moved under the CDC. These are just two suggested approaches to creating greater accountability and cohesion.

Thank you,
The Pagosa Lodgers

Elk Trace Bed and Breakfast
Hillside Inn
Alpine Inn
West End Lodge
Healing Waters and Resort
Elkwood Manor Bed and Breakfast
Fireside Cabins

Motel Soco
El Camino Lounge and Grill
The Springs Resort and Spa
Riverwalk Inn
(Shelly and Jason's STR LLC?)
Riff Raff on the Rio
Riff Raff Brewing Co.
The Nightingale Motel
The Neon Mallard
Pagosa River Domes
High Creek Lodge
Melissa Moeller, Local STR owner
Olivia Modern, Local STR owner
Nicole and Pete Macomber, Local STR Owner
Jacque Aragon, Local STR owner
Jenifer Pitcher Local STR owner, Special Events Board Member
Angelina Waterman, Local STR owner
Michael Collins, Local STR Owner