

**Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting - February 10, 2025
Finger Lakes Community College Wine and Viticulture Center
Geneva, NY 14456**

Board Member Attendance:	Present	Excused	Absent
David Hutchings, Sonnenberg Gardens - Chair of the Board	X		
Steve Fuller, Bristol Mountain – Board Treasurer		X	
Charles Parkhurst, Lyons National Bank - Board Secretary		X	
Lisa FitzGerald, Finger Lakes Winery Tours, Chalet Bed and Breakfast, Vice Chair of the Board	X		
Mike Kauffman, Eastview	X		
Mike Roeder, Caledonia Country Club	Z		
Sheryl Mordini, 1795 Acorn Inn Bed and Breakfast	X		
Lenore Friend, Finger Lakes Community College	X		
Russ Kenyon, Boylan Code	X		
Mark Gilbride, Lazy Acre Alpacas	X		
Chris Vastola, Ontario County Board of Supervisors, Town of Canadice		X	
Lori Proper, The Lake House at Canandaigua	X		
Sherry Brahm-French, Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery	Z		
Mike Darling, Crafty Ales and Lagers		X	
Todd Plouffe, Indus Hospitality Group			X
Jim Cecere, The Speakeasy at VINIFERA, FLX Group, FLX Goods	X		
Naved Amed, Geneva on The Lake	Z		

Staff: Valerie Knoblauch, Tracey Burkey, Chloe Davis.

Call to Order and Welcome. David Hutchings called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.. and declared a quorum.

Consent Agenda. David asked for a motion to **accept the minutes of the March 10, 2025 Board of Directors meeting.** *The motion was made by Russ Kenyon and seconded by Mike Kauffman. All present voted in favor of the motion.* It was noted that the date for the next meeting needed to be corrected at the bottom of the agenda. Valerie indicated that this correction would be made with the date being: May 15, 2025. The Hotel Canandaigua has been confirmed as well.

The **financial reports ending February 2025** were provided by Bowers and presented as part of the consent agenda. There were no questions. A motion was made to accept the financials as reported by David Hutchings and seconded by Mark Gilbride. All present voted in favor of the motion.

The final item on the consent agenda was the **decommissioning of two computers.** There was a motion made by Russ and seconded by Sheryl Mordini to remove Laptop L-14 and Desktop D-12 from our inventory. All members voted in favor of the motion.

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Executive Committee.

The board was asked to review the committee appointments for the year. Given the special nature of the transition in leadership this year, a lot of attention has been directed to that and it's importance to get the **committee's scope of work in place** within the next two meetings. David asked each committee chair to call a meeting between now and June. Valerie will help set the agenda for the initial meetings and guide the transition.

David Hutchings asked for someone who would be interested in engaging in the **Valerie Knoblauch "yearning to learn" Scholarship committee** after the scholarship was fully established. He noted that the first year was a decision by our board, and then the scholarship would become part of NYSTIA's fund. Russ Kenyon volunteered to take the lead on that.

Calendar. A renewed and updated calendar was offered for approval. There was a motion by Sheryl Mordini and a second by Mike Kauffman to adopt the changes to the calendar and republish it for 2025. All present voted in favor of the motion, and it was passed.

Under the Governance committee was an item for Meetings Transparency. Valerie reviewed the advisory which had come down from the Public Authorities Budget Office. This has been filed as a reference with our other PARIS items. After a review with the executive committee regarding compliance and attention to the specifics of the language (i.e. "should" as opposed to "must or shall.") Valerie was asked to put together a best practices document which will help the new leadership. She presented that and wanted it to be entered into the record as guidance. No policy changes are necessitated by this.

Finance/Audit Committee.

In Steve Fuller's absence, Valerie reviewed the committee work of the Technology Task Force. This RFP had received 7 responses. Ultimately, it was narrowed to four proposals. Further review, interviews and clarifications resulted in a recommendation by staff that the board enter into an agreement with Integrated Systems in Victor, NY. This company does a good deal of municipal work and is offering a slightly different approach, which in transition, and with the help of Thomas Macchia would fit our needs. A few questions ensued - in particular verifying the procurement process was followed and asking for implications for the future as well. Valerie answered with a "yes" to the procurement process - and secondly that for future procurement, you'll have to make your best estimate as to the value of the service and if that is over \$10,000 then the best guidance is to do an RFP as was done in this case. After this discussion, a motion was made by Sheryl and seconded by Russ to enter into the contract with Integrated Solutions, Victor, NY designating them as our MSP, per the schedule in the RFP. All present voted in favor of the motion.

For the record and based on the approval of the board, Tracey Burkey has been added as a signatory on the operating account, the scholarship account, and the CNB savings account, Other signatories remain the same.

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President's Report.

Valerie brought the board up to date on the status of the Virtual Museum. Board members asked several questions and gave input into the importance of a public launch of this. Timing was discussed, along with several ideas, including a virtual press conference and unveiling as well.

Valerie indicated that the Virtual Museum is a feature of the NYSTIA conference and given all the detail and the prolonged winter weather, we were running a little slower than anticipated. When asked when the official launch could be, she estimated mid-July? Some discussion followed asking if we should wait until September? Board members were enthusiastic about the museum and Valerie promised engagement as it is brought to life. Right now, there are a lot of details, both in terms of content and logistics for installation, as well as the challenge of managing the state grant.

Valerie agreed to have a PR Chat time with the board to share all their ideas. She would like to include a potential PR agency for this project as well as our marketing staff, who will need to facilitate the project as it happens.

Additionally Valerie promised to send the link so that people may access and see and hopefully help proof with us. There is a lot of content. She noted that it is now available in the Google playstore and the Apple store as an app. True soft launch is April 24th when this will be featured at the NYS Tourism Industry Association conference in cooperation with STQRY and RIT.

Valerie reaffirmed her commitment to participate in the panel discussion at the Managing Tourism Across Continents in Turkey. She is excited that the museum is getting such prominent coverage. This panel is addressing the mutual win-wins of the collaboration between academia, government entities, non-profits, and business enterprises to provide tourism products and also employ the future workforce.

Search Committee Report.

Lisa Fitzgerald brought the board of directors up to speed, ensuring that she maintained the confidentiality of the candidates and the process. She noted that they were down to three candidates being invited for interviews, after six interviews and nearly 100 applications. Lisa noted that the finalists include both local and non-local candidates. There is a diversity within backgrounds as well. She reviewed the schedule with next steps being in-person interviews on April 28th. Following that the committee will make a recommendation to come before the full board. There was discussion about including the committee's recommendation on the board agenda for the May meeting.

Searchwide has been a tremendous resource and can continue to guide the committee and the board with timing, and affirmation recommendations. Lisa commented that the committee has been an amazing group to work with. She also thanked Tracey for her ongoing coordination of dates and participation in the process. Another item of note for the board is the need for a board member or two to tour around with the candidates. A 90 minute tour is planned and should be with those not on the committee. Ordinarily, this would also include the outgoing CEO, but since Valerie is out of town at the MtCON conference in Turkey, Jessica has been tapped as the staff member for this tour.

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Old Business. Tracey quickly reviewed the dates and needs for the April events related to our hosting the NYS Tourism Industry Association Conference. See the newly adopted calendar for insights.

Follow-up to the advocacy summit was the next topic on the agenda. Valerie noted the initial energy and enthusiasm with the audience - especially surrounding the broader concept of tourism as a second lane of Ontario County's economic development. The slow shift to the broader, more appropriate term of the Visitor Economy was of particular interest.

Next step is for board members and others to share after the summit and keep the message going. A question was asked - what are you doing to share? Collectively, we should spread the message of the Visitor Economy as it benefits our residents and communities. Josiah produced for us an Advocacy Plan, we will reshare that and suggest tactics and actions for the board.

Board members asked for an update on Short Term Rental status within Ontario County. Valerie had shared an email from Tom Harvey, Ontario County Planner with regard to common questions and answers from our county. Our lodging establishments shared a perspective and some info that they were getting from Air B&B. It was inconsistent and confusing, especially because some establishments were getting it and others were not. Valerie indicated that she could share this, as advised by Tom with Jeff Trickler, the county treasurer, however, this might be best to have a direct meeting since he is the collector of taxes and FLVC is not familiar with the nuances of that. Valerie was asked to make that connection between Jeff and the three lodging board members. She will do that ASAP as tax filings are due soon.

New Business.

Valerie shared information on the organizational chart and the attention to the deficits in skills and time for our current staff to complete tasks. It was noted the need for consistent visitor services programming, consumer research analysis and also assistance in coordinating the logistics of meetings - from board meetings to Tourism Thursdays, etc. We also need someone attentive to posting information on our board page of the website. For instance, the just approved best practices plan would be attended to by this person. Incorporating these duties will change the part-time visitor services and the part-time clerical jobs into one, full-time job. There is no additional cost beyond the current budget. It will mean current staff changes, as our part-time person does not want a full-time position. This change will be effectuated as soon as possible with a definitive target of mid-May. Valerie asked the board to share any ideas of people they have for this type of position. The job description is posted on our join-our-team page on the website.

Adjournment.

Sheryl Mordini cast the motion for adjournment, and it was seconded by Lisa. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. FLCC Wine and Viticulture Center, Geneva. NY

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