

PRESENT

Bob Bennett
Mike Kauffman
Suzanne Farley
Mike Roeder
David Hutchings
Jessica Bacher
John Cowley
Russ Kenyon
John Brahm
Dan Fuller

EXCUSED

Frank Riccio
Lisa Fitzgerald
Dick Maltman

EXCUSED

Alexa Gifford
David Linger

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
AJ Shear
David Lee
Sue Schmidt
Carol Hicks
Michelle Dawson
EX-OFFICIO
Alison Grems - Canandaigua Chamber
Mitch Donovan – Victor Chamber

GUESTS

Donna Yudin, Interim General Manager

WELCOME – Mike Roeder, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. and introduced John Cowley, Town of Naples Supervisor, as a new member of our board. The board subsequently introduced themselves and our guests in the room. Mike also advised that at the end of the board meeting there would be a tour of the new Geneva Events Center/Geneva Events Factory for all of the members who can stay. Mike called on AJ Shear to present the Board of Directors Correspondence Notebook.

Correspondence Notebook –AJ pointed out Grant Lee’s picture was prominently displayed in the front of the notebook. Board members congratulated David Lee on the birth of his son. AJ pointed out the article that was on the front page of the Daily Messenger last night; Valerie was extensively quoted about winter business. Finally, AJ asked board members to look through the cards for our tourism family who had recently been dealing with some health issues.

Chamber Reports- Mitch Donovan reported on behalf of the Victor Chamber of Commerce. Ganondagan is having a Native American Winter Festival this coming Saturday the 22nd at the Victor Municipal Park. The Food and Brew Fest is still scheduled for May. Victor will be hosting on the 2nd Saturday in September, Hang Around Victor where the theme will be Potato Fest.

Jessica Bacher spoke on behalf of Dee Isaacs about the Geneva Chamber. She advised that the new Geneva Events Center/Geneva Events Factory had their ribbon cutting ceremony on February 7, 2014. Their tourism committee has addressed the voids analysis for our contract. Valerie Knoblauch, in Alison’s absence, shared she had attended a Canandaigua Quarterly Stakeholders meeting. It was very beneficial to be “at the table” with other more traditional economic developers, including Mike Manikowski of Economic Development. Alison joined the meeting at this point. She added that she and her board were pleased that the City Council had approved the lakefront development PIF (Pilot in Lieu of Financing) and advised the school board would vote next. This is an important vote to move a long standing “still” project forward, in particular because of the environmental contamination and brownfields which are costly to mediate.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS-

Mike Roeder asked for a motion to **approve the minutes of the January 15, 2014 Board of Directors meeting**. Russ Kenyon made the motion and David Hutchings seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie presented the financial reports, noting that we are balancing per the budget. Dan Fuller moved to **accept the January 2014 and Year-to-Date financial reports**. Suzanne Farley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Bacher reported on behalf of the nominating committee. Jessica reminded everyone that Lois Kozlowski would not be completing her term. Jessica continued by saying that Lois recommends Audrey Carrier, who is currently serving on the Chamber of Commerce in Honeoye. The nominating committee concurs with this recommendation. John Brahm moved to **accept the nominating committee's recommendation to have Audrey Carrier resume her position on the board**. Suzanne Farley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Valerie will take the resolution to the Planning and Research Committee of Ontario County and seek their approval.

Policy - Valerie addressed the need for a new policy in order to meet New York State guidelines for future grant opportunities. She is asking for approval of a policy regarding **Women and Minority Owned Business**. David Hutchings who also receives NYS grants commented on the need for this policy. Mike Kauffman inquired as to whether we have been shut out of potential grants by not having this policy. Valerie indicated that we had not, but other county tourism agencies are also adopting it in anticipation of it being a future qualifier. In general the board agreed to the policy. It will be on the agenda at the next board meeting for adoption.

Valerie spoke next about the existing policy entitled: **Reserve Fund**. This policy was originally instituted in 2008 and had come up again during the 2013 audit. Russ Barone (our auditor) questioned the reserve fund. It was created for crisis situations. After reviewing the target levels and the purpose, it was agreed that it was an achievable goal, but it would take about \$20,000 per year for 7 years to meet the policy level. John Brahm moved to **reapprove the Policy on the Reserve Policy**. Russ Kenyon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

A discussion followed with regard to the need for an investment strategy and the idea of investing in a foundation. Russ Barone had advised to invest very carefully as the FLVC is a not-for-profit, and therefore under enhanced scrutiny for its funds. Russ Kenyon asked if we needed an investment advisor. It was agreed that the audit committee/executive committee would meet to review prior to the next meeting.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - Mike Roeder indicated that he has held a date for recognizing Lois Kozlowski, a long term member of our board. Valerie followed up by indicating that we will hold an event to honor Lois Kozlowski on April 7th or 8th. In addition to this, Valerie spoke about how FLVC would like to have a new supervisor orientation as there has not been one yet with the new supervisors. She suggested perhaps having a one hour social before the next scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting. This social would allow the FLVC Board of Directors and staff to visit with each of the new supervisors. Then in reference to the retired supervisors, such as Dan Marshall and Mary Luckern, a social event at our office at a later date would be a good idea.

Lastly, Valerie discussed the topic of the "paperless board meetings" and the potential target date for this would ideally be April 1, 2014 which is the next scheduled Board Meeting. David Lee took over this topic and advised he had met with Sean Barry of Ontario County IT and discussed the best method of getting the documentation for the board meetings to the board members via electronic means. Sky Drive appears to be the most effective way to accomplish this so far. He will continue to work on this with Sean and we are on target for April 1.

Jessica Bacher introduced Donna Yudin, Interim General Manager of the Ramada. Jessica noted that there had been recent changes in the Ramada staff, and Donna had been moved up from her sales position. Donna thanked the board for coming to the meeting at the Ramada and to please look around at the property, of which they were very proud. She shared the overview of the rooms in the hotel and indicated that they appreciate the partnership with our organization and the participation with Sue's initiatives in particular.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT- Valerie spoke about the FLVC Strategic Plan, more importantly visitor engagement and return visitors. She reviewed the strategic overview sheet she had provided for the meeting. This sheet outlined the specific initiative: efforts should be focused on driving longer lengths of stay that cover our lowest occupancy nights, including Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays. Increased visitor engagement will result in higher trip satisfaction and spending, return visitation, loyalty and extended stays.

Four objectives were being moved forward in a variety of ways. AJ Shear advised where FLVC is with the Mobile Happiness Zone. He stated that FLVC has envisioned the Mobile Happiness Zone as a fun, interactive area where props would be available for visitors to do self photos (“selfies”) similar to what is done in a photo booth. In addition, it also might contain a running video of past visitors’ moments of happiness, and the idea of a “mascot” was also discussed. David Lee addressed our mobile presence via smart phones and tablets. He indicated that 46% of attention to our website is drawn from mobile devices. This is why social media is of crucial importance in marketing messaging today. Dixon Schwabl has been contracted to achieve the highest amount of media possible.

Valerie commented on the 4th initiative under the visitor experience area and the gateway projects. The goal of these gateway projects is to enhance visitor experience and provide a welcoming atmosphere – fostering return visitation and lengthening stays. Next steps would be to work with the gateway communities of Naples, Victor, Geneva and Canandaigua to determine what is most effective in each of their communities. Common branding is essential. These will be reviewed both through our traditional partnerships with the chambers and perhaps with some new interfaces with the villages, towns or BIDs.

MARKETING REPORTS AND UPDATES- Sue Schmidt reported she introduced 5 new ski groups for January, February, and March. She also reported the New York State Canal Conference is to be held in Geneva in September. Sue is conducting a familiarization tour for the hospitality group who is servicing the new Geneva Events center. She is extending this in-depth Geneva tour offering to others in the sales community to provide the best possible overview and again extend stays and foster return visitation.

Valerie reported on the occupancy report. She advised the January occupancy report showed us down 2%, ADR was up .50% and Rev Par 4.7%. She indicated 7 out of the 10 counties were down. Tompkins County was down 11%, Niagara County down 7% and Essex County was down 6%. All ski communities were down. However, Monroe and Onondaga (the metropolitan area) were even or up a little. For the months of November through April we were off goal by 7% according to the STAR Report. Bob Bennett of the Holiday Inn in Victor indicated the fact that New Year’s fell on Wednesday in the middle of the week, really impacted business along with the snow and sub-zero temperatures. However, the last two weeks of the hotel occupancy were fantastic. Jessica Bacher, Geneva, agreed with Bob Bennett and added that the next few weeks are looking stronger. Lastly, Alison Grems, Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce, said the short season between Thanksgiving and New Years and the weather impacted the downtown merchants.

NEW BUSINESS – Valerie mentioned the possibility of the “Everwilde Spa” potentially being built on Middle Cheshire Road in the Town of Canandaigua. We are being asked for a letter of support. Lisa Fitzgerald had previously mentioned to Valerie that she had attended these meetings which were directed towards potential zoning changes. There was discussion regarding the project, its background and potential. Valerie will engage on our behalf in this discussion and write a letter of support.

Board member Mike Kauffman excused himself from the meeting at this time.

OLD BUSINESS - Valerie spoke about the casino initiatives and the moving target of information. She had provided three potential drafts of casino support letters. She reviewed the final draft with the board and indicated how this would be used by the Finger Lakes Gaming and Racetrack to plead their case about the economic disruption a nearby casino could cause. The board asked that the distribution of the letter be expanded and that we continue to support the vitality of the racetrack in our area. Valerie shared the notarized version of the Farmington Resolution which we had received. After further discussion Bob Bennett moved to **accept this letter as the official Finger Lakes Visitors Connection letter, pending small revisions, and directed her to send it to our elected officials. John Brahm** seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN – Mike Roeder extended the invitation to the Events Center again to the entire board. Having no more business to come before the board, Russ Kenyon **made the motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by David Hutchings. All voted in favor of adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:53.

Minutes submitted by Michelle Dawson

Next Meeting:
April 1, 2014
FLCC
Canandaigua, NY 14424