

**Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, New York
Board of Directors, Wednesday, September 9, 2015 8:00 am
Ontario County Municipal Building, Canandaigua, New York**

PRESENT

Mike Roeder
Bob Bennett
David Hutchings
Suzanne Farley
Mike Kauffman
Audrey Carrier
Jessica Bacher
Dan Fuller
Lisa Fitzgerald
Alexa Gifford
Frank Riccio
Dick Maltman

EXCUSED

Russ Kenyon
John Cowley
John Brahm
Carl Carlson
David Linger

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Carol Hicks
David Lee

EX-OFFICIO

Alison Grems, Canandaigua
Chamber

WELCOME – Mike Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:02 am. He asked for input from all of the board members on summer business. The general consensus was that overall it was a successful summer, except numbers were down in June due to the excessive rain. Valerie referenced the Smith Travel Research report for July, which supports the feedback from the board.

CORRESPONDENCE NOTEBOOK – Carol reported on the Correspondence Notebook. She noted that there were numerous articles regarding the Everwilde project and the Seneca Lake propane storage issue. Carol also brought attention to the multiple letters of support that Valerie wrote to the Empire State Economic Development Council for various projects in Ontario County.

EDUCATIONAL SESSION.

In lieu of a full educational session and the amount of official business, Valerie noted that several members of our group have been dealing with a variety of challenging situations. She provided an update on Carl Carlson who was recovering from surgery and undergoing treatments, Sue Schmidt's mother, and her grandson who had broken his femur. On the good news side, she shared that Suzanne Farley has a new grandson, Finn.

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD –

Governance Committee. Bob Bennett reported that the Governance Committee did not meet. Policy updates to follow under Official Business.

Executive Committee. Mike Roeder reported for the Executive Committee. In preparation for the audit, the committee had reviewed the status of all open-ended contracts. They directed Valerie to close out any contracts that were past the deadline. He indicated that it's important in the future to make sure that we discuss new opportunities with the chambers and others, but that these be structured in a manner to manage the deliverables in a timely, quality manner. Valerie shared the emails that she had written so that the board was up to speed.

Mike reported on the request that was received from Geneva for funding support for the Geneva Visitor's Center. They had requested \$60,000 in this upcoming year. The request has been uploaded to OneDrive so that all members can consider it. The board asked a variety of questions and Valerie ultimately read Matt Horn's email which detailed the latest specifics with regard to rationale and desired response date. Valerie shared that she and Berkeley had met with them and that she's asked him to take under advisement his recommendation for our role in Visitor Services – as it pertains to economic development opportunity. She noted that he will undoubtedly address this at his first strategic report.

Nominating Committee. Valerie gave an overview of the results from the survey that was sent to the board members asking them about their interest and time to continue serving and their suggestions for the format of the meetings. Suggestions included the length and structure of meetings, guest speakers, frequency of the meetings and adopting a consensus agenda. Discussion ensued. It was agreed to run a trial period through the end of the year with these changes, except for the guest speaker idea. A guest speaker will only be asked in if they have ample time and their information is relevant to an agenda item of the meeting.

Audit and Finance Committee. Valerie reported that a final budget cannot be completed until September 25, after the last the set of occupancy numbers come in from the county on September 20. Valerie noted that the draft budget is posted on OneDrive. This is a zero-based developed budget and all the detail is there in the 51 pages. If board members have any ideas that they would like to include or questions, please contact her. Valerie gave a brief report on the 5-year Capital Project Budget, separate of the regular budget.

David Lee and Sue Schmidt presented the preliminary budget to the Ontario County Planning Committee last month. John Shepard, chair of the Finance Committee of Ontario County asked about the Reserve Fund. Valerie reviewed the board's policy on the Reserve Fund. The policy states that we need to build a reserve to maintain 67% - 75% of one year's budgeted operating expenses and general administration expenses. There is currently \$210,000 in the Reserve Fund, which is underfunded by approximately \$140,000. Valerie asked if the board wanted to revisit the policy and noted that she thinks the confusion is that that is a travel industry standard vs. a town government standard and Mr. Shepard may not realize that.

FLVC Strategic Planning and Research Committee. Valerie Knoblauch reported that the Annual Meeting and the next Board meeting will be October 20, 2015. Berkeley Young will be at the meeting and she wants the board to plan on workshops before and after the meeting with Mr. Young.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS – Mike Roeder asked for a motion to **approve the minutes of the June 17, 2015 Board of Directors meeting.** Bob Bennett **made the motion to approve the minutes;** Mike Kauffman **seconded;** **the motion passed unanimously.**

Financial Reports for June, July and YTD. Valerie Knoblauch presented the Financial Reports for June, July and year-to-date. Frank Riccio **moved to approve the June Budget vs. Actual, approve the July Budget vs. Actual, the Year-to-Date Financials and the Balance sheet through July 31.** Suzanne Farley **seconded,** **and the motion passed unanimously.**

Policy. The policies that were reviewed at the June 17, 2015 meeting have been on OneDrive and there have not been any changes. The board agreed to adopt these with one motion.

- Administration and Operations: Accounts Receivable and Advertising Restrictions.
- Section 8. Procedures: Guidelines for Funding (Deleted)
- Administration and Operations: Restrictions on Funding Requests, Community Advertising, Political Advertising and Sponsorships.
- Employment and the Law: Sexual Harassment (Deleted)
- Employment and the Law: Harassment.
- Financial Policy: Internal Control Policy.

David Hutchings **moved to approve the second reading of the policies.** Alexa Gifford **seconded,** **and the motion passed unanimously.**

Propane Gas Storage White Paper. This white paper had also been presented at the last meeting and up on OneDrive for further review. Valerie provided an update on a couple of towns that had adopted the policies since our June meeting. Frank Riccio **motioned to approve the Propane Gas Storage White Paper.** Richard Maltman **seconded,** **and the motion passed unanimously.**

EX-OFFICIO/AGENCY REPORTS

Chamber Reports – Alison Grems spoke on behalf of the Canandaigua Chamber. She referenced the Wake Park and the fact that it will be open through October. The Finger Lakes Resort project is currently on hold. The North Shore Development is moving along. The Bristol Mountain Aerial Adventure Park Canopy Tour will be opening soon.

Jessica Bacher spoke on behalf of the Geneva Chamber. She reported that the Finger Lakes BBQ Competition was recently held in Geneva.

Valerie Knoblauch gave a brief report on the community FAM tours that have been conducted by the staff. These tours are beneficial in exposing the FLVC team to restaurants, attractions and accommodations in Ontario County, to better serve and inform our visitors. Additionally, they open up the line of communications for the industry to get to know us better and understand our marketing programs.

PRESIDENT and CEO REPORT

Valerie reported on the shared economy meeting that was attended by Gary Baxter, County Treasurer; Gary Curtiss, County Attorney; Elaine McCaig, Carol and herself. Valerie told the board that we have received an e-mail from I Love NY stating that we cannot list any AirBnB and VRBO accommodations that do not have NYS approvals and licensing in place. The treasurer's office is concerned about the potential sales tax collections (and occupancy tax) from these rentals. In order to collect taxes, there would need to be changes made in the Occupancy Tax Law, which is currently in the second year of a three year term. The current law applies to four rooms or more, meaning the law would need to be changed to one room. The board raised many other issues including regulatory, taxation, and revenue generation and dispersement. All agreed that it is a complicated issue. Valerie committed to do a briefing report on the issue either at the next meeting (if it ties in to our strategic plan) or at a later meeting.

9:38am – Board Member Dan Fuller left the meeting.

MARKETING, SALES and VISITOR SERVICES REPORTS

Attractions Task Force – David Hutchings reported on the Attractions Task Force. The meeting was well attended. A goal of the task force is to help relay the stories around the attractions. In order to do this they are encouraging and training employees to blog in a story-telling style. The idea of group blogs was also discussed. Packaging ideas are currently being worked on as well.

9:39am – Board Member Suzanne Farley left the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

President Mike Roeder asked if there was any old business. No old business was brought before the board.

NEW BUSINESS

President Mike Roeder asked if there was any new business. No new business was brought before the board.

ADJOURN – Richard Maltman **made the motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Audrey Carrier. All voted in favor of adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.

Minutes submitted by Carol Hicks.

Next Meeting: October 20. To include strategic planning, budget update as primary focus.

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