

A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, June 14, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
Muller Field Station, 6455 County Road 36, Honeoye, NY

Present

Bob Bennett
Carl Carlson
Audrey Carrier
Suzanne Farley
David Hutchings
Mike Kauffman
Russ Kenyon
Steve Laros
David Linger
Dan Marshall
Mike Roeder

Excused

John Brahm
Lenore Friend
Alexa Gifford
Meg Joseph
Frank Riccio

Absent

Guests

Steve Powell,
Destination Services

Staff

Carol Hicks
Valerie Knoblauch
David Lee

Welcome – Mike Kauffman called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. and introduced Dr. Bruce Gilman, steward of the Muller Field Station. Dr. Gilman gave a presentation of the work that is being done at the station, a property that was donated to Finger Lakes Community College in 1999 by the Muller family. He highlighted our common interest in water quality in the Finger Lakes, especially the research and monitoring of blue-green algae blooms in the Finger Lakes. Mike thanked him for a very informative presentation. Dr. Gilman left at this point.

Official Business - Mike Kauffman requested a motion to move all the items under official business. *Russ Kenyon made a motion to approve the following:*

- a. *Minutes of the May 9, 2018 meeting*
- b. *Financial reports: May Budget vs. Actual; Balance Sheet as of 5/31/18*

The motion was seconded by Dan Marshall. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Governance Committee – David Hutchings gave an overview of Policy #103 – Distribution of our mailing list, which is up for revision. Changes needed to be made because of the recent regulations on GDPR confidentiality of customer information. *Russ Kenyon made a motion to approve Policy #103 – Distribution of our mailing list as presented. The motion was seconded by Bob Bennett. All members voted in favor of the motion.*

President's Report – Valerie Knoblauch provided a background on the strategic initiative that is being addressed at the meeting today. She referred the board to OneDrive for materials on our prior actions with regard to Top Product Development. Her focus has been on Steve Powell, Destination Services, and the need for new research and data to complete this initiative. The discussion would come under the Strategic Planning committee of the board today.

Executive Committee – Mike Kauffman reported that as the result of the discussion at the May Board of Directors meeting, Steve Powell is here today to present; and to address the questions that were brought up at that meeting.

Nominating Committee – Valerie indicated that Steve McGuire has been promoted to the General Manager position at the Holiday Inn in Auburn, leaving a vacancy on the board. The committee agreed that Sheryl Mordini of the 1795 Acorn Inn Bed & Breakfast in the Town of Bristol is a great candidate to fill this vacancy. Audrey Carrier made a *motion to nominate Sheryl Mordini (1795 Acorn Inn, Canandaigua) to fill the unexpired term of Steve McGuire with Sheryl's term to expire September 30, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mike Roeder. All members voted in favor of the motion.* Audrey also reported that the committee was aware that there would be an additional vacancy in September when Alexa Gifford's term expires. They are also working on the slate of officers for the 2019 Board.

New Business – Budget timeline: Valerie is waiting for the last quarter occupancy tax collections to be reported to Ontario County. These numbers are due on June 20. Valerie will receive a number from Gary Baxter between June 25 – 30. The numbers have been tracking fairly even for this year, as compared to last year. Valerie is working with Ontario County and the City of Canandaigua to determine the financial impact of The Inn on the Lake closing for renovations. Valerie recently turned figures over to NYS Tourism Economics, which reports on the economic value of tourism to the county, region and state.

Strategic Planning Committee – Carl Carlson introduced Steve Powell, CEO of Destination Services, to speak on Tourism Product Development. Steve has worked with Berkeley Young, of Young Strategies, for the past 10 years. Steve provided the board with a brief background highlighting his forte of conventions, meetings, groups, hotels and destination management.

Steve sees our county as a focused leisure market in his quick trips across the county. He is a advocate for product diversity and questioned a potential opportunity in the meetings / small conference business. Steps we would need to take to get good analytical and risk data includes the need for: a database of meeting planners; a profile assessment of their needs and a demand profile. Based on this, he would determine the feasibility of a space or spaces. Alternately, the study may reveal that the return is not worth the investment needed for a meeting facility or facilities. If we proceed, Destination Services can implement the recommendations of the project. Steve would work with Finger Lakes Visitors Connection (FLVC) to find developers and to also seek out properties that may want to add on to their already existing facilities. Steve emphasized that we need to look at what we want to be, based on the product development perspective. He recommended prioritizing the product development already determined by the Young Strategies research and in our Strategic Plan, creating a *Master Plan for Development*.

Steve provided the board with an example and details on Mt. Airy, NC, the hometown of Andy Griffith and the town that the *Andy Griffith Show* is based on. Mt. Airy is totally a leisure market. Berkeley and Steve went into Mt. Airy and realized that millennials have no idea who Andy Griffith is and they need to look at other tourism products to drive the tourism business. They are currently in the process of change. They are renovating an old garment mill into a hotel, small conference center, restaurant; and possibly a theater, to drive business. Additionally, Steve is working with the State Theater of Virginia to bring in a satellite theater. A local developer is building residential units. Residents from Charlotte want to go to Mt. Airy to relax, have a great dinner, go to the theater. This lifestyle ties into the meeting with Mike Manikowski, Ontario County Economic Development. Mike emphasized the quality of life in Ontario County.

How do we sustain our destination? It is important that we look at the product development list and ask, *will this sustain the destination?* Steve and Berkeley are passionate about tourism, with Steve stressing that tourism is about business – making money to sustain the tourism product. Discussion ensued. Steve emphasized that he will not make a recommendation for a product that we do not need and cannot sustain.

Russ Kenyon noted the important role that FLVC has in working directly with Ontario County Economic Development and the importance of tourism as an economic driver. Russ reminded us of how far our organization had come in these relationships and the respect that we garnered as experts in tourism as economic development and lifestyle building.

Steve will work with FLVC to create an evaluation tool for proposed projects, to provide specific parameters and determine if a project is feasible. Valerie requested authorization to enter into a contract with Destination Services, not to exceed \$25,000, including travel expenses. *Dan Marshall made the motion to enter into a contract with Destination Services for tourism product development, not to exceed \$25,000, including travel expenses. The motion was seconded by Steve Laros. All members voted in favor of the motion.*

Adjourn – *Mike Roeder made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by David Hutchings. All members voted in favor of the motion.* Mike Kauffman adjourned the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 12
Location TBD (looking into the Finger Lakes Welcome Center in Geneva)

Minutes submitted by Carol Hicks