

**A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, March 2, 2022 – 11:30 a.m.
Via Zoom per Governor’s Order on Public Meetings
Canandaigua, NY 14424**

| Board Member Attendance: | Present | Excused | Absent |
|---|---------|---------|--------|
| David Hutchings, Sonnenberg Gardens - Chair of the Board | X | | |
| Lenore Friend, Finger Lakes Community College – Vice Chair of the Board | | X | |
| Charles Parkhurst, Lyons National Bank - Board Secretary | | X | |
| Steven Laros, Fairfield Inn & Suites Geneva - Board Treasurer | X | | |
| Bob Bennett, Homewood Suites by Hilton Victor - Immediate Past Chair of the Board | X | | |
| Mike Kauffman, Eastview | X | | |
| Mike Roeder, Ravenwood Golf | X | | |
| Sheryl Mordini, 1795 Acorn Inn Bed and Breakfast | X | | |
| Steve Fuller, Bristol Mountain | X | | |
| Frank Riccio, Cobblestone Creek Country Club | X | | |
| Russ Kenyon, Kenyon & Kenyon | X | | |
| Mark Gilbride, Lazy Acre Alpacas | X | | |
| Dan Marshall, Ontario County Board of Supervisors, Town of South Bristol | X | | |
| Lori Proper, The Lake House at Canandaigua | X | | |
| Lisa FitzGerald, Finger Lakes Winery Tours, Feathers and Tails Farm | X | | |
| Sherry Brahm-French, Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery | X | | |
| Mike Darling, Crafty Ales and Lagers | X | | |

Staff: Valerie Knoblauch, Julie Maslyn, Tracey Burkey, Zach Langmead, FLVC intern Kate Fitscher
Guest: Nichola Ostrander; Ostrander’s Consulting

Call to Order, Attendance, Welcome and Introductions - David Hutchings called the meeting to order at 11:32 am via zoom conference call. All board members present participated via Zoom.

Consent Agenda - David Hutchings presented the minutes (Item 1a) of the December 8, 2021 Board meeting, *Frank Riccio moved to accept these; Mike Roeder seconded the motion. Dan Marshall and Dave Hutchings abstained because they were not present at the last meeting, all others present voted in favor.*

Frank also made a motion to accept the following financial reports. Budget vs. Actual - December, January, Year to date; Balance Sheet as of 1/31/22; Balance Sheet as of 2/25/22; P and L through 1/31/22; Credit Card Report. Mike Roeder seconded. There were no questions about the financials. All present voted in favor.

Good News/Announcements/Round the Table - State of the Travel Industry

Valerie and David asked board members to share their experiences in travel recently and their thoughts on where the marketplace is and how the consumer behavior has changed. Each member shared insights. Collectively there were common themes of frustrations with air travel; consumer bad behavior, widely disparate approaches to COVID. There was also some discussion about prices and service value. Gas prices are of a concern. The Canadian border needs to be opened as well. Everyone is ready to “move on.” See Board members insights in Attachment A.

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Presentation and Discussion - Nichola Ostrander of Ostrander’s Consulting -

Valerie introduced Nichola Ostrander and shared the background that Ontario County has hired her company to facilitate the county’s opportunities for the potential recovery funds for both municipalities and for businesses of all sized. Ostrander has been very effective in helping businesses to qualify. Nichola also told the Board that NYS allocated 1 billion dollars to small businesses, and she knows that there are several Ontario County businesses that would qualify. She reported on the CDBG Cares Grant. They have met with a total of 52 businesses, submitted 26 applications, to date there are 11 awarded for \$520,000. There are still 13 applications pending. There may be an opportunity to ask for more money to replenish some of this grant funding, Livingston County was successful with that.

In a partnership with FLVC Ostrander’s Consulting has created a calendar of workshops/meetings scheduled eight months (March through November except for the summer months). These are both grants specific for not-for-profit organizations, work force development for businesses, to sexual harassment training. Watch for a calendar of events.

Committees of the Board

Executive

David Hutchings reported that the Executive Committee met, and discussion was held on the FLVC vacancies. They also approved the payout of Valerie’s, Tracey’s, and Julie’s PTO Liability in relation to the new FLEX Policy. This ensures that in September there will be no payroll liability. Valerie is still tracking the use of PTO to see how the system works.

On March 11, David, Valerie, and Julie will meet with the NYS Comptroller’s Office to hear their report on the Audit, this report will also be emailed to all other Board members. There will need to be an official board response. A special meeting may need to be called.

There needs to be a change in a couple of meeting dates on the Board of Directors meeting calendar, one of which is the next meeting date. It was originally targeted to National Tourism Week. Valerie will not be available then. We are hoping it can be in person. After a brief discussion the meeting date was set for April 27, 1:30 - 3:00. This would be held in conjunction with the joint FLVC Ostrander Consulting workshops, and Board members would be ready to go from one meeting to another.

Additionally, the July 19, 2022, Board meeting will probably need to be changed as this comes in the middle of Destinations International Annual Conference, which is being held this year in Toronto, and Valerie and Tracey have attended in the past and would like to attend again.

Finance and Audit

Valerie showed the 1st draft of the Capital Projects Budget for years 2023 - 2028. This has been through the Finance Committee as a first draft. There is a caution that the numbers are still fluid due to supply chain and inflation affecting long term projections. This plan will continue to be refined and will make its way back in front of the board for adoption. We have a proposal from Bero Associates with regard to the building and structural elements of the plan.

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Bero Associates had been referred from a couple of board members and others who had experience with historic structures. They met with Valerie and visited the office. At her request, they submitted a proposal and a plan which would serve as a foundation for a scope of work and for a budget base. Valerie was seeking support of this type of service to continue to flush out the detail of the plan. The board was supportive of using this type of service.

On behalf of the Finance Committee Valerie followed up on the meeting with regard to maturing CD’s. Charles had taken the lead on this for the committee, working with Valerie. His recommendation to distribute the approximately \$405,000 that had accumulated because of the recently liquidated CDs in the following manner. This strategy would keep money as a cash asset for a little while longer as we wait to see what happens to rates. It also allows us not to exceed our FDIC limits of \$250,000.

Retain at Wayne Bank approximately \$250,000.

Take approximately \$56,000 to the NYS Matching Funds Account to fund that while we are waiting for the state share.

Take the remainder, which will be approximately \$100,000 and move that into a Savings Account at Five Star Bank, FLVC has a low amount of money at Five Star and there would not be a risk of us going over the FDIC limits. This would be put into a new savings account, if the board authorizes this plan.

Mark Gilbride made a motion to open a new savings account at Five Star Bank and to authorize the plan above across all the banks. Russ Kenyon seconded the motion; all present voted to approve.

Governance No Report - No meeting

Nominating No Report - No Meeting

Strategic Initiatives Task Force Reports

Valerie acknowledged that the plan was to have all the task force reports in place for this meeting. However, as we continue to see COVID and COVID recovery provide constant change, we have been unable to “nail” the tactics and initiatives with any degree of certainty. It was agreed to keep the information flowing, to remain focused on recovery and budget stability, and then to put the strategic initiatives in place. Valerie noted the workforce development initiative in particular as one with constantly shifting priorities. FLVC will be putting a landing page on the website to provide up to date information so that when we are ready to engage with specific tactics we will all be singing from the same song sheet.

Marketing Report

The following FLVC programs are in the planning stages:

Literature Exchange – scheduled for June 8. If you are interested in distributing your brochures or getting brochures, please mark your calendar (save the date cards will be going out).

Transportation Summit - tentatively scheduled for June 15, we are paying attention to the discussions that are happening concerning intra county transportation and this summit may have to be pushed into the Fall, stay tuned.

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Legacy Awards are scheduled for September. These awards are our opportunity since COVID to make public recognitions in our Industry and for us to recognize those important to our industry that may have left or retired during COVID.

President’s Report

Valerie reported on the successful installation of technology upgrades, including new cat 6 cables and the removal of old cabling. Also, the installation of phones from Empire Access.

Valerie reported on conversations she has been having with the County on the need for more EV Charging Stations, and the probability of funds being available in the Federal Government. She has floated out the possibility of shared interest and assets between us and the County and putting a charging station behind our garage.

Business Development Report

Tracey briefly reported that she had been in contact with a tour bus operator that was hoping to reach wineries with an appeal to letting groups (including bus tours) back into their operations as large groups, noting that they are not rowdy bachelorette parties, but quiet, usually senior citizens, and very much interested in wines and experiences. An initial zoom call with the Canandaigua Lake Wine Trail was successful and an in-person tour will happen next week where Tracey is confident that more positive conversation will happen.

Old Business

There was no old business brought to the floor.

New Business

The following State Advocacy Programs were touched upon in the Strategic Initiatives Task Force Report. Valerie made note of how these items have also been identified by our board as challenges to the industry and our recovery.

- Short Term rental legislation s5665/A6003;
- ADA Website Legislation S7374/A8054;
- Tourism Recovery Improvement Districts: S6186A/a2149;
- Matching Funds - Restore \$1 million S803/I9003

Adjourn

David Hutchings asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:55, Russ Kenyon made the motion, Sheryl Mordini seconded the motion and all present voted to adjourn.

Next Meeting (s):

April 27, 1:30 - 3:00 pm followed by a workshop planned in conjunction with Ostrander’s Consulting.

July 19th will be changed at the next meeting.

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Attachment A.

Board member insights on travel in the last two months

Mark Gilbride: went to Denver recently and wants to report that air travel is terrible, they lost 3 days of their trip due to airline issues. Lazy Acres Alpaca business is on the slow side, but that is not unusual for this time of year, they are taking the time to get ready for the upcoming season.

Sheryl Mordini: recently canceled a trip (January) but is getting ready to book a trip to Europe and very much looking forward to it. 1795 Acorn Inn is having a slow but not an unusual start, thinking it will be a busy summer though. Reported that it feels like people have gotten “forgetful” with masks, there are definitely a group of people who are ready to be “done” with masks, yet there also remains a group that still wants separate group mealtimes and wears their masks regularly.

Russ Kenyon (Kenyon and Kenyon): Wants to affirm what Mark Gilbride said, “air travel is terrible”. He and his wife have been out of state at least once each month of the year it seems like, and they have seen so many attitudes, depending on where they have been. Masking is definitely a polarizing issue, hotels have no maid service, continental breakfast is back, but finding it to be the exact same, narrow parameters each day. Feeling like this is the new normal – a reduction in the level of service but prices that stay at the earlier level price. The current prices at the airport don’t make any sense, there are incredible deals right alongside exorbitant prices.

Mike Roeder: was recently in Florida for the PGA trade show – and they were masking indoors. Maybe because of the business that he is in, but he is seeing a big line between indoor and outdoor activities, and the masking that goes along. Ravenwood Golf Club is looking forward to 60+ weddings, they are going to be part of a Canadian virtual golf show, there is a sense that the Canadians are feeling like they will be able to cross the border again soon.

Loir Proper: The Lake House on Canandaigua recently had a group from Canada – by bus. In order to return they were needed a PCR test, the Lake House worked with a clinic to facilitate that; everyone was able to return home – success! They are seeing Corporate business meetings as still short window bookings, looking to summer for lots of bookings. The restaurant which can seat 120 is booking up each weekend, there is no longer a requirement of masks except in the spa area, but they will accommodate groups that still want to be masked, with masking.

Mike Kauffman: 2021 was a really good year for Eastview Mall, thinking that with the stimulus money, Dick’s opening, and overall stay at home fever that people really came out to shop. 2021 compared to 2019 was up 11%. 2022 is starting good, it is slow right now, but that is to be expected, the mask issue is still a polarizing one, about 20% are still masking at this time. There is still work to do on the occupancy side, getting store fronts filled.

Sherry Brahm-French (Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery): recently went to St. Thomas, they needed a PCR test to get there and come back and found the whole process to be nerve racking, in that you felt like you didn’t know if you were going to get to leave until almost the minute you needed to leave. Everyone wore a mask, and there was uniform signage to ask you to. Naples at this time is slower, but they had a good turnout for the Vintage Valentines event.

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Lisa FitzGerald: Traveled to Hilton Head NC, and they were the only ones wearing masks, they really looked like outsiders. Flying was just OK - they separated her from her girls (ages 5 & 8), so she spent time going to passengers getting them back together, but people were accommodating. Finger Lakes Winery Tours is doing really well, people are looking to travel, and they are masking for consideration of all, they are finding that people are pretty agreeable.

Bob Bennett: Homewood Suites has been sold to Indus Hotel group, they had an excellent 2021, based on groups booked, bookings for 2022 so far look good.

Mike Darling: starting to see an uptick in business at Crafty Ales and Lager, especially the closer we get to St Patrick’s day, which for the beer industry is the unofficial opening of the season. Phelps recently did a sip & stroll and the place was crowded!

Steven Laros: the Fairfield Inn & Suites has just hired 3 more to the staff which puts them at fully staffed and they are looking forward to the new normal

Frank Riccio: Cobblestone Creek Country Club is just coming out of a week of total shut down for cleaning, it is still a quiet time but they are preparing for the Men’s Invitational which will soon be coming up.

David Hutchings: recently traveled to Indiana and echoes Lisa FitzGerald’s thoughts that they were the only ones masked. Except for the Theater, there was more masking there. In Indiana the basketball game was unmasked, but for the Syracuse game here it is vaccination card required. Sonnenberg is looking forward to 35 wedding or special events this season, the Orchid show has already happened successfully.

Steve Fuller: Bristol Mountain has had a great season and they will soon be host to 6 Olympian athletes with the US National Championships - the limitation will be parking; passes are going quickly. We are also looking forward to 300 Athlete for the USSA EQS Eastern Freestyle Championships that will be joining the parade in Canandaigua ahead of the Winter Carnival.