

**A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, March 30, 2022 – 8:30 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

Call to Order, Attendance, Welcome and Introductions – David Hutchings called the meeting to order at 8:31 am via zoom conference call. Board member Steve Laros was present in the office with Valerie and Julie.

David shared the purpose of the meeting was to respond to the New York State Comptroller’s Office report of March 2. He reviewed that he, Valerie and Julie had participated in a meeting on March 10 held at FLVC where the findings were reported from the audit. He mentioned that the report focused on procurement and the recommendation to enhance our processes and the documentation of the processes.

David noted that Valerie had sent recommended language for the board’s consideration as a response to the audit. She noted that if we want our “response” to their report to be included when they published it, that it was necessary for her to get this to the NYS auditors by April 1st.

Valerie took the floor to overview the advance draft document that she had sent for the special meeting. The board reviewed both policy and procedures.

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She noted that there was only one recommendation from the Comptroller’s Office, which is a very positive audit, in her view. She restated the key recommendation:

Key recommendation from the NYS Comptroller’s Office:

Adopt a more comprehensive written procurement policy which includes the requirements for adequate documentation to be maintained to support purchasing processes, and ensure the policy is consistently followed.

Additional recommendations (p. 5)

1. The Board should adopt a more comprehensive written procurement policy which includes the requirements for adequate documentation to be maintained to support purchasing processes including when a competitive process was not used, and ensure the policy is consistently followed.

2. Corporation officials should: Ensure a competitive process is followed for purchases in accordance with the procurement policy and the purchasing process is documented.

Specific tactical suggestions included: 1) a provision for sole source purchases and guidance for maintaining documentation and 2) seek competition as a matter of course

Valerie and David addressed various questions regarding the audit, the recommendations and reviewed the suggestions. After further discussion - *The board approved the response (See attachment A) with a unanimous vote on a motion by Steve Laros and a second by Charles Parkhurst.*

Discussion next went to the specific actions necessary for updating the Procurement Policy. *A motion was made by Steve Laros and seconded by Sherry Brahm-French to make two changes to Procurement Policy #111. All board members voted in favor of the changes.*

The changes are: to add

d) sole source purchase is an exception when a particular good or services for which there is no substantial equivalent, including but not limited to branded creative services, which are only available from a single source provider.

All board members presented voted in favor of this policy change.

Add:

Seeking competition. *Seeking competition helps facilitate the acquisition of goods and services of maximum quality at the highest value and guards against favoritism, improvidence, fraud and abuse. FLVC shall seek competitive bids and services to ensure that what is purchased is most appropriate for the Corporation’s needs and procured in the most economical way and without favoritism.*

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The board turned their attention towards the procedures and what had been implemented at the December meeting. There were several questions regarding the tools and systems that had been developed and perfected during that time. Valerie noted that as part of the language of this first adoption that a review process would be established. She noted that the process (and related forms, such as the procurement worksheet) had been established and tested through the staff with a couple of examples. She showed the form to the board. It is still a work in progress, but at least the categories are all reflective of the points that need to be addressed regarding process and standards.

When discussion concluded, Finance Chair, Steve Laros moved that the Procedures for Procurement be amended as follows: to replace “A Review Process Shall be Established” with: *An internal review by staff will be performed annually in conjunction with the PARIS filings deadline. This review will be provided to the Board of Directors audit committee and will assure the procurement policy and process has been followed including seeking competition, and any rfps and bids that our sought through the year are documented and maintained per process.*

FLVC has adopted a form for standardization of the process. This form (Procurement Planning and Coversheet) will be attached to the procedures and will undergo continual refinement to standardize the process and the record keeping and does not cause unnecessary busy work, but rather – informational benefit to the selection process.

Adjourn

David Hutchings asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:55. Frank Riccio made the motion, Steve Laros seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Next Meeting

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

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ATTACHMENT A

Office of the New York State Comptroller
PSU – CAP Submission
110 State Street, 12th Floor
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please note that this letter serves as a respond to the Office of the State Comptroller dated March 2, 2022. Finger Lakes Visitors Connection president, Valerie Knoblauch and the Board of Directors appreciate and respect the recommendations of the auditors from the NYS Comptroller’s office. This letter is our response to the audit and also our corrective action plan review, since all the items have been completed.

The board met on March 30, 2022 in order to review the recommendations and to respond to meet your April 1 publication date. The following overview includes details on specific policy and procedural changes that have been adopted by the board at our meetings on December 8, 2021 and March 30, 2022.

While COVID produced many unique circumstances for the operation of our agency, we believe our refinement of the Procurement Policy (#111), the addition and subsequent clarification of the Procedures (#505), and the related training of the staff members (all of whom are new since 2019 with the exception of the president) will result in a tighter procurement process – and in particular, a process of greater consistency in seeking competitive bids, documentation and maintenance of records.

Additionally, the members of the Board credit our staff for the professionalism, sound business judgements, and operational strengths that were also noted in the interactions of this audit.

Finally, please see corrective actions which have been taken in relation to your recommendations.

- FLVC adopted a procurement policy (Policy #111) in September of 2009. This policy had been reviewed over the years with minor updates made. This procedure was modeled after Ontario County’s at that time.

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- At the December 8, 2021 meeting the board approved the recommendation of the Governance Committee of the board to add Procurement Procedures #505. Procedures and Documentation to Support Procurement Process, Selection, and Oversight. Includes detail on record keeping (narrative of vendor selection and location of files); sole source bidding documentation, a planning and coversheet checklist, and the importance of seeking competitive bid proposals.
- At the March 30, 2022 meeting, the board edited the policy to include sole source purchases as recommended in the report.
- At the March 30, 2022 meeting, the board adopted a statement about Seeking Competition that will be added to both policy and procedures as a preliminary consideration to purchases.
- At the March 30, 2022 meeting, the board edited the procedures (#505) to replace the phrase, “a review process shall be established” with the process requirements for maintaining records to document the bids and to provide for an annual review process.
- At the March 30, 2022 meeting, the board added a paragraph addressing the desire and understanding of the benefit of competitive proposals.

In closing, we agree with the Auditors findings and wanted to reemphasize that the board’s attention to continual improvement in processes and policy including, but not limited to, procurement is an ongoing concern of our leadership. We appreciate the feedback and guidance.

If you would like specific copies of any of the policy, procedures, or forms that we are using and have updated, I am pleased to be able to supply them as evidence of completion or for your further input. Additionally, these will be posted as part of our PARIS updates, no later than April 15, 2022.

Sincerely,



Valerie Knoblauch, President and CEO
Finger Lakes Visitors Connection
19 Susan B. Anthony Lane
Canandaigua, NY 14424