

Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, New York
Board of Directors Meeting, Wednesday, July 24, 2013 8:00 a.m.
Veterans Park, East Bloomfield, NY

PRESENT

Alexa Gifford
Mike Kauffman
Dick Maltman
Bob Bennett
Suzanne Farley
David Hutchings
Lois Kozlowski
Mary Luckern
Lisa Fitzgerald
Jessica Bacher

EXCUSED

John Brahm
Frank Riccio
Russ Kenyon
Mike Roeder
Dan Fuller

ABSENT

David Linger
Carl Carlson

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
David Lee
Holly Chaapel
Sue Schmidt
AJ Shear
Sara Paduano

Guest

Bob Hobday- Deputy Director of the Antique
Wireless Museum

WELCOME – Mike Kauffman, 1st Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:15 am, initiating self-introductions and welcoming Bob Hobday. Valerie noted an invitation to the Board of Director’s meeting was extended to Supervisor Dodie Huber, however Ms. Huber was unable to attend due to prior commitments. She arranged for our meeting this morning in her town and was pleased to know that Mr. Hobday would be presenting.

CORRESPONDENCE NOTEBOOK- The correspondence notebook was passed around the table. Please make note of the Governor’s letter to Valerie Knoblauch for her participation in the tourism summit he held in May. Additionally, there were several newspaper articles pertaining to the occupancy tax in nearby Seneca County and recent updates on the gaming legislation, which had not gone in our favor.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS- Mary Luckern moved to **approve the minutes of the May 16, 2013 Board of Directors meeting**. Dick Maltman seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie presented the financial reports, noting that we were over budget in the month of May due to the Travel Guide and we were under budget in the month of June. Year-to-date it balances out as we are under budget \$40,764. There were no questions from the board. Suzanne Farley moved to **accept the May, June, & YTD financial reports**. Alexa Gifford seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie presented the 2013-2014 Budget Proposal. One unique revenue item is in the government grants line item. There is \$37,500 anticipated from a New York State, Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grant for the Food Revolution. The expense side of the budget is “in line” with past budgets, creating a mix of marketing tactics – and once again putting more into electronic marketing than in the past. The proposed budget will also be presented at the Ontario County Planning and Research Committee on August 7, 2013 and finally be adjusted in late September once the final quarter of occupancy tax revenues is in. Lois Kozlowski moved to **accept the 2013-2014 Preliminary Budget**. Mary Luckern seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie explained to the board that the current company vehicle, a 2010 Ford Flex, is three years, four months old with about 72,000 miles. The Executive Committee met and approved the soliciting of bids for a new vehicle. They wanted the bid specs to go to Ontario County dealerships only. This had been done – and the specs were also available to the board. Procurement policy is being followed. Valerie asked the board to **authorize the executive committee and member Dick Maltman to analyze the bids, make a recommendation and allow her to enter into a sales contract for a new vehicle and sell the 2010 Ford Flex.** David Hutchings made the motion, Jessica Bacher seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie Knoblauch provided more detail on the **Finger Lakes Visitors Connection goals/metrics** that were previously reviewed at the May meeting. She noted that the board performance goals were high level goals and her role was to manage the process within the office and through the board to ensure staff tasks were contributing to the strategic goals of the board. In alignment with our strategic plan, there are four major areas with results objectives beneath them. These are: visitorship, economic vitality, and board and organization stewardship. These six outcomes are: 1) Increase occupancy 2) Build friendbase by 10% and engage visitors in the brand 3) Increase meetings (weekdays - year round) and shoulder season (May and June) and (September, October, November) 4) Increase sales tax revenue associated with tourism 5) Foster development of tourism product and inventory by developing and publicizing needs 6) Ensure compliance and fiscal responsibility for assets of corporation.

Mike Kauffman asked how friendbase is defined. AJ Shear, Communications Manager, explained that FLVC plans to reach out to the individuals who have inquired of us before (leads) and ask if they would like to continue to receive information, what their interests are, how they would like to hear from us. If they agree we would consider them our friends. We will also be acquiring new friends through our website, via phone, at trade shows, and advertising using these same methods, making sure our “leads” or “friends”, as we call them, are qualified. Lisa Fitzgerald asked if we are counting people twice if they like us on Facebook as well as sign up for information. Sara responded that we have one central database that will be culled and refined to eliminate duplication. We want to qualify our leads and then engage them as friends, as the first goal states. We will start our new year with a solid base number of friends that we will grow throughout the year.

On the increase meetings during the shoulder season goal, Jessica Bacher questioned the inclusion of May and June as shoulder season. She felt that there were substantial conferences during that time and perhaps our resources are best directed to even higher need times. Valerie asked Sue Schmidt, Vice President and Manager of Groups and Sales, to gather data to confirm levels of activity so that we could be consistent in what we are calling our shoulder season for meetings and conferences.

Bob Bennett asked how much detail the Board would see in reports in the activity and tasks related to the new metrics Valerie indicated that behind each metric is an action plan for each staff member – and that Valerie has ongoing meetings with them to review the status of the action plans and the results. Sue Schmidt was asked to provide an example of her action plan. Sue explained that she hosts a hotel sales team meeting, which has met two times thus far and each time a sales/action plan is addressed. This gets the hotels to come to the table and discuss how we can collaboratively increase meetings and groups. Tools are also being developed like the Groups database designed with customer relations management in mind and tracking of results.

After further discussion, the board **approved the following Mission Statement and Performance Measurements for 2013/2014** on a motion by David Hutchings and a second by Mary Luckern; the motion passed unanimously. This will be posted to PARIS.

**Authority Mission Statement and Performance Measurements
Ontario County Four Seasons Local Development Corporation**

Public Authority’s Mission Statement: To create visitorship and economic vitality by marketing and developing the assets of Ontario County as a premier leisure and meetings destination.

Date: 05/01/13 – 9/30/14

Performance Area	Goal	Data Verification Source
Visitorship	Increase occupancy between November 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014 by 2%	STR Report
	Build Friendbase by 10% and engage visitors in the brand so they can retell the story – measured by interactions increase of 10% – social and PR.	FLVC database and stats
	Increase meetings (weekdays - year round) and 24/7 Shoulder season (May) and (September, October, November) by 5% over base number.	Base inventory for May 2013 September, October, November 2012
Economic Vitality	Increase sales tax revenue associated with tourism by 3% over 2012 numbers.	Tourism Economics Potential read from alignment with occupancy tax to sales tax ratios.
	Foster development of tourism product and inventory by developing, publicizing top product list. Advocate for products and programs which fill identified voids in assets to fulfill premier destination status.	Top Product List One new product developed, supported, etc.
Board/Org Stewardship	Ensure compliance and fiscal responsibility for assets of corporation by 100% conformance with PAAA	Audit

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT- Valerie noted that she is pleased with the support of the board when needed. She is interested in seeking change in the upcoming year from 2012-2013. Valerie would also like the board to help support FLVC at sponsored events to help represent Ontario County tourism; specifically see more engagement outside of their own community. Valerie displayed the overall results of the board self-evaluations which were tallied by an intern at FLVC. After reviewing the self-evaluations, Lois Kozlowski questioned the accuracy of the results due to the final numbers not being consistent. Valerie asked Holly Chaapel, Executive Assistant to the President, to re-evaluate the self-evaluations and get the accurate numbers to report back to the board.

OLD BUSINESS- Valerie reported that Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Seneca nation have come to an agreement after four years that racetrack-based casinos are no longer allowed to use the word “casino” when marketing their facilities. The word “Casino” needs to be changed back to the word “Gaming”. Steve Martin, Director at Finger Lakes Casino and Racetrack said that it will be a costly change; however New York State will help fund part of the costs. There are two other facilities in Western New York in the same situation.

NEW BUSINESS – Valerie stated that there are potential changes within the county government. Mary Luckern will not be running again for Town Supervisor of Geneva and Dan Marshall will not be running for Town Supervisor of South Bristol. Both have been strong proponents of tourism.

MARKETING REPORT – Sara Paduano, Marketing Manager, initiated the marketing report and asked AJ Shear for his PR report. AJ is working to raise FLVC’s profile on an economic and political level. AJ stated that it is important for FLVC to be seen as a resource for the Finger Lakes with regard to the economic messaging. FLVC is contracting with Dixon Schwabl for this purpose. The contract calls for feature stories of economic development in Ontario County, data messaging and centralizing the profile of Valerie as the tourism resource. AJ passed around his media win notebook, which highlights featured stories and mentions of Ontario County. AJ also spoke about an upcoming press conference (July 29 at Co. Road #12, South Bristol) that FLVC is partnering with the wine industry and Senator Ted O’Brien.

David Lee, Visitor Experience Manager, reported on golf marketing. David has been the point person for the special emphasis on golf this year. FLVC has hosted a variety of golf writers, developed golf packages and supported the promotion of golf at the Toronto Golf show. David shared a notebook of the PR wins that had been achieved to date through these efforts. FLVC has hosted a total of four golf travel journalists in the past two months, resulting in 16 media wins and an audience of 7.1 million readers. These articles highlighted the golf courses as well as the unique golf packages that were cooped for Spring golf in cooperation with Ravenwood, Bristol Harbour, and Holiday Inn Express.

Sara Paduano spoke about cooperative programming and the upcoming marketing day on September 12th. She stated that FLVC represents every entity in Ontario County and asked the board to look at the draft of programs and give feedback. She posed the question - What are we missing and what are your thoughts on the costs of the partnership programs? Bob Bennett asked why the cost of programs has increased. She noted that there are several new opportunities that we did not have in the past, and that the prices were two plus years old and the costs of production have gone up. Sara is also launching a college outreach program by August 1, 2013. This will involve the entire staff and the first outreach will be to St. John Fisher College. Each will be different, but the end goals are consistent for each program: friend-building, website links to us for information on the Finger Lakes, and group visitation opportunities, particularly in the off season.

EDUCATIONAL FOCUS- AJ Shear introduced Bob Hobday, Deputy Director of AWA Communications (The Antique Wireless Museum). Bob gave a mini presentation of AWA Communications noting that the museum is about 65 years old and they just moved locations from the old Bloomfield Academy to Rt. 5 and 20. They have completed phase one of their master plan. Bob stated that “AWA Communications is the best-kept secret of the Finger Lakes Region and currently has about 2000 international members.” The vision of the museum is to “preserve and share the history of technology used to communicate and entertain from the first telegram to today’s wireless text messaging.” AWA Communications is chartered by the New York State Department of Education. All funding to help develop the museum is raised through members and friends. Bob invited everyone to the museum’s grand re-opening and dedication on August 20 at 2:00 pm. Bob also offered to give a tour of the museum at the conclusion of the meeting.

ADJOURN – Mike Kauffman asked for a motion to adjourn. Dick Maltman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jessica Bacher, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am.

Minutes submitted by Holly Chaapel.