

**RICHMOND REGION TOURISM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022
THE DEPOT
ASHLAND, VA
NOON**

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

- A. Welcome: Chairman Dan Schmitt called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m., established a quorum and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Chairman Schmitt welcomed the group and introduced Mr. Josh Farrar, Town Manager, Town of Ashland who welcomed the group. Mr. Chris Stem, owner of The Depot also welcomed the group. Chairman Schmitt acknowledged the new staff members who were in attendance:
- Reed Patterson – joined RRT on May 9th as our Convention Services Manager. Reed graduated from Radford University and came to RRT from the YMCA of Greater Richmond.
 - Chase Gunn – started with RRT on July 18th as our Senior Creative Marketing Manager. Chase graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and came to RRT after running the national apparel brand for Sigma Phi Epsilon's National Fraternity.
 - Deanne Ralston –started with RRT on August 8th as our Community Relations Coordinator. Deanne graduated from VCU in 2012 with a Dual Degree and came to RRT from LenderSelect Mortgage Group. She has previously worked in events and hospitality much of her working career.
 - Casey Watson Armstrong– started with RRT on August 29th as a Destination Sales Manager. Casey graduated from Virginia Tech and came to RRT from the Linden Row Inn.
 - Destiny Fuller – started with RRT August 29th and is our new Sports Intern. She is a resident of Petersburg, VA and a graduate student at Virginia State University where she played a part on their women's basketball program for 2 years while studying sports & obtaining her bachelor's degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation. She is now working on earning her masters at Virginia State University in sport management.
- B. **MOTION Minutes**: The minutes from the July 14 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Perry Miller made a motion to adopt the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Todd Parnell. The vote passed.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Presentation – Kelly King Horne, Executive Director, Homeward “Trends in the Homeless Community in RVA” - Chairman Schmitt introduced Ms. Horne who has been with Homeward for 19+ years. Ms. Horne presented information to the group about the coordinated response to homelessness in our region. A copy of the presentation was distributed as well as recent data.
- B. **MOTION Governance Report**: Chairman Schmitt reported that Ms. Lisa Sims, Chair of the Governance Committee could not be present however her report includes a new appointment to the board to replace Rich Conti who termed off of the At Large Director seat which is appointed by the Museum Directors Association. A motion was made by Jim Holland to appoint Danielle Ripperton, Executive Director, Children’s Museum of Richmond, seconded by Ms. Nancy Thomas. The vote passed.

- C. President's Report: Mr. Jack Berry gave a personnel update and noted that we have one position of Public Relations Manager that remains vacant. The Executive Committee met earlier in the week and reviewed the Reserve Policy. The finances for FY22 will be complete soon with the audit being conducted in October. Approximately \$500,000 in savings from FY22 will be added back to reserves. Mr. Berry reported that finances are in great shape and that the staff is working with the Executive Committee to begin funding the reserves in the FY24 budget. A full presentation will be made on the FY24 budget as well as the new Reserves Policy at the December 1st meeting. Mr. Berry presented the market trends for July and noted that occupancy is up over 2019 levels but not above 2021 levels. Business travel is beginning to return as Capital One started back with business travel in August.
- D. **MOTION** Mission, Vision, Values Statements: Katherine O'Donnell presented the final mission, vision and values statements and noted that a few tweaks have been made since they were discussed in July. The board commended the staff for taking the lead to draft new statements. A motion was made by Nancy Thomas to approve the statements, seconded by Mr. Jim Holland. The vote passed. It was announced that Destinations International has asked Richmond Region Tourism to write a case study on our process for other destinations to follow.

III. **OLD BUSINESS & WRAP-UP:**

- A. Tourism Improvement Districts: Katherine O'Donnell updated the board on the progress being made. The TID Steering Committee has been reaching out directly to hotels to get the 51% or more (per jurisdiction) support needed for a TID to be created. Ms. O'Donnell reported out the percentages in each jurisdiction, but it is a work in progress and the group is feeling very comfortable so far. The draft TID plan will be completed in October, and a reception is being planned for November 1st where hotels will begin to sign petitions.
- C. Tourism Master Plan Initiatives: Mr. Berry distributed an article from *Richmond Bizsense* regarding the Richmond Coliseum and convention center hotel project. The Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority is heavily involved in the process along with the City of Richmond. On September 26th, the City is expected to award the property to the EDA from Richmond Redevelopment and Housing. Mr. J.C. Poma updated the board on the efforts surrounding workforce development and noted that partnerships are being formed with high schools and universities to launch a video series to assist with recruitment in our industry. Mr. Tom Loftus introduced Rosalie Morton and Jeff Wilson with Padilla Advertising Agency. Mr. Loftus reported that 13 proposals were received during the Inspiration Campaign process, and Richmond Region Tourism worked with ChamberRVA and the Greater Richmond Partnership to review all of the advertising agency candidates. Five finalists were selected, and Padilla was the overall final selection. Located in Manchester with 40 staff and locations in five other cities, the agency stated that this inspiration campaign will be a marquee project for them. Padilla was formerly known as Carter, Riley, Thomas or (CRT). The agency distributed blank notecards and asked the board to write down their favorite thing about the region, or things that make the region unique. The campaign, which will create a halo effect will also help with business and workforce and will be a campaign used for tourism but also for business recruitment.
- D. Pet Friendly Campaign/Video: Tom Loftus reported that the pet friendly campaign launched, and a new video was shared with the board.

E. Other Business: Chairman Schmitt referred to the September Board Report and local PR update that was emailed and distributed to the board. The floor opened to any roundtable announcements:

- Dominion Energy awarded BLK RVA a \$12,500 social justice grant
- Kings Dominion sponsored the Female Athlete of the Year and Richmond Raceway sponsored the Fan Voting Portal for the 2023 RVA Sports Awards
- Henrico Sports & Entertainment Authority officially established by the Henrico Board of Supervisors
- Restaurant staffing issues persist
- Economic development initiatives – Lego, Plenty, Civica
- Valor Awards December 1 – 100 Club
- Hanover Tavern Autumn Festival and 5K run September 24
- Squirrels playoffs and competition for most attendance
- New Diamond District announcement
- NASCAR dates for 2023 announced – April 1-2 and July 30
- Upcoming festivals – 2 Street, Folkfest
- Airport attendance up over last September; job fair
- Colonial Heights – Wayne Covil to do a story on Shepherd Stadium, Sept 24-25 Arts & Craft festival at Fort Clifton Park and Christmas Parade December 6 at 7pm
- Run Richmond 16.19
- Fall Line Trail
- Dominion Energy Share program – assisting over 9,000

Chairman Schmitt thanked the Depot venue as well as the Town of Ashland for hosting us. Upcoming events included the golf tournament on September 22nd. The next board of directors meeting will be immediately after the Valor Awards breakfast on December 1st at 10:15 a.m. at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Attendees:

Kathy Abbott, Town of Ashland
John Cario, Richmond Hilton Downtown
Pat Collins, TowneBank
Jim Holland, Chesterfield County
Lester Johnson, Mama J's Kitchen
Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Hanover County
Jen Kostyniuk, Dominion Energy
Jon Luginbill, Sports Backers
Perry Miller, Capital Region Airport Commission
Todd "Parney" Parnell, Richmond Flying Squirrels
Danielle Ripperton, Children's Museum of Richmond
Dan Schmitt, Henrico County
Nancy Thomas, Retail Merchants Association
Jennifer Wakefield, Greater Richmond Partnership
Lori Waran, Richmond Raceway

Guests Present

Josh Farrar, Town of Ashland
Kelly King Horne, Homeward
Doug Smith Colonial Heights
Dawn Miller, Henrico Sports Authority
Rosalie Morton, Padilla
Jeff Wilson, Padilla

Absent:

Neil Amin, Shamin Hotels
Brian Anderson, ChamberRVA
Bridgette Bywater, Kings Dominion
Greg Kochuba, Colonial Heights
Rita McClenny, Virginia Tourism Corp
Patricia Paige, New Kent County
Ellen Robertson, City of Richmond
Lisa Sims, Venture Richmond
Chris Tsui, EAT Restaurant Partners

Staff Present

Jack Berry
Katherine O'Donnell
Michelle Lovatt
Tom Loftus
Matt Robinette
J.C. Poma
Chase Gunn
Casey Armstrong
Destiny Fuller
Reed Patterson
Deanne Ralston