

**RICHMOND REGION TOURISM  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2025  
GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER  
10:00 A.M.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:**

- A. Chair Lisa Sims called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. and established a quorum.
- B. Welcome Remarks: Mr. Nate Harris, General Manager of the Greater Richmond Convention Center, opened with words of appreciation for Richmond Region Tourism (RRT). He noted the Convention Center's strong partnership with RRT, highlighted a record-breaking summer season, and expressed gratitude for the organization's role in driving regional success.

Mayor Danny Avula, City of Richmond, shared his excitement about the region's growth and momentum, emphasizing RRT's marketing efforts and collaboration across jurisdictions. He spoke enthusiastically about the opportunities for regional development in the years ahead.

Mr. Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond, introduced himself and reflected on his recent arrival from Atlanta. He emphasized tourism's central role in economic development, praised the region's unique advantages such as the James River and cultural assets, and expressed his eagerness to collaborate with partners across the region.

- C. Guest Introductions: Chair Sims welcomed several guests and a return board member to the meeting:

Ms. Michele McKinnon, General Counsel for RRT, McGuireWoods

Mr. Steve Halasz, Blue Room Research

Ms. Rachel Smith, Director of Tourism, Hanover County

Ms. Kathy Abbott, Town of Ashland (temporarily serving in place of Mayor Steve Trivett)

Ms. Bryonna Head, City of Richmond, Department of Economic Development

Ms. Cassandra Gilbertson, Ms. Deb Archer, and Ms. Jé-Vonna Sampson, MMGY NextFactor

**II. BOARD GOVERNANCE:**

- A. **MOTION Minutes**: The minutes from the July 17 meeting were reviewed. Ms. Renee Haltom motioned to accept the minutes which were seconded by Ms. Ellen Robertson. The vote passed unanimously.
- B. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws: Governance Committee Chair, Ms. Danielle Ripperton, provided an overview of the committee's recent work, assisted by members Mr. Paulin Cheatham and Mr. Perry Miller.

Ms. Michele McKinnon of McGuireWoods summarized the proposed updates:

- **Articles of Incorporation**: Cleaned language and updated provisions, including replacing the obsolete "Museum Directors Association" with board appointment authority, informed by recommendations from museum leaders.

- **Bylaws:** Modernized to reflect best practices and current statutes. Updates included:
  - Clarification of electronic meetings and notice requirements.
  - Board service limited to two consecutive three-year terms, with exceptions for officers.
  - Language revised to require—not just intend—that directors represent key community segments.
  - Addition of a Personnel Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Immediate Past Chair) to evaluate presidential compensation.
  - Formalization of a Governance Committee to recommend a slate of officers.
  - Addition of the Immediate Past Chair as an officer position.
  - Removal of the Finance and Audit Committee.
  - Budget deadline adjusted to align with current practice.

Questions were raised about whether “museums” should be broadened to “attractions.” The Governance Committee clarified that under the national definition, “museum” already includes museums, gardens, zoos, and other nonprofit cultural institutions.

**MOTION Articles of Incorporation:** Mr. Perry Miller motioned to approve the Articles as presented, which were seconded by Mr. Brian Bald. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION Bylaws:** Mr. Perry Miller motioned to approve the Bylaws as presented, which were seconded by Ms. Ellen Robertson. The motion passed unanimously.

### III. **ADJOURNMENT & STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION:**

- A. Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, Chair Sims called the meeting to adjourn at 10:32 AM.
- B. Strategic Planning Session: Following adjournment, MMGY NextFactor facilitated a strategic planning session with the RRT Board of Directors.

Attendees:

Kathy Abbott, Town of Ashland  
Brian Bald, Capital One  
Paulin Cheatham, Dominion Energy  
Susan Dibble, Hanover County  
Will Dixon, Sports Backers  
Renee Haltom, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond  
Rita McClenny, Virginia Tourism Corp  
Mark Miller, Chesterfield County  
Perry Miller, Richmond International Airport  
Danielle Ripperton, Children's Museum of Richmond  
Ellen Robertson, City of Richmond  
Dan Schmitt, Henrico County  
Jennifer Schofield, Kings Dominion  
Lisa Sims, Venture Richmond  
Jordan Stewart, New Kent County  
Nancy Thomas, InUnison  
Jennifer Wakefield, Greater Richmond Partnership  
Lori Waran, Richmond Raceway

Guests Present:

Deb Archer, MMGY NextFactor  
Mayor Avula, City of Richmond  
Odie Donald II, City of Richmond  
Kelly Franke, Town of Ashland  
Cassandra Gilbertson, MMGY NextFactor  
Steve Halasz, Blue Room Research  
Nate Harris, Greater Richmond Convention Center  
Bryonna Head, City of Richmond Economic Development  
Michele McKinnon, McGuireWoods  
Dawn Miller, Henrico Sports and Entertainment Authority  
Jé-Vonna Sampson, MMGY NextFactor  
Rachel Smith, Hanover County  
Amber Wallace, City of Colonial Heights

Staff Present:

Katherine O'Donnell  
Michelle Lovatt  
Jerrine Lee  
Matt Robinette  
Danielle Fitz-Hugh  
Tom Loftus  
Mike Kerr  
Grantland Steele

Absent:

Brian Anderson, ChamberRVA  
Neil Amin, Shamin Hotels  
John Cario, Richmond Hilton Downtown  
Greg Kochuba, Colonial Heights  
Michael Lindsey, Lindsey Food Group  
Mayush Mehta, JP Hospitality  
Todd "Parney" Parnell, Richmond Flying Squirrels