

**Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, February 20, 2020**

**8:00 a.m. Alton City Hall - Chambers**

**Present:** John Hopkins, Lauren Pattan, Kristi Hyten, Michael Barker, Karen Brncic, Brian Campbell, Kim Durr, Cameo Foster, JD Lorton, Mike McCormick, Dave Miller, Patty Rotermund, Doug Stotler and Erin Ventimiglia

**Absent:** Mitch Bair, Stacy Frierdich-Hinrichs, Tom Guarino, Sandy Hefner, Linda Jun, Cathy Luttrell and Cindy Warke

**Staff:** Brett Stawar, Barbara Strack and Stephanie Tate

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by John Hopkins.

**Opening remarks from Chairman:** John thanked everyone for making it to the meeting, with a special thanks to Kim Durr and Randy Pembroke at SIU-Edwardsville for helping to host our Tourism Summit on January 16, 2020. It was a huge success and had a positive effect on the 250 people who attended. Many good words were spoken to encourage and uplift the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau area of coverage.

**Board Minutes:** John asked the board to review the December board minutes. Dave Miller motioned to approve the December minutes. Mike McCormick seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

**Financial Statements:** John asked the board to review the December and January financial statements. Dave Miller made a motion to approve the December and January financials; seconded by Mike McCormick. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **STRATEGIC REPORT REVIEW:**

Brett did a quick overview of the strategic plan that was presented last month. He said one of the suggestions for the strategic plan is to form committees based on the different priorities, which include (1) Outreach, (2) Development, (3) Sports and Recreational Development and (4) Organizational Effectiveness. He would like 3-4 board members per committee to volunteer. If not, there could be committee assignments. An email will be sent to board members with descriptions of action plans for board members to review and volunteer. Another suggestion is to include hospitality in the strategic plan, but Brett said at this time we do not have the capacity to take on that big of a project. We will continue to keep it as a future goal but not include it in the strategic plan. Mike McCormick made the motion to approve the Strategic Plan. Brian Campbell seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **REPORT OF BUREAU ACTIVITIES:**

Brett said SIU-E was a great venue for the Tourism Summit because of the room capacity and equipment offered. Plans are underway to schedule it there again for next year.

The Bureau is working with the City of Alton to repair the retaining wall in the front of the building. It was hit in an automobile accident and the front entrance is blocked off until repairs are complete.

We have engaged the services of Jackson Lewis P.C. to review the employee handbook at an expense not to exceed \$1,500. They are supposed to have it complete by the end of the month.

The second stakeholder quarterly report will be distributed electronically by the end of February.

Alton Restaurant Week was a great success, with many great reports from our restaurateurs. We are evaluating a price increase to \$12 lunch/ \$30 dinner to accommodate rising costs. At the end of this month and through the first week of March, we are launching the first Collinsville Restaurant Week promotion with six participating restaurants.

The new 2020 Visitor Guide is in full distribution mode and being well received. We are examining a new approach for Visitor and Seasonal Guides, which will be semi-annual visitor guides to incorporate the spring/summer and fall/holiday seasons and the eagle guide.

We continue to work with Simpleview for the post launch of our new websites. Please look at our new website, RiversAndRoutes.com, and provide any feedback. We are launching VisitAlton in the next few weeks with a new bookable tour product and store.

We have hired a social media consultant to help us continue our growth while an employee is out of the office on maternity leave. She intends to return before Memorial Day.

We debuted the 3 Local Legends video series at the Summit, the Wildey Theatre, Catsup Bottle and Ariston Café. We are working on a Great Rivers Road segment that will be ready in the spring. All of these campaigns will be sponsored promotions in the coming weeks to get new travelers and raise the profile of our bureau and region.

American Cruise Lines and American Queen Steamboat Company both confirmed their shore excursion plans for their 2020 docking dates. ACL will feature a Historic Alton tour for every passenger before they board the ship. For passengers disembarking, they will have the option of taking tours of the Lewis & Clark sites, Grafton or an Alton hop-on/hop-off shuttle. ACSC will feature the Lewis & Clark sites and their Alton hop-on/hop-off shuttle route. They will also have one docking date in Grafton featuring 5 shuttle stops. Brett said many of these dockings will bring overnight stays, with 50% guaranteed to be in Madison County.

Board members were reminded to mark their calendars for our annual Tourism Rally on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, at Collinsville Aqua park. More details to come.

The Illinois Bike Tour 2020 will be June 7-12, 2020 with two overnights in Edwardsville and two in Alton/Godfrey. Half of the participants will do overnight tent camping and the other half will stay in hotels.

**General Announcement:**

Karen said that the Alton Marina made it on the cover of Quimby's 2020 Cruising Guide, which is the "Bible for the River" and has a complete listing of marinas and locks on the inland and gulf intercoastal waterways.

The next board meeting is set for Thursday, March 19.

**Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dave Miller and seconded by Michael Barker.

**Publications distributed:** Strategic plan

Respectfully submitted by,

Brett Stawar  
President/CEO

Kristi Hyten  
Secretary/Treasurer