

**Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting
Thursday, May 21, 2020**

8:00 a.m. via ZOOM

Present: John Hopkins, Lauren Pattan, Kristi Hyten, Mitch Bair, Michael Barker, Karen Brncic, Brian Campbell, Kim Durr, Cameo Foster, Stacy Frierdich-Hinrichs, Tom Guarino, Sandy Hefner, Linda Jun, JD Lorton, Cathy Luttrell, Mike McCormick, Dave Miller, Patty Rotermund, Erin Ventimiglia and Cindy Warke

Absent: Doug Stotler

Staff: Brett Stawar and Barbara Strack

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

Opening remarks from Chairman: John thanked everyone for being able to attend the board's first virtual meeting.

Opening remarks from President/CEO: Brett said with the COVID pandemic, the economy is not in good shape and tourism is on the forefront of taking the hit, along with many other industries. The State of Illinois cut off our grant funding for promotional campaigns through June 30 and we terminated five staff members, but the Tourism Bureau is still working hard and has switched gears to promoting health and safety in our area. We put together numerous videos with our partners that promote safety while keeping our attractions and our name out there. At the present time, the Visitor Center is closed and staff are working from home.

Board Minutes: John asked the board to review the February board minutes. Patty Rotermund motioned to approve the February minutes. Kim Durr seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Financial Statements: John asked the board to review the February, March and April financial statements. Dave Miller made a motion to approve the February, March and April financial statements; seconded by Cindy Warke. All members were in favor and the motion carried. Brett said we will have more revenue than expenses for FY 2020 since we stopped most promotional activities. He hopes to use that surplus towards the FY 2021 budget.

REPORT OF BUREAU ACTIVITIES: Brett said he is concerned about getting new Officers and Board Members whose seats are expiring June 30, until we can address the effects from COVID-19. There was a discussion on the seats opening up for renewal. Dave Miller made the motion to suspend Article 2 of the Bylaws with the purpose to extend all Officers and all Board Members whose seats expired June 30, 2020 for one year, beginning July 1. That means on June 30, 2021, there will be 14 board members who are up for renewal. Seven of them will be for a two-year term, and the other seven will be up for the regular three-year term. Mitch Bair seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Brett said he reached out to our landlords to see if they could do anything to help us out with our new lease agreement since we only have four staff (and Sara McGibany) that work at the new office building now. They have not responded yet.

Brett announced that the Illinois Office of Tourism hired a new director, Karla Flannery.

Brett said the Tourism Bureau is not eligible for the Payroll Protection Program because we are a 501c6 organization. ICCVB is lobbying to get CVB's included in the PPP program. Brett said we are looking at grant options through Great Lakes EDA and if there are any community block programs available.

Old Business: Brett said there has been a pause in the approval of the Handbook and the strategic committee assignments. He said we do have the committee assignments, but we will wait until we have a better idea of where tourism and our economic landscape lands.

General Announcement: Linda Jun said she returned from Washington D.C. last week, where over 1,000 motor coach buses gathered trying to draw awareness of the motor coach industry. She encouraged board members to send a letter to their local officials to help the motor coach industry during these perilous times.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Karen Brncic and seconded by Sandy Hefner.

Publications distributed: None

Respectfully submitted by,

Brett Stawar
President/CEO

Kristi Hyten
Secretary/Treasurer