

MINUTES

**VISIT VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 22, 2026 – 8:30am**

A meeting of the Visit VBR Board of Directors was held on Thursday, January 22nd 2026, at 8:30am at the Roanoke County Administration Building.

In Attendance:

Mark Lucas, Chair
Doug Blount, Treasurer
Allison Oakey
Bart Wilner
Chris Dorsey
Eric Sichau
Gary Larrowe
Chris Whitlow
Jim McAden
Mike Stewart
Randy Clements

Richard Caywood, Vice Chair
Kim Blair, Secretary
Lee Whilelm, Past Chair
Sam Lionberger
Whit Ellerman
Stephen Lemon
Sunny Shah
John Shaner
Ken Lanford
Mike Maxey
Annette Lewis

Ryan Bell
Valmarie Turner
David Robertson

John Carlin
Alexander Boone

Not In Attendance:

Ken Lanford
William Ferrell
Sherman Lea
Lucas Thorton

Susan Short
Peter Lewis
Jennifer Eddy

Staff:

Landon Howard, President

Cheryl Morales, Director of
Community Relations

Debora Wright, Senior Vice
President Chief Strategist
Danielle Hart, Office
Manager/Assistant to the
President

Other Attendees

Marc Nelson
Jeremy Holmes

Steve Sandy

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 8:40am.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Blount presented the financial report for December 2025. John Shaner made a motion to accept the financial report. Chris Whitlow seconded the motion. All agreed and the December 2025 financial report passed unanimously.

Review of Minutes:

Secretary Blair presented amended minutes from the 11/19/25 Board of Directors meeting. Lee Wilhelm made a motion to approve the minutes; John Shaner seconded the motion. All agreed and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Report:

Chair Lucas announced that 2025 was a record-breaking year for tourism in the region and shared the confidential news that the 100th Anniversary of the Outdoor Writers Association of America Annual Conference would be held in Roanoke in August of 2027.

Bylaws Revision: Chair Lucas introduced Mike Hertz, appointed corporate attorney, from Woods Rogers. Hertz briefly discussed the changes made to the bylaws that were included in board packets, including changes to board size range, chair limits, and quorum increases. Valmarie Turner raised questions about the size range and chair term limits, expressed her disagreement with these two changes as well as concerns about locality representation. Mike Hertz explained that the size range was altered in relation to required members specified in the bylaws. President Howard also clarified that Board size would reduce the following year due to attrition.

Eric Sichau shared that he appreciated the Roanoke Regional Chamber's position on the Board to represent business interests but that there needed to be continued support from business in the room beyond locality representation. President Howard spoke to the need for private industry support to grow the tourism industry in the region and that industry representation would foster this. Lee Wilhem also spoke up in support of the need for this representation and provided historical context for early Board formation.

Chair Lucas requested a motion to vote on the proposed bylaw amendments. Lee Wilhem made the motion, and John Carlin seconded it. The motion passed with Valmarie Turner voting nay, and all other members voting yay.

IRONMAN Event: Chair Lucas introduced Dr. Randy Clements to speak about a potential opportunity with the IRONMAN event for 2027. Dr. Clements shared that Roanoke is one of several potential locations in the region being considered for the July 2027 IRONMAN event and gave an overview of the requirements of the host city. This included venue requirements, licensing fees and other costs, and other services that would need to be provided. Board members discussed the IRONMAN event previously held in the region and raised questions about the costs and ROI of the proposed event, as well as regional capacity as it relates to venues and course availability. VVBR Chief Strategist Vice President Debora Wright shared that VVBR is also trying to extend their contract with USA Cycling to include 2027 and 2028 and is now beginning to plan to host OWAA in 2027. Valmarie Turner shared that the City of Roanoke was potentially in support of bringing IRONMAN back to the region but would need more details

prior to committing. Board members and VVBR staff agreed more discussion was needed before committing to this.

Transportation Update: Chair Lucas introduced Jeremy Holmes from the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC). Holmes presented on the work that RVARC does in the area, particularly the work done through Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO). As a part of the regional commission, the RVTPO advocates for and allocates federal and state funds for regional level transportation projects. Holmes spoke about the TPO's work as it relates to projects that could impact tourism such as the Greenway network, airport expansion, improvements for Route 220. Both Eric Sichau and Mike Stewart spoke up in support of the work that Holmes and the TPO are doing, and spoke for the need for continued alignment of groups such as the TPO and VBR to further regional collaboration and success on projects.

President's Report:

President Howard provided a brief overview of KPIs and lodging data for the 2025 year, demonstrating the strong regional growth that occurred in the last 12 months. Due to the length of presentations, Board Members were encouraged to review the data provided in their packets and to reach out to President Howard with any questions or comments about this information.

New Business:

No new business was raised during this meeting.

Adjournment:

With no other business to be conducted, Chair Lucas thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. Alexander Boone made a motion for the meeting to adjourn, and Mike Maxey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

Kim Blair

Kim Blair (Mar 27, 2026 12:31:46 EDT)

03/27/26







012226 VVBR Board Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report

2026-03-27

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