

MINUTES

**VISIT VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

November 19, 2025 – 9:30am

A meeting of the Visit VBR Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, November 19 2025, at 9:30am at the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In Attendance:

Mark Lucas, Chair
Doug Blount, Treasurer
Allison Oakey
Jennifer Eddy
Gary Larrowe
Eric Sichau
Ken Lanford
Bart Wilner
Jim McAden
Ryan Bell
Mike Stewart
Randy Clements

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

Susan Short

Not In Attendance:

James Smith
Whit Ellerman
Sherman Lea
Lucas Thorton
Chris Whitlow

Valmarie Turner
Chris Dorsey
William Farrell
Peter Lewis
David Robertson

Staff:	Landon Howard, President	Debora Wright, Senior Vice President Chief Strategist
	David Aldridge, VP of Marketing (Virtual)	Kathryn Lucas, Director of PR
	Cheryl Morales, Director of Community Relations	Danielle Hart, Office Manager/Assistant to the President
Other Attendees	Marc Nelson	

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 9:38am.

Treasurer’s Report:

Treasurer Blount presented the financial report for October 2025. John Shaner made a motion to accept the financial report. Sunny Shah seconded the motion. All agreed and the October 2025 financial report passed unanimously.

Review of Minutes:

Secretary Blair presented amended minutes from the 9/26/25 Board of Directors meeting. Bart Wilner made a motion to approve the minutes; Lee Wilhelm seconded the motion. All agreed and the motion passed unanimously.

President’s Report:

President Howard gave an overview of KPIs for October 2025. He noted that room demand and revenue are still trending upwards for the region and in comparison, to competitor markets. Despite lower demand for short term rentals, revenue is still trending upwards overall. Senior Vice President Chief Strategist Debora Wright gave an overview of some of the on-going initiatives, including the 2025 Holiday Marketing Campaign. She also recapped the recent Research Summit in which VVBR staff presented year end tourism data and discussed how VVBR measures success as it relates to KPIs and economic impact data. Kathryn Lucas, Director of Public Relations, provided updates from the October Metro Mountain Media Tour, including information on the feature articles already secured because of this media tour. She also shared that VVBR is pursuing the OWAA 2027 Conference, which would bring in over 300 attendees, including outdoor writers and outdoor brands, that could present incredible opportunities for continued exposure. Bart Wilner commented that he had friends from out of town who planned a trip to the Blue Ridge Region because they saw the area featured in travel articles and spoke to the effectiveness of this work.

Old Business – 2025-2029 Strategic Action Plan:

Chair Lucas spoke about meeting format feedback received and that Board Meetings would try to shift more towards a ‘working meeting’ style, particularly in regards to the Board Strategic Plan. Chair Lucas started by discussing the possibility of starting various special task forces as it relates to items in the Board Strategic Plan, particularly

Transportation and Sports. Many members spoke up regarding this subject and expressed interest in being a part of these task forces. Mike Stewart spoke up regarding the airport's recent performance and how passenger flight numbers are breaking records. The airport is looking to expand as possible and hopes to continue expanding flight offerings as well as a physical expansion. Eric Sichau spoke up as well and noted that RVARC has a transportation focused committee and inquired about the possibility of combining efforts.

Many members were also very interested in the Sports Task Force, particularly as it related to any potential new facilities development. John Shaner noted that Salem was conducting a feasibility study about the Salem Civic Center and any potential upgrades/new construction.

Lucas requested that anyone interested in either task force reach out to him via email so that they could begin organizing these groups.

Finally, Debora Wright spoke to the Destination Alignment Plan with the Roanoke Regional Partnership as it related to the Board Strategic Plan and shared that progress is continuing to move along. The brand kit and messaging are in the final stages of review, and the hope is that this provides a unified message so that economic development and tourism can begin melding their efforts. A key focus of this plan is to keep both residents and visitor's needs in mind. More will be shared as this plan is finalized.

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 and the meeting was adjourned at 10:34am.

Kimberly P. Blair

Kimberly P. Blair

Kimberly P. Blair (Jan 20, 2026 13:56:58 EST)

01/20/26







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Final Audit Report

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