



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

## Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting August 11th, 2017

Present: Amy Todisco, Rosemarie White, Peter MacLaren, Lori Klein, June Anderson, Jack Sharry, Roger Nishi. Also ED Jasmine Bigelow. Ted Fisher, and Jim Tabor joined during the meeting.

Apologies: Brad Long.

The Board meeting was called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:09 a.m. in the Board Room of the new Mad River Taste Place.

A quorum of 7 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair.

### Minutes of prior meetings:

1. Moved by Peter that the minutes of the July 14th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by June. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website.

### Action Item updates:

1. Kiosks: Discussions have started with Jackson Whelan on making the small changes needed. The ED is researching the best way for other members interested in having kiosks to purchase the stands. Members interested include the Wilder Farm Inn, the Warren Lodge and the soon to be renovated Garrison Lodge. The ED has a contact that may have some surplus suitable stands and iPads at an attractive price. **Action: Jasmine.**
  2. Coffee Morning. Next one will be in October. Still looking for all members to suggest speakers. **Action: All**
  3. The MRV Gardeners have volunteered to look after the gardens adjacent to our new Visitor Center. **Item closed.** (Noted that the outside drain needs to be fixed. The ED will follow up with the landlord.)
- Open items are listed at end of the minutes. Other items were dealt with during the meeting.

### Financial Report:

1. Karen has now inputted all the current data, but there are still some tweaks required on item classifications. A final report is very close.
2. The \$8k discrepancy that had been reported was prepaid dues from 2015-16 that should have been carried forward to 2016-17, so current dues income is \$8k higher. However overall dues revenue after this correction are about \$10k below budget. The ED will prepare a change report to show how things have changed relative to budget. **Action: Jasmine**
3. A/R of about \$7k still has to be collected by the end of August or written off. Much of this A/R appears to result from an invoicing problem, in that the Freshbooks invoices show the current amount due but not prior amounts. As a result much of the A/R is from members who current period dues are paid, but who do not realize that prior period invoices have not been paid. The Treasurer and ED will address the final collections on an urgent basis, and ask for help from others as needed. They will also see what can be done to fix this anomaly in Freshbooks. **Action: Jasmine & Rosemarie**
4. Expenses are considerably down relative to budget so our cash position is strong.
5. Given the cleaned up financials and updated process for keeping reporting up to date should be both easier ongoing. Karen will continue to help ongoing.

### **Membership Update:**

1. Increasing membership will be a key priority for the coming year. All Board members are asked to help. **Action: All**
2. The ED will be finalizing a new member packet that can be used to inform prospects of the benefits of membership. **Action: Membership Task Team**
3. The ED recommends that we keep the dues structure as is for the coming year as there is not time to fully design a new approach before the start of the fiscal year on September 1st.
4. The Membership Task Team will work on a new approach including tiered membership and other dues changes for the subsequent year. **Action: Membership Task Team**
5. The ED recommends that MRV-ME be retained for the coming year, however with a 50/50 split between event support and marketing. Also all applicants for MRV-ME grants will need to be Chamber members. The ED is researching additional incentives for members to contribute to MRV-ME. **Action: Jasmine**
6. Moved by Peter that we accept the recommendation from the ED on dues structure and MRV-ME for the coming fiscal year. Seconded Rosemarie. Carried.
7. The ED is working on the overall value proposition for members. Her assessment is that the key need is to much more clearly articulate the benefits already in place, including website referral metrics, leverage from Facebook posts, visitor referrals from the new and improved visitor center, etc. Amy will expand on this critical topic in her presentation at the Annual Meeting. **Action: Jasmine & Amy**
8. Another item planned for the coming year is more workshops to help members get the most from their presence on the MRV website, posting events, and getting mentions on our Facebook page. **Action: Jasmine**
9. All of these items will be incorporated in the membership package/talking points that can be used in promoting the Chamber to new members. Jack offered to help crafting the messages. **Action: Jack with Membership Task Team**
10. The ED requested that all members continue to offer ideas for improving the value proposition for members. **Action: All**

### **Operations Report:**

1. The ED reported that the new Visitor Center is looking good, however it is still a work in progress. As such she recommends that we defer the official opening with invited media etc. until after foliage when we can present a center that has everything in place.
2. It has been possible to be open from Wednesday through Sunday as planned, with help from Board members and volunteers.
3. It is urgent that the volunteer program be ramped up under the direction of the new Office Coordinator to provide consistent coverage and minimize the time our staff spends talking to visitors, so that they can focus on adding value for our members! At the same time the ED has learned a lot over the past few weeks hearing what visitors are asking about and looking for.
4. Of interest is that the Visitor Center is busier in the mornings, presumably as visitors are arriving in the Valley. There is also now a Visitors Book to help us track where visitors are from. Suggested that we try to encourage visitors to include their email address.
5. Quotes are coming in for signage, including a new canopy. It appears that a new metal framework for the canopy will be required as well. The ED will check with the landlord to see if they are prepared to cover some of the cost of the structure, as it is part of the building. **Action: Jasmine**
6. Still need a bistro table for the visitor area.
7. Big news! Jasmine has hired our "Member Services Coordinator" who will have the roles of member interaction, office manager and volunteer coordinator. After interviewing several applicants for the position one candidate was outstanding: Ginger Berkelhamer. Ginger has been in the valley for three years and owned a second home here for many years before that. She has a background in Marketing & Sales. Interestingly her husband is the new ED for MRV TV. She will be starting immediately, working for all or part of 4 days per week, being Monday PM, all day Tuesday, Thursday AM and all day Friday (except over lunch). Jasmine will be in the office Monday though Thursday.

### **Branding for the Valley:**

1. The ED has been working with the MRVPD staff and others on the proposal for the evolved MRV logo, which it is hoped that all organizations and towns in the Valley will adopt.
2. The design builds on the existing MRV Chamber logo and maintains the colors and shapes, but has a more solid design with a more clearly defined winding river running across it.
3. The Board members unanimously supported the new logo design, and encouraged the ED to continue working with the others involved to finalize an overall approach and for the various words, fonts etc. that will be used for its various purposes. **Action: Jasmine**
4. It was suggested that the best approach for working with the Valley towns on encouraging them to adopt the new logo would be through the MRVPD.
5. The intent for Chamber use will be to continue to use our tag line of “Come for the Mountains, stay for the Valley”, with variations like “Come for the beer, stay for the Valley”, etc.

### **Website Project:**

1. Following several conversations with web developers, the ED recommends that we take two-step approach.
2. Step 1 will be to address the small number of key improvements to the home page and main landing pages that have been identified as offering significant improvements to the visitor experience, while being easy and fast to do. We will ask Jackson Whelan to address these updates as soon as possible. **Action: Website Task Team**
3. Step 2 will be to prepare an RFP for the design of a new fresh set of page designs that will pull in most of the existing content but present everything in an up-to-date and more effective/attractive way. This redesign has been facilitated by the move of the existing website to the open source WordPress base that we completed last summer. The ED will take the lead on preparing the RFP, probably after the Annual Meeting. **Action: Jasmine**

### **Annual Meeting:**

1. The details of the package to be sent to all members were agreed by the Executive Committee, finalized by the ED, and emailed to all members on August 7th, meeting the 30 days notice required by the bylaws.
2. The theme will be based on our “On the Move” message.
3. Ongoing communication to members will take place over the coming weeks to encourage as high an attendance as possible on Thursday September 7th. This will include a “pre-story” in the Valley Reporter prior to the meeting as well as a follow up article the week after. Jack will assist the ED to finalize this material. **Action: Jack**
4. Help will be needed at the meeting, in particular as Ginger has already planned vacation that week. June and Rosemarie volunteered to help with set up and sign in, and Roger, Peter Lori & Amy volunteered to help with clean up etc. **Action: June, Rosemarie, Roger, Peter Lori & Amy**
5. All Board members are asked to review their bios and provide any updates to the ED. **Action: All**
6. A draft budget has been prepared and included in the package. It will be refined by the ED and the Treasurer prior to the Annual Meeting, and emailed to all Board members for electronic approval. **Action: Rosemarie and Jasmine**
7. The 2017-18 work plan, building on the Strategic Plan, is being prepared in more detail for presentation at the meeting by the ED. **Action: Jasmine**

### **Other Business:**

1. The ED has started discussions with Mt Mansfield Video to get quotes on a 2 minute version, and other 1 minute segments, derived from the “Almost There” video and associated B-Roll, as well as seeing if we can have ongoing access to the B-Roll.
2. The ED will discuss with Robin Morris to see if we can use the Boardroom at the Taste Place for our ongoing Board meetings. If so, we will continue to hold these at 11AM each month on the 2nd Friday. One detail to be checked is the possible use of a conference phone. **Action: Jasmine**
3. The upcoming mixer on Tuesday August 15th hosted by the Northfield Savings Band at The Taste Place requires RSVPs. The ED will send out another reminder.

**Adjournment:**

1. Moved by Roger, seconded by Lori. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

1. We will hold a brief Board meeting prior to the Annual Meeting at 3PM on Thursday September 7th at the Big Red Barn at Lareau Farm.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

**Held over Action Items:**

1. Continue dialog with LCRCC Chamber. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. Remains open. **Action: Board Members**
3. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
4. Personal Interaction with members. **Action: ALL**
5. Valley Vitality Fund: **Deferred**
6. Research other organizations' approach to naming. **Action: Jasmine**
7. Email ED with name suggestions. **Action: All**
8. Arrange meeting of invited members to discuss naming. **Action: Jasmine**

**New Action Items:**

9. Kiosks next steps: **Action: Jasmine**
10. Suggested speakers for Coffee Mornings. **Action: All**
11. Financial report and associated change analysis. **Action Jasmine**
12. A/R follow up and closure by end August. **Action: Rosemarie & Jasmine**
13. Encouraging new members to join. **Action: All**
14. Membership benefits packet. **Action: Membership Task Team**
15. New Dues approach. **Membership Task Team**
16. MRV-ME incentives. **Action: Jasmine**
17. Expanded Value Proposition for members: **Action: Jasmine & Amy**
18. Website, Event and FB training workshops. **Action: Jasmine**
19. Membership package/talking points. **Action: Jack with Membership Task Team**
20. Ideas for improving the value proposition. **Action: All**
21. Continue work on signage. **Action: Jasmine**
22. Branding for the Valley. **Action: Jasmine**
23. Current website improvements. **Action: Website Task Team**
24. Website RFP. **Action: Jasmine**
25. Articles for VR etc. before and after Annual Meeting. **Action: Jack**
26. Help at Annual Meeting. **Action: June, Rosemarie, Roger, Peter Lori & Amy**
27. Review and update bios as necessary. **Action: All**
28. Finalize budget and send to Board for electronic approval. **Action: Rosemarie and Jasmine**
29. 2017-18 work plan. **Action: Jasmine**
30. Use of Taste Place Board Room for our Board meetings. **Action: Jasmine**