



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

## Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting January 13th, 2017

Present: Amy Todisco, Peter MacLaren, Lori Klein, Brad Long, Ted Fisher, Jim Tabor, Roger Nishi, Rosemarie White, with June Anderson and Jack Sharry by phone. Also ED Jasmine Bigelow.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:04 a.m.

A quorum of 10 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair.

### Minutes of December 9th meeting:

1. Moved by Jim that the minutes of the December 9th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by Brad. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website.

### Action Item updates:

1. Stowe Auto Show: Jasmine still to follow up to address the current possibilities. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Web Cam at Warren Store: No immediate action planned. **Open**
3. Kiosks: Have been pulled in for troubleshooting. **Action: Roger**
4. Website page about Stars: Done. **Closed.**
5. Banner protocol: Still open but does not seem to be a current issue. However TD bank has raised questions about insurance as posts are on their land. Noted that Llyle currently installs banner on behalf of the Chamber when needed and he is insured via WCVT. Left open for further review as required. **Open.**
6. The Bridges: Resolved for current year through a one time special arrangement for a reduced rate and balance in trade, including day passes etc. **Closed.**
7. Top Gas/Travel "I": Jack talked to Andy Cunningham of Warren Select Board. They are open to our continued use for the Travel "I" but they will not provide any maintenance (although they do plow in winter). One suggestion is that the Rotary might take on maintenance. Peter noted that despite Andy's comments, subsequent to Jack's discussion the whole area was weeded and the grass was cut before the snow. To be reviewed again in the spring. **Open.**

### Sugarbush Update:

1. "Friendly Gathering" music festival coming to Sugarbush Mt Ellen from 29th June to 1st July. 3500 people are expected, primarily in the 21 to 34 age group, and from prior events are expected to be a respectful crowd. There will be camping and event is expected to provide business for local lodging and restaurants. Noted that the organizers are responsible for all logistics and no related issues are expected. Ted requested a letter of support from the Chamber, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: Jasmine.**
2. VIMBA will be back on July 20th to 22nd, and they may also come back in 2018.
3. Sugarbush are continuing to look into developing Mt Ellen for summer activities.

### Website update:

1. Brad and Peter have reviewed the current website content and prepared a report that Jasmine will be reviewing, addressing both immediate improvements and opportunities and longer term redesign. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Several of the immediately identified problems have been fixed by Peter and Jackson. Jackson is continuing to provide support for "clean-up" items under the initial contract.
3. Noted the link to Lake Champlain Chamber website appears broken. Peter to investigate. **Action: Peter**

4. There has been some dialog with Darlene who expressed interest in being involved with the next steps for the website. Jasmine has written to her to advise that no decisions will be taken until the future direction of the website is decided as part of the strategic review.

#### **Financial Report:**

1. Work continues to get the books fully organized. Stephanie is working on it, and Michele Eid will be providing some paid for support.
2. Currently 50 members have significantly outstanding dues, however as 34 of these have not even opened the emailed invoice from Freshbooks much of the issue is likely simply communications. Stephanie is calling each relevant member directly.
3. The Treasurer will provide a full report as soon as everything is up to date. **Action: Rosemarie**

#### **Membership Report:**

1. "Sell my Timeshare now", a relator focusing on timeshares, has listings in Waitsfield and would like to be a Chamber member even though they are not physically located here. The Board saw no issues and gave approval to Jasmine to determine appropriate dues and sign them up. **Action: Jasmine**

#### **MRV-ME Grants:**

1. The votes are in and Jasmine analyzed, with some technical help from Peter. Only four applications were received and all received awards that have been decided by Jasmine as follows:
  - a. Valley Arts Foundation: \$2,750
  - b. Green Mountain Stage Race: \$5,500
  - c. Mad Marathon: \$6,750
  - d. Hartshorn Farm Food Festivals: \$1,000
2. The total of \$16k fits the budgeted amount, which also corresponds to the amount collected or committed by MRV-ME contributors. Jasmine recommended that we live with that number this year and recognize that the MRV-ME funding approach for events needs a major review for subsequent years in the context of our strategic plan.
3. Jasmine will follow up with all recipients to explain the background to the level of this year's awards. **Action: Jasmine**

#### **Strategic Planning:**

1. Jasmine has met with or spoken to a large number of members and other key stakeholders. She invited Board members to identify others who might have relevant input to the process. **Action: Board Members**
2. Jasmine is reviewing all the input and will collate into a draft plan for review by the Board.
3. The intent will be to have a rolling 3 year plan, updated annually, accompanied by an 18 month Operating Plan for the immediate timeframe then an annual Operating Plan ongoing.
4. The plan needs to be based on realism of what we can accomplish with present resources, while leaving open the potential for an expanded role in the future.
5. Current intent is to have the draft ready for review by the Board at the March Board Meeting. **Action: Jasmine.**
6. Discussed that we need to keep our members and the Valley in general informed about the process and progress. Suggested that we coordinate a series of "My Views" and letters from Board members and other stakeholders for the Valley Reporter over the coming weeks, as well as using the page set aside for Chamber news. Also possibly using other channels. Jasmine will coordinate. **Action: Jasmine**
7. Discussed that the communications content needs to include some substance and not just appear as yet another "plan for a plan"

#### **ED Report:**

1. Emails to members will of course continue. Suggested that the bios of Board members might be included in some fashion, e.g. one or two highlighted each time. (Peter pointed out that these are all on our website, although probably hard to find.) **Action: Jasmine**
2. Coffee Mornings with the ED are continuing the 1st Tuesday of each month. Board Members are also welcome, and ideally "bring (or send) a friend"! **Action: Board Members**

3. Member mixers are also a forum for providing brief updates to members. Looking forward to unique “Moving Mixer”.
4. Feedback form Community Vitality Project (CVP) is that they recognize the need to align with the other key organizations in the Valley, including the Chamber, particularly with regard to consistent approaches to branding and marketing etc.
5. Suggested to Jasmine the she talk with Karen Nevin at Revitalize Waterbury to exchange ideas. **Action: Jasmine**

**Other Business:**

1. A continuing challenge is visibility of the area – i.e. the Mad River Valley and navigation in the area when people are here. (Secretary’s note: this is a topic that is in the scope of the CVP as well.) One specific point is that at present there is no coordination or useful cross-linking with the Town’s websites, particular the new Waitsfield website. Left for Jasmine to consider as appropriate.
2. Dave Hartshorn and Amy will be going to the NY Travel Show January 26th, 27th & 28th to represent the MRV. Are looking for Lodging certificates or other giveaways to help with the promotion. Amy will review overall strategy with Jasmine. **Action: Amy & Jasmine**

**Adjournment:**

1. Moved by Lori, seconded by Jim. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.

**Next Meetings:**

1. The next Board meeting will be on Friday February 10th at 11 a.m. at the General Wait House.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

**Action Item Summary:**

1. Stowe Auto Show. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Kiosks: **Roger**
3. Banner Protocol: **Open**
4. Top Gas area maintenance: **Open**
5. Friendly Gathering letter of support: **Action: Jasmine**
6. Website review next steps: **Action: Jasmine**
7. Check Lake Champlain website link. **Action: Peter**
8. Treasurer’s report as soon as possible: **Action Rosemarie**
9. Follow up with “Sell my Timeshare now”: **Action: Jasmine**
10. Briefing MRV-ME Award recipients: **Action: Jasmine**
11. Strategic Planning contact suggestions: **Action: Board Members**
12. Strategic Plan draft for March Board meeting: **Action: Jasmine**
13. Strategic Plan communications coordination: **Action: Jasmine**
14. Member newsletters, Board bios: **Action: Jasmine**
15. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings: **Action: Board Members**
16. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin: **Action: Jasmine**
17. NY Travel Show strategy: **Action: Amy & Jasmine**