



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

## Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting November 10th, 2017

Present: Amy Todisco, Peter MacLaren, Lori Klein, June Anderson, Jack Sharry, Jim Tabor, Brad Long.  
Also ED Jasmine Bigelow.

Apologies: Roger Nishi, Ted Fisher

The Board meeting was called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:11 a.m. in the Board Room at The Mad River Taste Place. Amy expressed our thanks to the Taste Place for offering to host our Board meetings ongoing.

A quorum of 7 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair. (Noted that June and Jim left the meeting at about 1 p.m. A quorum of 5 Directors continued until adjournment.)

### Minutes of prior meetings:

1. Moved by Jim that the minutes of the September 7th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by Lori. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website. (Note that we did not hold an October meeting.)

### Action Items noted at end of minutes.

### Financial Report:

1. September & October reports were presented.
2. Ongoing, Ginger will handle day-to-day transactions and put paper work into a folder. Karen Pearson will be coming in at the beginning of each month to make all entries into QuickBooks, which should eliminate any ongoing problems with classification etc. The monthly cost for Karen's help will be moderate.
3. We will start to manage payroll internally (currently managed by Hall & Holden) starting in January, which will save us about \$80 per month.
4. At the end of each fiscal year we will continue to send the books to Hall & Holden to prepare tax filing.
5. We will move to the new version of QuickBooks, which will allow us to handle invoices from QB, starting with the next fiscal year. This change will save us about \$350 per year for FreshBooks, currently used for invoicing, and significantly simplify ongoing reporting, which is currently complicated by need the need to reconcile QB and FreshBooks.
6. Reporting categories will be streamlined to align the budget with QuickBooks.
7. Credit Card processing is being reviewed to see if we can save on processing costs.
8. Still some A/R to be resolved from last year, with most of the \$ amount due from one member. The Board agreed with the ED's proposal to try to work out a payment plan. All A/R will be closed out in the books in the next two weeks.
9. Ginger is continuing to follow up on current dues.
10. MRV-ME total billing was \$20k, which will be offset by \$2k from members exiting the program, so we should end up with \$18k, i.e. \$9k for events and \$9k towards marketing,

### Membership:

1. We have attracted 6 new members with total annual dues around \$2,360.
2. We have lost 4 members with total dues of around \$1,400.
3. Membership/Dues Task Team will be tackling the dues planning over the coming months, and the Task Team is considering bringing in expert outside help. The firm objective is to have the new structure in place for the next fiscal year. **Action: Membership/Dues Task Team**
4. An idea to save some cost is to replace the current membership stickers with an online fulfillment process, with rotating colors each year.

5. We need a clear and easy to understand presentation of member benefits. Jack, Amy and Ginger have been working on this aspect. The associated Chamber pages on the website have been updated, and all Board members are asked to provide feedback to the ED ASAP. **Action: All Board members.**
6. The ED will work on improving the overall presentation on the website. **Action: Jasmine**
7. Noted that organizations and non-profits that are members receive benefits applicable to the organization, but these do not extend to members of that organization unless they are direct members of the Chamber.
8. Some discussion about how to encourage non-business residents and second homeowners to become individual members.
9. Some discussion is that a gap in our membership is that many restaurants in the MRV are not members. A problem for these restaurants, Lodging members and Valley guests, is that there is little communication about opening days & dates, specials and other updates. Work is needed on a value proposition to encourage all restaurants to join.
10. The “Join the Chamber” page on the website will also be updated.
11. Via newsletters and other announcements the ED will let members know we are focusing more of our effort on marketing our members and the Valley.
12. Some discussion on how to manage the MRV Calendar. The Calendar is currently open to everyone to post events, as a result of the commitment made following the EV workshops to provide this service for the Valley. However it was noted that due to lack of promotion over the last year the use of the calendar has diminished significantly since its launch. Agreed that we will work to promote the value of the calendar during the coming year, and possibly in future consider limit access for posting to it with no charge to just members, as a member benefit, with a nominal charge for others. Some Board members expressed concern that a fee approach might diminish the value of the Calendar. For now we will flag on the website that we may change the policy in the future, and in the meantime work to promote the value of the calendar to everyone in the Valley. **Action: Jasmine**
13. For Social Media, proposed by Lori that only material relating to members should be posted to/promoted on our social media feeds. Seconded by Jim. Carried unanimously.
14. Following receipt of the feedback on member benefits from Board members as noted above, the ED will work with the Dues/Membership Task Team to prepare an easy to read and nicely presented member benefits package ready for the next meeting, intended to make it easier to recruit new members. **Action: Jasmine**
15. As a next step the Board will work on developing a target list of potential members. **Action: next meeting**

#### **Other updates:**

1. The winter edition of Vermont Life covered the Mad River Taste Place.
2. The November edition of Business People covered Ginger’s appointment.
3. The draft of the Marketing Plan will be sent by the ED to the Executive Committee for review within the next two weeks, then reviewed at the next Board meeting. **Action: Jasmine**
4. In response to the Newsletter, two additional ideas were submitted for workshops. The intent is to get started in the immediate future, by holding at least one workshop per month. Jasmine volunteered to be the presenter at some of them, where she has relevant expertise. **Action: Marketing Task Team**
5. The ED reported that BedandBrew has been discontinued for now due to lack of interest from visitors.
6. Ski the Valley has been put on hold for the coming year as the change to RFID by Sugarbush, not useable at MRG, and pricing changes at both ski areas made it impractical. The ED will work with both SB and MRG to come up with new and improved ideas for the 2018/2019 season. **Action: Jasmine.**
7. Suggested that one focus for communications, e.g. in My View articles in the VR, should be on the leadership that the Chamber is providing on moving the yardsticks in the MRV. **Action: Jasmine & Jack**

#### **Website:**

1. The immediate fixes to the current website have been completed by Jackson Whelan.
2. The RFP for the new website will be sent out next week. Responses will be reviewed by the ED with support from the Website Task Team. **Action: Jasmine, Peter & Brad**

**Task Teams:**

1. The following were agreed:
  - a. Membership/Dues: Amy, June and Lori
  - b. Marketing, including Business Workshops: Roger, Jim & Jack
  - c. Website: Brad, Peter & Ted
  - d. Communications: Jack

**Adjournment:**

1. Moved by Peter seconded by Amy. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:20 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

1. The next meeting will be on Friday December 8th at 11:00 a.m. at the Mad River Taste Place Board Room.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

**Open Action Items (not closed or discussed at this meeting):**

1. Continue dialog with LCRCC Chamber. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
3. Valley Vitality Fund: **Deferred**
4. Research other organizations' approach to naming and arrange meeting of invited members to discuss naming. **Action: Jasmine**
5. 2017-18 work plan. **Action: Jasmine**
6. Kiosks next steps. **Action: Jasmine**
7. Signage & Branding. **Action: Jasmine**

**New Action items:**

1. Dues planning to have new structure in place for the next fiscal year. **Action: Membership/Dues Task Team**
2. Member benefits updates on website, feedback to the ED ASAP. **Action: All Board members.**
3. Member benefits presentation, and associated Join the Chamber page etc., improved on the website. **Action: Jasmine**
4. Calendar posting policy update on website. **Action: Jasmine**
5. Member benefits package suitable for recruiting new members. **Action: Jasmine**
6. Target list of potential members. **Action: next meeting**
7. Marketing Plan will be sent by the ED to the Executive Committee for review within the next two weeks, then reviewed at the next Board meeting. **Action: Jasmine**
8. Scheduling member workshops. **Action: Marketing Task Team**
9. Work with SB and MRG on replacement for Ski the Valley for next season. **Action: Jasmine**
10. Leadership focus for communications. **Action: Jasmine & Jack**
11. Website RFP responses review. **Action: Jasmine, Peter & Brad**

**Ongoing Reminders:**

1. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. **Action: Board Members**
2. Personal Interaction with members. **Action: ALL**
3. Email ED with name suggestions for MRV Chamber. **Action: All**
4. Suggested speakers for Coffee Mornings. **Action: All**
5. Encouraging new members to join. **Action: All**