



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

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

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

Absent: Roger Nishi

Guests: Bob Ackland and Kristine Keeney from the MRVPD; Terrell & Estefan from IBM Watson by phone

### Presentation of Project Watson:

1. Bob Ackland advised the Board that the possible use of the IBM Watson system could be an approach for improving the relevance of the MRV Community Dashboard currently being managed by the MRVPD, and it might be valuable to do this in collaboration with the MRV Chamber.
2. The IBM team provided an overview and short demo of Watson, illustrating how insights and inferences can be drawn from data in a sophisticated way, once it is all captured in the system. The system can also pull in selected relevant social media feeds for analysis.
3. It was clarified that Watson does not directly assist in the collection of data, which was seen by many to be the largest current challenge.
4. Preliminary estimate of costs would be about \$5,500 per year plus about \$2,200 to add social media.
5. Next steps are for Amy and Jasmine to meet with the MRVPD on Wednesday to discuss further, including how to address data collection. **Action: Amy & Jasmine.**
6. The guests then left the meeting.

The Board meeting was then called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:58 a.m.

A quorum of 9 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair.

### Minutes of January 13th meeting:

1. Moved by Amy that the minutes of the January 13th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by Rosemarie. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website.

### Action Item updates:

1. Stowe Auto Show: Jasmine has initiated discussions however no conclusions as yet. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Web Cam at Warren Store: No immediate action planned. **Open**
3. Kiosks: Have been pulled in for troubleshooting. **Action: Roger**
4. Banner protocol: Left open for further review as required. **Open.**
5. Top Gas/Travel "I": To be reviewed again in the spring. **Open.**
6. Friendly Gathering letter of support: Completed. **Closed**
7. Website review next steps. **Action: Jasmine**
8. Check Lake Champlain website link. Fixed. **Closed**
9. Treasurer's report as soon as possible: **Action Rosemarie**
10. Follow up with "Sell my Timeshare now". They are now members. **Closed**
11. Briefing MRV-ME Award recipients. Completed. **Closed**
12. Strategic Planning contact suggestions. Completed. **Closed**
13. Strategic Plan draft for March Board meeting. **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: Amy and Dave attended the show, and there was great interest in Vermont and the Mad River Valley from the large number of people who visited the desk. All the donated freebies and brochures were given out. A large number of leads were generated. Many thanks to Amy and Dave for doing this at minimal cost for the Chamber. **Closed.**

#### **Financial Update:**

1. Account receivables are down to about \$10k over 90 days, however a potentially significant part of these are still thought to be billing issues. Stephanie is following up by phone and email to have the receivables cleaned up by the March meeting,
2. The Chamber is gradually growing again with the addition of several new members.
3. Full financials will be ready for the March Board meeting. **Action: Rosemarie**

#### **Strategic Plan update:**

1. The Strategic Planning process is progressing well and has included receiving feedback from two focus groups. Jasmine reported that she is now ready to move from research to starting the draft of the plan.
2. Feedback from dialog to date has reinforced that the two key roles of Chamber should be:
  - a. Destination Marketing
  - b. Business Advocacy
3. There have been some nuances on what the role of business advocacy should be, ranging from lobbying on specific issues, through to supporting members to help them with their own actions. The current leaning is towards the latter.
4. Also there is probably a useful role for the Chamber to help coordinate and cooperate with other Valley organizations.
5. Kevin Begin of the Tucker Hill Inn and Jack are helping Jasmine to structure the plan.
6. With respect to keeping the community informed on the process, Jasmine recommends holding back until after we review the draft in March so that we can talk about specifics, and not just the process.
7. A draft will be circulated to the Board by March 16th, to be reviewed and discussed at our next Board meeting, rescheduled for March 20th. **Action: Jasmine.**

#### **Executive Session:**

1. Moved by Peter, seconded by Amy that we move into executive session. Carried.
2. Executive session started at 12:17 p.m.
3. Moved by Amy, seconded by Peter that we leave executive session. Carried
4. Executive session terminated at 12:34 p.m.

#### **New Business:**

1. It was noted that Darlene McCormick has continued to request involvement in the MRV Chamber website. The Board had understood that the prior response from the ED had dealt with her requests. While the Board appreciated her assistance as a consultant during the 2016 website migration, the Board agreed that there is no further need for Darlene's involvement. Moved by Amy, seconded by Lori, that the dialog with Darlene on this topic be closed. Carried.
2. The status of reciprocal benefits with the Chittenden Chamber (LCRCC) remains to be clarified. **Action: Jasmine**
3. Noted with some concern is that it seems the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce is attempting to recruit members in the Mad River Valley. Jasmine will follow up with them and advocate a cooperative approach, rather than competing for members, as is normally the case between Chambers representing different regions. **Action: Jasmine.**
4. The ED met with Gary Kessler to put in context the reduced MRV-ME award for this year's GMSR. One possible additional way the Chamber can help is to assist with recruiting volunteers for the event as apparently this is one of the challenges that Gary faces. One possibility is that the Rotary might be interested. Rosemarie will follow up **Action: Rosemarie.** The fourth day of the event is held in

Burlington and as far we know Gary receives minimal help there and we may be able to help make some contacts. June might be able to assist here. **Action: June**

5. Jack noted that the CVP has decided that Recreation will be the focal point of addressing vitality initiatives. He indicated that the CVP would probably like the Chamber to take the lead on overall Branding, and to help determine the role of data in planning and measuring the actions to be taken. Next steps are still to be determined.

**Adjournment:**

1. Moved by Lori, seconded by Brad. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:04 p.m.

**Next Meetings:**

1. The next Board meeting will be on **MONDAY** March 20th at noon at a location to be advised.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

**Action Item Summary:**

1. Stowe Auto Show. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Kiosks. **Action: Roger**
3. Banner Protocol. **Open**
4. Top Gas area maintenance. **Open**
5. Website review next steps. **Action: Jasmine**
6. Treasurer's report for March meeting. **Action Rosemarie**
7. Strategic Plan draft for March Board meeting. **Action: Jasmine**
8. Strategic Plan communications coordination. **Action: Jasmine**
9. Member newsletters, Board bios. **Action: Jasmine**
10. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. **Action: Board Members**
11. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. **Action: Jasmine**
12. Discuss Watson and data collection with MRVPD. **Action Jasmine & Amy**
13. Follow up with LCRCC Chamber re reciprocal benefits status. **Action: Jasmine**
14. Follow up with Central Vermont Chamber regarding their recruiting in the MRV. **Action: Jasmine.**
15. Follow up on volunteer and sponsorship help for GMSR. **Action: Rosemarie and June**