



MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting April 8, 2016

Present: Peter Hans (Chair), Peter MacLaren, June Anderson, Jack Sharry (by phone), Amy Todisco, Lori Klein, Roger Nishi, Jim Tabor, Ted Fisher, Rosemarie White (for Treasurer's report only). Also Interim Manager Rebecca Baruzzi,
Apologies: Lisa Loomis

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 11:05 a.m.

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

Minutes of March 11th meeting:

1. Moved by Peter M that minutes be accepted as circulated, seconded by Jim. Carried.

Director's Report:

1. The Director's report was provided before the meeting. Rebecca covered highlights.
2. Two new members, Dave Hartshorn: Hartshorn's Organic Farm and Ana Del Rosal: Mountain Rose Yoga and Acupuncture.
3. Rebecca reviewed the list of comments and recommendations that came out of the Members' meeting.
Rebecca is prioritizing for action as appropriate.
4. Target Marketing class was held for the business community on 3/22. There were 15 attendees, all members with the exception of one participant from Middlebury. The attendees felt that there was value in the class.
5. The Packaging for Profit meeting with Tim Piper presenting on 5/16 at the Inn at the Round Barn Farm from 9-12 should be very valuable. Agreed to make **personal outreach from Board** to encourage members to attend:
 - a. **Lodging – Peter**
 - b. **Wellness – Amy**
 - c. **Retail – Lori**
 - d. **Restaurants – Rebecca**
 - e. **Recreation – Rebecca**
 - f. **Arts – June****Rebecca will ensure this meeting is on the calendar, Jim will do a piece in the paper a week or two ahead, and Rebecca will do additional PR.**
6. The Route 100 Bridge south of Flatbread will be closed for 28 days June and July. Rebecca is talking with our member American Flatbread to minimize impact on them by working on some creative ideas.
7. Bed and Brew going well – close to a sell out except for June run. More tours are being considered.
8. Maple Festival was a huge success – about 500 people visited Hartshorn's. **Amy will do a My View** reflecting on its success (it was already reported on in last week's paper) with a preview of the future food festivals planned.
9. Mixers are planned for April 13th at Valley Arts, and tentatively planned for May at Sugarbush, June at Spring Hill School, July open (maybe **Hartshorn Farm – Amy will follow up**), August at White Birch Cottage, September at Bundy Center.

Marketing Committee:

1. Draft plan is close to final. The goals and actions will be socialized/finalized with the Marketing Committee next week.
2. A specific idea is to leverage the “Three Mountains/One Valley” theme jointly with Sugarbush and Mad River Glen.
3. Possible Tag line is “Come for the fun of it”. Not final yet.
4. Jack will be in town April 14th for a week or so. He, Jim and Rebecca plan to make some “house calls” to key “touch points” around the valley, including MRG, Sugarbush and others. **Jim will also reach out to Skinner Barn/Peter Boynton** as one of the key Performing Arts members.
5. Given the very poor ski season and their potential key role in the new theme, a priority will be to **meet with Mad River Glen**, and in particular see how we can help in the short term and work together to plan for a big recovery next season! Also Board members with personal contacts will reach out to offer help to MRG as one of our key members.
6. We should add information about the Asset Groups to the MRV website, with links for example to the new Wellness Group website. **Peter M will investigate.**

Website Committee Update:

1. Rosemarie and Roger, along with Kurt from Waitsfield Telecom and technical consultant Kevin Broderick met with Steve from Vickery Hill last week.
2. Steve has offered time flexibility and to provide support for the transition to a new website. As such the committee recommends leaving the hosting and admin as is until the transition. A follow up question to be checked is if we **can have the high level Admin password** in the meantime so that we can make small changes that are currently on hold, like menu labeling updates etc.
3. The committee is recommending one of two platforms for the new website, the Open Source MODX (used by Ski Vermont, VAST and others in the state) or the widely used commercial platform WordPress. Are working to get proposals from vendors using each approach and will be ready to **present recommendations at the next Board meeting.**
4. Currently the committee is estimating that the transition of the current website content to the new platform will require a budget in the ballpark of \$15k, which is much less than originally thought. It was noted that we have more than adequate funds in the CSP reserve to cover this cost, and that this would be appropriate use for that reserve. These details will be finalized when specific proposals are on the table for decision at the next Board meeting.
5. Peter H reminded the Board that the intent is to re-use all the existing content of the current site and that the external appearance should be virtually identical to the current website. However by moving to a widely used open or commercial platform it will be easier and less expensive to make ongoing changes and functionality updates.

Membership:

1. Peter M reported that the Sole Proprietor category with a reduced annual premium discussed at the last Board meeting ended up having too many complications and the committee recommend not proceeding with it at the moment. Most of the opportunities for bringing in new members can be addressed by the introductory discounts agreed at the last Board meeting.
2. The committee proposed the idea of brainstorming socials where a member invites a limited number of other members to assist that business discuss some ideas or challenges. This approach has already started among the Food Producers. **Rebecca has already been working on this type of approach and will take the lead on taking next steps. Amy offered to assist.**
3. The committee recommend adding a “30 second shout out” for a total of 5 minutes max at each member mixer, where any member can give an impromptu 30 second update on their business, announce a special, event etc. **Rebecca agreed to add to this segment** to mixers ongoing.
4. The committee continues to work on updating the member benefits, and then to work on approaches for making them more visible to our members.

Business Support:

1. Covered in Director's report

CEDC Update:

1. The joint Chamber and MRVPD committee has now agreed to use the name Community Economic Development Committee (CEDC).
2. Work is continuing on reviewing the needs, organization and funding approach recommendations for taking next steps on the Economic Vitality initiative.

Financial Update:

1. Status of A/R from member dues was reviewed, and great progress is being made. Now less than \$3k is over 90 days. As noted previously, much of the problem related back to incorrect invoicing, and no invoicing in some cases, leaving many members confused as to what they actually still had to pay. Also some prior members who had left the Chamber were still on the list.
2. The Board thanked Robin and Rebecca on their dedicated work to continue to get this problem under control.

Adjournment:

1. Moved by Jim, seconded by Lori, carried.
2. The meeting adjourned at 12:40PM

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on Friday May 13th at 11AM.

Action Item Summary:

1. *Member meeting feedback: Rebecca prioritizing actions*
2. *Packing for Profit meeting: Peter M, Amy, Lori, Rebecca & June to get word, Rebecca to get it on calendar and Jim to get article in paper*
3. *Ongoing Food Festivals: Amy will author a My View*
4. *July mixer: Amy to see if Hartshorn Farm would be the venue.*
5. *Marketing Outreach: Jack, Jim and Rebecca to include calls on MRG and Skinner Barn*
6. *Add info on Asset Groups to website: Peter M to investigate*
7. *Interim access to high level admin for current website: Committee to follow up*
8. *Website move: Website Committee to have proposals for next Board meeting*
9. *Member Brainstorming Socials: Rebecca will coordinate next steps, Amy will assist*
10. *30 second shout outs: Rebecca will add to mixers ongoing*

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

Reports attached.

- *Members meeting feedback summary*
- *Director's report*