



MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting May 13, 2016

Present: Peter Hans (Chair), Peter MacLaren, June Anderson, Jack Sharry (by phone), Amy Todisco, Roger Nishi, Jim Tabor, Rosemarie White. Also Executive Director Rebecca Baruzzi. Also guest Darlene McCormick for web site discussion.

Absent: Lisa Loomis, Ted Fisher, Lori Klein

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

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

Minutes of April 8th meeting:

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

Financial Update:

1. A full set of financial reports to date was provided by the Treasurer ahead of the meeting.
2. The budget ongoing has been updated to align with currently expected revenue. While revenue is down compared to the original budget due to a decline in membership, some adjustments to planned expenditures have been worked out between the Treasurer and the ED, and we should complete the fiscal year in the black.
3. A/R has been reduced significantly through extensive follow ups to correct the membership list to align with current membership, to correct invoices where required, and collect on receivables. The Board thanked Robin and Rebecca, and the Board members who assisted, on their dedicated work to continue to get this problem under control.
4. Moved by Peter M to forgive the dues outstanding for the current year owed by the Skatium, seconded Amy, and carried unanimously. To be made clear to the member that this is a one-year special arrangement. **Action Robin**
5. Treasurer's report moved by Rosemarie, seconded by Amy, and carried unanimously.

Website Committee Report:

1. The web committee received several proposals to migrate the MRV website to an open source platform. These were narrowed down to three and the committee met or spoke with the principals for all three proposals.
2. Two of the proposals are based on WordPress, which is the more widely used system. Following a brief discussion the Board agreed that the two associated proposals were the ones to be considered.
3. Both proposals were in the same order of budget magnitude. Both proposals are currently estimates but both companies are willing to move to a firm price proposal after a meeting to finalize the scope of the deliverables. Both can complete the work by around the end of June assuming a decision is made at this Board meeting.
4. After including a reasonable contingency, and remuneration to Darlene for her consulting work, both can achieve the desired migration within the \$15k that the Board had tentatively proposed for the project.
5. References have been followed up and checked out as positive in both cases.

6. After a presentation by the committee of the highlights of the two proposals and the associated companies, and a discussion by the Board, Peter H, chair of the web committee, moved that:
 - a. the proposal from Jackson Whelan be accepted
 - b. the Board approves a budget of up to \$15,000 to complete the redevelopment of the website and its CMS including integration of the community calendar and booking and availability widgets.
 - c. the redevelopment project be funded from the reserve account the Chamber holds at Northfield Savings Bank (current balance: approximately \$44,000). These funds were originally generated from the community sponsorship program several years ago.
7. The motion was seconded by Jim. Carried by a majority with one nay vote.
8. The Board thanked Darlene for her assistance, and authorized her to confirm the decision to Jackson Whelan, to be followed by a meeting as soon as possible to kick off the project. **Action Darlene for Peter H.**
9. Board members with any feedback on specific aspects of the current website and calendar that should be considered in the migration are asked to provide that feedback to Darlene a.s.a.p. **All members.**

Director's Report:

1. The Director's report was provided before the meeting. Rebecca covered highlights.
2. There is an opportunity through the Vermont Convention Bureau to make a proposal to host a multi-site, multi-day Lacrosse Tournament in June/July 2017. Initial success would likely be followed by a multi-year commitment. Clay at the American Flatbread brought this opportunity to the ED's attention and is willing to support going after it. While it is not our normal role to coordinate proposals for events the Board agreed with the ED's recommendation that she should pursue this opportunity along with interested members, including joining the VCB if required. **ED to pursue.**
3. BedandBrew had been a great success, although there have been some Inntopia issues. Meg Shultz has been the primary host with Mike Jengo providing the transportation. The ED reported that Mike would like to "own" the tours to give him more flexibility and efficiency in managing bookings. This move would also reduce the Chamber office workload. Some Board members expressed strong concerns about the potential for transferring ownership, as the tours are a major marketing point for the Valley overall and the Chamber, and are one key aspect of encouraging members to contribute to MRV-ME. The scenario of franchising MRV Chamber owned tours was raised. However there is also the concern that Mike might stop supporting the Chamber tours. Agreed that a **sub-committee of Peter M and Jim** would review the situation and work out a resolution with the ED and Mike Jengo.

Marketing Committee:

1. No report given limited time at this meeting.

Membership Committee:

1. No report given limited time at this meeting.

CEDC update:

1. The meeting with Vermont Futures attended by some CEDC members and other community members on April 28th was very helpful in bringing a Vermont wide perspective.
2. CEDC is working to arrange a follow-up community leaders meeting with Vermont Futures to share the perspective and build consensus around changes needed for the future vitality of the MRV.
3. The CEDC is currently working on an incremental approach to possible changes to address the recommendations from the EV process.
4. Looking at how we address the overall vision for the MRV and work towards coordination of all related functions is being pursued.
5. No specifics have been recommended as yet.

Chamber Perception among some members and others

1. The ED noted that she has had feedback, directly and indirectly, from both members and others in the community about a continued negative perception of the Chamber and its actions. Some of this perspective may relate to history, lack of understanding of what we are currently doing, perhaps just personalities and of course potentially some real problems.
2. Agreed to have a more detailed discussion at our next Board meeting.

Adjournment:

1. Moved by Roger, seconded by Amy. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45PM.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on Friday June 10th at 11AM.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

Action Item Summary (including those carried over from last meeting):

Prior:

1. *Member meeting feedback: Rebecca prioritizing actions*
2. *Ongoing Food Festivals: Amy will author a My View*
3. *July mixer: Amy to see if Hartshorn Farm would be the venue.*
4. *Marketing Outreach: Jack, Jim and Rebecca to include calls on MRG and Skinner Barn*
5. *Add info on Asset Groups to website: Peter M to investigate*
6. *Member Brainstorming Socials: Rebecca will coordinate next steps, Amy will assist*

New:

7. *Robin to adjust Skatium A/R, and advise member.*
8. *Darlene, on behalf of Peter H, to organize meeting with Jackson Whelan*
9. *All members with inputs on website transition needs to send comments to Darlene*
10. *ED to pursue 2017 Lacrosse tournament*
11. *Peter M and Jim T to propose plan for BedandBrew ongoing*
12. *Plan to discuss Chamber perception at next Board meeting*

Reports attached.

- *Financial Report*
- *Web Committee Report*
- *Director's report*