



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

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

Present: Peter Hans (by phone), Peter MacLaren, Jack Sharry, Amy Todisco, Roger Nishi, Rosemarie White, Lisa Loomis, Lori Klein, June Anderson, Jim Tabor. Ted Fisher joined shortly after the meeting started.

As Peter Hans was attending by phone, Treasurer Rosemarie White chaired the meeting. The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 11:04 a.m.

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

### Minutes of June 17th meeting:

1. Moved by Lori that minutes be accepted as circulated, seconded by Jim. Carried.
2. Noted by the Secretary that Board minutes are published on the Chamber website approximately two weeks after each meeting on the About/ Chamber of Commerce page, using this link at bottom right: <http://www.madrivervalley.com/newsletter>

### Financial Report:

1. Circulated before the meeting. Discussed briefly.
2. A/R is largely under control, and overall receipts status is not that far behind last year.
3. The Board expressed their thanks to Robin for a job well done on cleaning up the outstanding receivables.

### Strategic Direction:

1. Peter Hans had circulated a motion, which he proposed. *“The Board resolves to temporarily suspend its involvement in the CEDC. The Board will consider reengagement once it has had time to develop a comprehensive strategy for its own operations in the near term and the Planning District indicates to this Board it is ready to engage in genuine and cooperative collaborative cooperation with the Chamber in addressing mutual concerns including funding.”* Seconded by Amy. Discussion followed.
2. Several members expressed the point that there were two issues here: on the one hand the work of CEDC and its recommendations are an important context for the future of the Chamber in the larger context of the Economic Vitality of the Mad River Valley, while on the other the disrespect shown to the Chamber by the Chair of our partner organization, the Mad River Valley Planning District Steering Committee (MRVPD SC), is causing concern and is making it difficult to have a productive ongoing partnership.
3. It was also noted that the work of the CEDC is currently on hold pending the review of their recommendations by a sub-committee of the MRVPD SC, which will be presented to and discussed by the MRVPD SC at their next meeting on July 21st. It is thus premature to make any decision on the ongoing work of the CEDC.
4. The Board reached consensus that we should communicate by letter our concerns and our desire to continue to partner with the MRVPD, and request that the letter be put on the agenda of the July 21st meeting of the MRVPD SC.
5. Moved by Jack, seconded by Peter M that the motion be amended to read: *“The Board resolves to send a letter to the MRVPD SC, reflecting on the great progress the two organizations have made by working together on the VVSC and now CEDC, however expressing our strong concerns about the disrespectful comments made by their Chair about the Chamber, which have neither been withdrawn nor as yet repudiated by the overall Steering Committee, and to express that on our part the Chamber Board is*

*ready to continue to engage in genuine and cooperative collaborative cooperation in addressing mutual concerns including funding, on the assumption that the MRVPD share the same perspective.”. Peter H as proposer of the original motion accepted the amendment. It was then carried.*

6. The original motion as amended was then carried.
7. Amy noted that she had arranged to meet with the Chair of the MRVPD SC next week, and would report back by email. **Action: Amy**
8. Jack agreed to draft the proposed letter in collaboration with Amy and others, circulate it to the Board for comment by Friday July 15th, and have it finalized and delivered to the ED of the MRVPD by Monday July 18th. **Action: Jack**
9. Peter M will alert the MRVPD ED that the letter will be forthcoming and ask for it to be on the agenda of the MRVPD SC meeting on July 21st. **Action: Peter M**

#### **Hiring Committee update:**

1. The hiring committee reported that after discussing possibilities for an Interim Manager, they recommend that we should proceed to move forward with hiring a replacement Executive Director (ED).
2. Moved by Jim seconded by Lori, that the Board initiate a formal search to hire an ED, with the objective for the new ED to be in place by end August, i.e. before the Annual Meeting. Carried.
3. The hiring committee of Jim, Lori and Amy will continue, with the assistance of Lisa for placing ads, including on the Chamber website.
4. The job description will be updated by the hiring committee with an emphasis on:
  - a. Strengths in marketing
  - b. Good with outreach to members
  - c. Be ready to be part of defining the future role of the Chamber
5. Job description to be updated ASAP, circulated for comment, then ready for placing ads by Monday.

**Action: Hiring Committee**

#### **Chair Succession:**

1. Deferred till next meeting.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Website transition appears to be proceeding well, including improvements for the Calendar. On track for end of July.
2. Webcam issue at Pitcher Inn Warren Store resolved. The final bill is \$1,019 for the Chamber to buy the camera and s/w. The Warren Store will donate 50%, on condition the camera stay in place unless mutually agreed. A signed letter is being exchanged to cover this. Support will be handled on a case-by-case basis with Roger being the initial go to person. Moved Peter M, seconded Amy that the previous decision of the Chamber to approve \$450 net for the project be slightly increased to \$509.50 to cover 50% of the final bill. Carried.
3. Some technical issues need to be taken care of to transfer the feed off Vickery Hill's YouTube. It is expected that Jackson will be able to take care of this. Peter M will follow up. **Action: Peter M**

#### **New Business:**

1. Update to members. Jack with support from Amy will write a MyView for next week's Valley Reporter covering the progress over the last 6 months since the Economic Vitality Summit, emphasizing the areas we are working on, the successes, the challenges, and next steps. **Action: Jack**
2. Stowe Auto Show. The organizers are looking for a new venue. This is an annual event held in August. Would be a great win for the Valley. Sugarbush is keen to support investigating the possibility. Rosemarie will follow up with the organizers and work with Ted on next steps. **Action: Rosemarie**
3. Megan Smith, the Vermont Tourism and Marketing Commissioner, while talking with Peter M, expressed concern at not currently having a point of contact at the MRV Chamber for marketing matters. Jim Tabor has volunteered to be that point person. Peter M will make the introductions. If a meeting is arranged Amy and Ted expressed interest in taking part. **Action: Peter M**
4. The Board was reminded that through our membership with VACCE our members have access to attractive rates for dental insurance. Robin will include in the next newsletter.
5. Jim will provide support to Robin for ongoing Newsletters. **Action: Jim**

6. Potential workshop topics were identified for future consideration:
  - a. Workers Comp
  - b. Public Relations
  - c. Customer Service
  - d. Cyber Crime
  - e. Retirement Planning
  - f. Group Purchasing
  - g. Using Green Mountain Access
  - h. Social Media skills
7. Amy has identified that Betsy Bishop, the President of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, has offered to meet with our Board to discuss challenges and the future. The Board expressed enthusiasm. Amy will work with Betsy on possible dates. **Action: Amy**
8. The special arrangement with VermontWeddings.com comes to an end in October. Peter M is in discussion with Lorin Holmes as there is a mutual interest in coming up with an ongoing preferential arrangement for MRV Chamber members. **Action: Peter**

**Adjournment:**

1. Moved by Amy, seconded by Jim. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be in two weeks time on Friday July 22nd at 11 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

**Action Item Summary (including those carried over from prior meetings):**

**Prior:**

1. *Add info on Asset Groups to website: Peter M to investigate.* Not possible until website transition is completed. **Open Item**
2. *Member Brainstorming Socials. Amy will assist.* An action item for the Interim Manager to prime. **Open Item**
3. Lacrosse Tournament. **Action: Rosemarie**
4. Volunteers for visitor center to assist with being at the desk. **Action: Rosemarie**
5. Board terms to rationalize orderly transitions in future. **Action: Peter M** (Deferred to next meeting)

**Current Meeting:**

1. Meeting with the Chair of the MRVPD SC and report back by email. **Action: Amy**
2. Draft letter to MRVPD SC re CEDC. **Action: Jack**
3. Alert the MRVPD ED that the letter is coming and put on agenda. **Action: Peter M**
4. Move ahead on hiring new ED: **Action: Hiring Committee**
4. Follow up on transfer or WebCam feed by Jackson. **Action: Peter M**
5. MyView on 6 months of progress. **Action: Jack**
6. Stowe Auto Show. **Action: Rosemarie**
7. Megan Smith intro to Jim Tabor. **Action: Peter M**
8. Support to Robin for ongoing Newsletters. **Action: Jim**
9. Coordinate dates with Betsy Bishop. **Action: Amy**
10. Vermont Weddings.com follow up. **Action: Peter**