



# MAD RIVER VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2018

## **In attendance:**

Board Members: June Anderson, Kevin Begin, Ana Dan, Ted Fisher, Lori Klein, Brad Long, Peter MacLaren, Roger Nishi, Jack Sharry

Chamber Staff: Jasmine Bigelow, Ginger Berkelhamer

Guests: Mimi Buttenheim

Apologies: Jim Tabor

## **Meeting Opening**

- 11:06-Peter opened meeting; welcomed Mimi; all participants made introductions
- Mimi-President of Mad River Distillers; has been in hospitality, wine and spirits business a long time.

## **Updates from Executive Committee:**

- Meets monthly; focusing on governance
- Executive Committee-Normally 4, currently 2.
  - Jack was invited and agreed to be part of the Executive Committee
- Peter proposed to Board that Jack become Secretary; Ginger will take the minutes at the meeting and give them to Jack
- Motion-June 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - All in favor; Motion carried

## **Board Vacancy**

- Tradition to have representation from Sugarbush and Waitsfield Telecom on the Board, without them being Chair. Kris Merchant, from Waitsfield Telecom will be joining in August to replace Roger.
- Vice Chair-current vacancy; pursuing options. Finalize by April.
- Peter-Very positive about the day to day with Jasmine in charge of work plan and Ginger as support.

## **Approve Minutes of Last Meeting**

- Kevin-Motion to Approve; Ana-2<sup>nd</sup>; all in favor. Motion passed

## **Action Items**

- None to discuss

## **Financial Statement**

- Everything is trending well.
- Jasmine-Check in on revenue goal, which is to exceed goal by \$10,000, not exceeding yet, but making progress.

## **Membership Report**

- Jasmine-
  - Ginger has a goal to transition current members into the new tiered system. Other Membership goal is to increase from 147 to 165. Ginger is now concentrating on new members.
  - Kevin spoke with Gillespie Fuel and persuaded them to stay members. He shared his conversation with Gillespie to get them back.
  - Kevin offered to create a letter for Board members to sign and send to vendors.
- Discussion about getting new members-some people have some history and concerns with the Chamber. Ginger has had success getting appointments and persuading people to get familiar with the “new” Chamber.

## **Action item-board members to send a list of vendors**

- Discussion-Brad suggested we put testimonials on the website from members, particularly new members, about positive changes
- Jack-important for each Board member to advocate for the Board; so many good things happening

## **Director's Report**

### **Marketing**

- Our goal for the year is to increase traffic to website by 20%-moving in right direction, exceeded our goal in November, likely because of the snow!
- Important initiatives-
  - Improve SEO; has been going well.
  - Using Jackson Whelan to train us.
- Referrals are down; this is concerning. Referrals are easiest way to get visitors to the site. We will:
  - Educate membership to have links
    - Biggest partners are linking - Sugarbush, MRG, VT Chamber
  - Working partnership deals; 52-week campaign on VPR's website.
  - Ski The Valley, Dining, Shopping ads-Working with Sally on the ads

### **Content**

### **Blogs**

- Members participating are happy. Half the membership is eligible for this, but not taking advantage.
- Need to get the content distributed regularly-via social media, and email, to drive more traffic to the website

### **Videos**

- Mad River Valley Reality; Filming another episode with Jamieson.
- Jasmine is applying for a film grant to help produce more of these.

### **Public Relations**

- Jim is working on editing press list; online press kit is upon our site and we are working to be more proactive

### **Email Marketing**

- Building list; decent open rate; trying to gauge what is getting the most engagement.

### **Social Media**

- Posts are doing well; we have lots of ideas; need to execute.
- Jack-can we engage Harwood kids? Jasmine-yes, need to have that conversation

### **Visitor Center**

- We have been struggling to get volunteers. People who sign up don't stay long. We have three at the moment-Marie, Billi & Charlie
- We asked Chamber members to provide incentives; left it open to our businesses for what they want to donate. Not successful at the moment. We would like a board member to help us sort it out.
- June-Offered to help with developing a plan for volunteers; GMVS always looking for community hours. Peter-thanks to June for offering to help.
- Mimi-Can't we make it a requirement of membership to donate something? So, at the time of renewal, they have to check the box and donate.
- Lori-Harwood students?
- Discussion regarding the Farmers Market-We should have a presence at the market. We should offer member freebies. To be discussed at Board Retreat.
- Kevin-consider building into budget for next year to hire a staff person to manage volunteers

### **Event Grants**

- The future of what we do here is something to discuss at the Board Retreat

### **FLO Committee**

- Peter-Working on this since last April. Started the process of public meetings. Getting a lot of constructive feedback at the public meetings; the questions are around what specific projects will be funded. FLO committee is going to

be specific about affordable housing, seasonality and getting people here mid-week, and transportation throughout the Valley. Separately, noted that GMT is saying they are not sure they can continue service the way it is.

### **Task Team Updates**

- Lori-Retail-meeting scheduled for 1/31 at 8:30am
- Jack-Communications-working with Valley Reporter. Wrote a “My View” on individual memberships.
- Ted-ski industry liaison-Jasmine said we have had a very good 3 months around messaging of the ski industry. Ski Industry Forum and Ski the Valley night at Mad River Distillers in Burlington, raised money for VT Adaptive.
- June-design task team/volunteer-Helps develop and with design as needed.
- Ana-Restaurant task team-give them time to get through the winter; important is to get closing schedule for the Spring. Wants to see restaurants bring back some version of Taste of The Valley. If the restaurants run it themselves, it’s an opportunity for us to work together. Kevin-“Dine the Valley”
- Kevin-Sales-working with Ginger on brand. New task came up-tackling short-term rentals, i.e., Airbnb; to date try to level the playing field. Airbnb taking affordable housing inventory out of the market.
- Brad-Photography-get a solid bank of photos. Create a wish list and now developing ways to get them. Brad-research storage and usage for our members to use.

### **Board Engagement**

- Peter-With the move to quarterly meetings, we need each board member to be more proactive between meetings. Please:
  1. Be at events and talk up the Chamber
  2. Provide feedback-from members to Jasmine and Ginger
  3. Keep up to date of what’s going on. Alert Jasmine and Ginger about stuff that should be on the calendar
  4. Be an advocate for the Chamber
- Roger-update when things get done, don’t wait for quarterly meetings
- Peter motioned to nominate Mimi to the Board; Roger 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

- Lori moved to adjourn; Roger 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor

### **Meeting closed at 1:15pm**

### **Next meeting**

- Will be the Board Retreat. Date/place to be confirmed following Doodle Poll.