

**Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
March 29, 2023
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

Board Present: Carol Schuster, Tiana McCall, Chad Anderson, Darrell Snorek, Todd Cagnoni, Patricia Diduch, Kevin Frost, Jennifer Furst, John Groh, Mick Gronewold, Bobbie Holzwarth, Geno Iafrate, Dana Martin, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Caitlin Pusateri, Jay Sandine, Patrick Thompson, Kirk Weitzel

Board Absent: Nathan Bruck, Sonya Hoppes, Shelton Kay, Richard Shuga, Therese Thill

Staff Present: Kristen Paul, Joanne Nold, Jacqui Corsi, Brandi Liantonio

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:32 a.m. by Carol Schuster.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the January 25, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Internal Monitoring Reports:

It was moved, seconded, and approved to accept the Internal Monitoring Reports including John Groh's CEO interpretations, for monitoring on:

- 2.2 Treatment of Staff. It was noted that the Employee Handbook is in a review process and revisions should be wrapped in April, which means employees will be signing off on the new handbook again in April, instead of January per previous years.

Governance Process:

Board Development Committee was formed to work to fill one open board position. The committee welcomes recommendations for candidates to fill this position. Next month the next slate of officer for the next board calendar year, which starts in June.

CEO Report:

John Groh shared the report on Winnebago county's recovery from the consequences from the pandemic. The county has recovered faster than 9 of 12 similar counties in Illinois that the county uses to benchmark growth. The county is at 90% of where it was in 2019 and the set average is 82%. In part this is because we do not have a weekday travel market or the meeting markets that may drive down our recovery numbers. We are seeing an uptick in January and February 2023 numbers over 2022 because of sporting events that occurred this year.

Marketing Partnership meetings have been restarted as of last week with an introduction of a partnership portal to help support and encourage interaction and information exchange with city stakeholders. River District Association is also being revitalized. John is the board president and the board is working on reestablishing their social media and having meetings to encourage relationships between downtown businesses.

The Phantom Regiment, despite being a Rockford organization, has in recent year not had any clinics or recruitments in the Rockford area. John has engaged with the Regiment to bring them back to Rockford and help them have events in the city. They will be participating in the 2023 4th of July parade for the first time in years.

Destination Master Plan Update & Introduction of Consulting Team: Coming out of the pandemic allowed for the RACVB to review and consider doing a comprehensive plan for recovery and future success. We secured 2 grants to do the work of having a comprehensive plan developed and the timeline is to complete the work in the next year. The plan will include Winnebago and Boone counties and we'll be engaging with local representatives of both counties to focus on what is possible. We developed an RFP that was released nationally to make sure it was broadcast as widely as possible as well as locally advertised to ensure a robust return on options. Eight total proposals were received and they were independently reviewed and reviewed by local stakeholders and CVB staff members. Four firms were interviewed and after indepth assessment and discussion with the firms the RACVB settled on MMGY NextFactor. John then introduced Cassandra Macauley from NextFactor and she shared information regarding the team NextFactor comprehensively gathered to create a specialized project for Winnebago and Boone counties. When discussing the project plan, Cassandra expressed the importance of making data-driven decisions and plans. The plan has full scope for short and long-term strategies for up to 10 years and has 8 phases for the year long beginning implementation. MMGY NextFactor is also working with EightOneFive to ensure that would have strong engagement from the community.

CRE8IV 2023: John Groh said from the 183 submissions the review team narrowed down the options to a top 50 and are waiting for results from a grant proposal before making final decisions for which murals will be completed and the scope for the CRE8IV project for this year.

At 8:47 a.m. Chair Carol Schuster adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is Wednesday, April 26, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,



Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary
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