

**Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, New York
Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, January 12, 2011 8:00 a.m.
25 Gorham Street, Canandaigua**

PRESENT

Chris Iversen
Dick Maltman
Mike Roeder
Mike Kauffman
Bob Bennett
Lois Kozlowski
John Brahm
Alexa Gifford
Russ Kenyon

PHONE

Jessica Bacher
Dan Fuller
Suzanne Farley

ABSENT

John Maerhofer

EX-OFFICIO

Alison Grems, Canandaigua Chamber
Rob Gladden, Geneva Chamber

EXCUSED

Frank Riccio
Mary Luckern
Lisa Fitzgerald

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Rebecca Donovan
David Lee
Meg Colombo
AJ Shear

WELCOME – Chairman Mike Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Jessica Bacher, Dan Fuller, and Suzanne Farley participated via phone.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Chris Iversen moved to **approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2010 Board of Directors meeting.** John Brahm seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Valerie presented the financial reports for December and year-to-date, noting that we remain under budget in anticipation of upcoming website expenses. Payroll was under budget as benefit costs will show in the coming month. The balance sheet reflects money transferred from the reserve account to cover the early vouchering for matching funds. Ontario County instituted a new process, requiring a purchase order for our first draw request, which has impacted our usual funds balance for January. Russ Kenyon moved to **accept the December financial report.** Dick Maltman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie reported that the Executive Committee had reviewed the 2010 audit and 990 Form with Deb Lemke of Fredericksen & Sirianni, LLP on January 4, 2011, and had forwarded the 990 Form and Financial Statements to the entire board electronically. Chris Iversen had raised a question about the 990 Form, noting that the question “Have you had an independent audit?” was checked “No.” Deb Lemke called in to answer the question, stating that the question should be answered “Yes” and that she would adjust the 990 Form accordingly. Russ Kenyon moved to accept the recommendation of the Audit Committee and **approve the 2009/2010 Audit Report and approve the 990 Form as amended.** Chris Iversen seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Valerie also reported that Roberta Jordans, Harris Beach Solutions, had been contracted again this year to produce and post our financial report required by the Public Authorities Accountability Act.

Mike Roeder reported for the Chamber Contracts Review committee. The proposed Geneva Chamber contract removed the provision for welcome bags, reduced the number of leads and sales calls, and added 4 specific goals targeting cooperative promotions and packaging partnerships. Lois Kozlowski moved to **approve the Geneva Chamber of Commerce contract for March 1, 2011 through February 29, 2012 in the amount of \$8,250.** Chris Iversen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Russ Kenyon abstained.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - Valerie noted that she had forwarded written notes to the board, as some of the members would be calling in by phone, and referred everyone to those notes regarding the website. Valerie has had some discussion with Atomic Design seeking redress, and reported to the Executive Committee on January 4, 2010. To date, Valerie had been unsuccessful in getting our refund. Discussion ensued regarding our legal options. Lois Kozlowski moved to **authorize the Executive Committee to settle with Atomic Design and/or take appropriate action in seeking redress.** John Brahm seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mike Roeder appointed Russ Kenyon, Mike Kauffman and Lois Kozlowski to the ByLaws Review Committee. They will meet to review board term language and the withdrawal of Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, a designated ex-officio member, from active participation, and to make other suggestions as needed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Valerie showed the board samples of our latest print pieces in support of our brand guidelines. Marketing Day will be held on Wednesday, January 26th at the Finger Lakes Casino and Racetrack. Topics to be covered include niche programs, buy-in opportunities, packaging, Facebook and website stats. Valerie briefly reviewed the November Board Metrics report.

OLD BUSINESS - Valerie told the board to expect to receive the self-evaluation survey next week.

Valerie reported on the question of property tax exemption. She met with Mark Brown, City of Canandaigua Assessor, who indicated we are not exempt from property taxes as our primary purpose is the promotion and development of business and industry, rather than education or public need. Our 501-c-3 status does not extend to property tax exemption.

Valerie posted the final document from the Dumbwaiter Website Strategy contract. This 23 page document provides a map of our site including details on all the pages, their connections with one another and the style of information that is expected to be in each page. It also illustrates the expectation that our Access database will be tied at the grassroots level of any new website development. This document will be used as a base for the 2011 website RFP which Valerie intends to issue within the next week. The board asked several questions about the relationship between this document and our current situation with Atomic. The board discussed the RFP process, suggesting a little more time than Valerie had drafted. Valerie indicated that she would keep the RFP process in line with our procurement policy - which does not require that we go with the lowest dollar bid, but suggests that because of the connection with creative services, performance history, and other factors that the board select the most responsible bid for our situation. The board committee (Lisa Fitzgerald, Russ Kenyon, Bob Bennett, and Mike Roeder) was reestablished to review the website RFPs. This committee will work with Valerie who will also inform all board members as to the status of the process and any meetings so that they can participate if they would like. On a motion by Russ Kenyon and a second by Alexa Gifford, **the board empowered the subcommittee on the website to move ahead with the RFP selection process with the awarding of the Bid expected around the 15th of February.** All present voted in favor.

AJ Shear has been meeting with the supervisors around Ontario County as he develops content for the lifestyle kit and the website. These meetings have been a good opportunity to communicate what we do for tourism promotion and development. The Finger Lakes Visitors Connection staff was able to provide a DVD production to the county employees at the annual holiday party. This year's theme honored, in a fun manner, retiring administrator Geoff Astles and incoming administrator John Garvey, as well as past administrator John Hicks. The DVD was well received by the audience and fostered further conversations about tourism's marketing capabilities.

A suggestion was made that we consider a fact sheet which talks about our impact statistically. In particular it was felt that the concept of tourism creating local tax relief would be a strong concept to portray. Valerie will develop this type of information.

NEW BUSINESS - Valerie notified the board that the Occupancy Tax Law will be up for renewal in 2011. Chris Iversen suggested that the white paper on occupancy tax amply states our position. Others agreed and Valerie will communicate this to Ontario County.

AGENCY REPORTS – Alison Grems noted the Canandaigua Chamber’s Annual Dinner and awards on February 4th, and welcomed Russ Kenyon as the new Chair of the Chamber’s Board of Directors. In 2011, the Chamber will renew focus on economic development. Alison reported that, beginning April 1, NYSEG will be replacing pipes on Main Street; the project is expected to take eight weeks.

Rob Gladden thanked the board for approving the new contract with the Geneva Chamber. The City of Geneva is moving forward with plans for the Visitor Center and Finger Lakes Boating Museum. Rob is currently looking for an interim location for the Chamber during construction. The Geneva Chamber will hold their Annual Dinner on January 28th, and Rob invited everyone to attend a Business After Hours at Smith Opera House on January 12th.

OTHER - Mary Luckern has been reappointed to our board representing the Board of Supervisors, and there have been no changes in committees.

David Lee just returned from three days shadowing Berkeley Young and Dr. Larry Gustke of Young Strategies Group. David had experiences in evaluating the effectiveness of tourism marketing, research techniques, and destination marketing presentations and challenges.

Sue Schmidt attended the American Bus Association’s 2011 Marketplace in Philadelphia where she had 55 appointments and the opportunity to share a dinner table with Brian Crow, president of the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA).

Dan Fuller reported that Betty Little has been appointed Chair of the New York State Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation. No word yet on the appointment of a new Economic Development “czar”, but there is an initiative to look at regions more than counties.

AJ Shear reported on recent PR wins: an article on ice wines (featuring Casa Larga) appeared in the high-end New York/Los Angeles publication “Celebrity Life” as a result of AJ’s response to a HARO request; and Valerie was quoted in the Washington Post on solo travel as a result of Finger Lakes Visitors Connection’s interaction with Quinn & Co through our joint contract.

ADJOURN – Chris Iversen moved to adjourn the meeting. John Brahm seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Next meeting: March 30, 2011 8:00 a.m. Marketing Updates
 Finger Lakes Casino and Racetrack, 5857 Route 96, Farmington

Goal B. Brand Development

Strategy 7: Manage brand for consistency and tone in messaging, image, and service quality