

Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, New York
Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, June 20, 2012 8:00 a.m.
Finger Lakes Gifts & Lounge, Geneva

PRESENT

Mary Luckern	Mike Roeder
Dick Maltman	Carl Carlson
Frank Riccio	Dan Fuller
Lois Kozlowski	David Hutchings
David Linger	Jessica Bacher
John Brahm	Mike Kauffman
Bob Bennett	

EXCUSED

Alexa Gifford
Suzanne Farley
Russ Kenyon
Lisa Fitzgerald

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Sara Paduano
Rebecca Donovan

EX-OFFICIO

Alison Grems,
Canandaigua Chamber

WELCOME – Chairman Mike Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and thanked David Linger of Finger Lakes Gifts & Lounge for hosting the meeting. David welcomed everyone and shared information about his business. Valerie Knoblauch invited board members to join Geneva City Manager Matt Horn on a short tour of the Linden Street area and the Smith Opera House after the meeting.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS – David Hutchings moved to **approve the Minutes of the May 2, 2012 Board of Directors Meeting**. Carl Carlson seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie Knoblauch presented the financial reports for April, May and year-to-date, noting that we are right on target with budget overall. David Hutchings asked if spending is over budget for leisure and e-brand because we are doing more. Valerie responded that this a result of the timing of invoices and doing more – particularly with matching funds. Frank Riccio moved to **accept the April and May financial reports**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie presented two policies that were reviewed by the board at the May 2, 2012 meeting. Mary Luckern moved to **approve the Staff involvement in local or regional tourism boards policy and the Process for Determining Compensation for Chief Executive Employee policy**. John Brahm seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie presented four policies for review.

The Sharing of Tourism Information and Research policy has not been reviewed since 2002, but has served the organization well; Valerie has made minor language changes.

John Brahm moved to **approve the Sharing of Tourism Information and Research policy**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chief Staff Executive Continuation Policy was last updated in 2003. David Hutchings inquired whether the organization had a succession plan in place; Valerie noted that this policy covers that in general, but will look to see if a more extensive and specific policy is common and desired. John Brahm moved to **approve the Chief Staff Executive Continuation Policy**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS – continued

Valerie noted that changes in technology have necessitated a new policy on Use of Personal Devices at Work and For Work, constructed in cooperation with the Executive Committee and staff input. This policy allows employees to waive the use of company devices in favor of personal devices and that the waiver provides that the use of personal devices is subject to compliance with all company policies. Bob Bennett inquired whether there was an exit policy regarding personal devices. Valerie noted that there is an employee exit procedure and review and this should be added to it. John Brahm moved to **approve the Electronic Communications: Use of personal devices at work and for work policy**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The next step will be to get the waiver in place. Valerie would like insights and samples for this and will run any waivers by the executive committee and other experts.

Valerie made a change in language to the Second Signature Required for Checks in Excess of \$5,000, changing the word check to payments, modified to allow for electronic banking.

John Brahm moved to **approve the Second Signature Required for Payments in Excess of \$5000 policy**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie presented a new policy related to financial processes, contributed to by the Executive Committee. The Financial Payments and Transaction Processing policy will allow the organization to utilize wire transfers and electronic payments in addition to traditional paper checks and credit cards to increase efficiency and economy. Dan Fuller suggested amending the language in the first paragraph from “in compliance with applicable laws” to “in compliance with applicable laws and with the regulations of our financial institutions.” David Linger moved to **approve the Financial Payments and Transaction Processing policy as amended**. Mary Luckern seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Valerie presented a first draft of the Credit Card Policy. David Hutchings suggested adding the positions that will receive credit cards, with their respective credit limits, as well as the overall company credit limit. David also suggested having a standard form to be signed by the card user to replace a missing receipt. John Brahm noted the importance of having receipts at audit time. Valerie will make changes to the draft Credit Card Policy for the July 18th meeting.

Valerie reported that the Videography RFP was awarded to two contractors. Dixon Schwabl Associates was awarded a contract for 10 videos at a total cost of \$32,175. LaBarge Media was awarded a contract for 9 videos at a total cost of \$36,000. Both contracts were reviewed and recommended for approval by Russ Kenyon.

The position statement on Enhanced Gaming at Finger Lakes Casino & Racetrack was reviewed by the board at the May 2, 2012 meeting. Valerie made only one change, correcting the number of proposed allowed locations from nine to seven. Carl Carlson moved to **approve the position statement on Enhanced Gaming at Finger Lakes Casino & Racetrack**. David Linger seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mike Kauffman abstained.

CHAMBER REPORTS – Alison Grems reported that the Canandaigua Chamber’s new Visitors Guide is printed and distributed. The City of Canandaigua’s downtown landscaping plan will not be in place until 2013. The Chamber is continuing their negotiations with the City of Canandaigua for the creation of an Economic Development position. Barbara Walters retired officially on May 30, 2012. Sandy Wagner was recently hired as Administrative Assistant.

CHAMBER REPORTS – continued

Jessica Bacher, Tourism Committee chair, reported for the Geneva Chamber. The first installment of the NYS grant for the Finger Lakes Boating Museum has been received by the City of Geneva. The Chamber expects to be in temporary quarters for approximately 18 months until the completion of the new building which will house the Chamber, Visitor Center and the Finger Lakes Boating Museum.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT – We have received a request for a tourism representative on the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board. Jessica Bacher most recently served on the board, and explained that the organization is part of the NYS Dept. of Labor, and serves job seekers and employers in four counties with employment training, workshops and internships. Valerie noted that the Regional Economic Development Councils have placed an emphasis on job growth, and that companies who participate in job training programs are viewed favorably for grant applications. Two recommendations for board members have been forwarded.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS –

Goal C. Research and Data Collection.

Strategy 9: Research and data gathering systems are standardized and nimble both in terms of collection and evaluation as well as in communication.

Action Item: Quality tourism products are essential. Ensure quality by auditing and assessment and sharing results. Consider “secret shopper program” or the like.

This year’s tactic is a program for lodging evaluation. Staff members are encouraged to stay at an Ontario County hotel and complete a series of questions on their experience. They may alternatively have a family member stay, but the employee must spend some time at the hotel, and the family member must report. So far, Valerie and Rebecca have had family members stay and report. These reports provide valuable insight, and can be shared with the hotel management if they wish.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Valerie reminded the board about our Economic Development Analysis Tool, which was last used in 2008. Sue Vary, Ontario County Economic Development, contacted Valerie regarding a proposal by Turtle Rock Hollow. Valerie met with Sue Vary and the property owner, who has agreed to provide information to our board to assess the project based on our Analysis Tool. Valerie will forward a packet with this information to board members by the end of the week. The project is a facility which will include a ropes course, kayaking, and cabins, and is near the end of the approval process with the Town of Canadice. Valerie asked that board members be alert to any potential conflict of interest, and to notify Valerie.

The Regional Economic Development Council is preparing for the next round of Consolidated Funding Applications. Valerie has been asked for three letters of support and has provided these.

Valerie has been asked to rejoin the U.S. Travel National Council for Destination Organizations. Her term will start in September. She remains on the U.S. Travel Communications Committee.

MARKETING REPORT – Valerie shared AJ Shear’s “by the numbers” report on FLVC’s National Tourism Week activities, along with great photos of all the volunteers.

The Finger Lakes TRYathlon was an event scheduled for June 9th to generate PR around the Nature’s Health Club concept. While the actual event was cancelled due to the weather, two highly qualified journalists came through: Reiner Jenss writes for National Geographic’s Intelligent Travel, and Carol Cain is well-known blogger “NYCMama”. Both produced great articles. Valerie shared the link to view these articles.

EDUCATIONAL FOCUS - Valerie introduced Matt Horn, Geneva City Manager. Matt spoke about the City of Geneva’s investments in tourism - the City’s strategic focus on cultural attractions, outdoor events, downtown and lakefront areas all tie in with tourism. City businesses have benefitted from recent support and grants from New York State and Ontario County in amounts varying from \$20,000 to \$500,000. The City of Geneva has received the first installment on their \$2.5 million grant from New York State for the Finger Lakes Boating Museum, and has signed contracts with the state, architects, and engineers.

ADJOURN – Dick Maltman moved to adjourn, Carl Carlson seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m. Several staff and board members toured the Linden/Seneca Street area including Microclimate [a wine bar], a soon-to-be gallery and event space, and the Smith Opera House. We were greeted by the proprietors/directors at each location and provided an overview of their vision for their facilities.

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 18, 2012 12:00 p.m.
 Hemlock-Canadice State Forest
 Directions to follow, picnic lunch provided