

Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2026
Via Zoom

Present: Erin Katzker, Doug Dello Stritto, Amber Gansert-Dagnesi, Mike Riley, Kate Pelkey, Jessica Schneider, Stephen Selvek, Ahna Wilson

Staff: Courtney Kasper, Hilary Fenner, Dawn Lubaszewski, Noah Howard, Lynne Sweet

Absent: Brian DiBernardo, Aileen McNabb-Coleman

Excused: Kristen Lunkenheimer-Slocum, Kate Grindstaff, Jackie Schnurr, Laura Hahn, Jacob Hamilton, Kari Terwilliger

Presiding Officer: E. Katzker

Secretary:

The meeting was called to order at 8:36am by E. Katzker and recognized a lack of quorum. No voting will take place at this meeting.

I. Guest Report: Charlene Tarver, Fund Development Incubator

Charlene reported on the fourth class of the program, which currently has 13-14 participating nonprofit organizations. The main challenges identified by participants were grant writing support and donor identification strategies, particularly for older donor demographics. The next in-person session is scheduled for April 23rd from 2-5pm at the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, and the board requested an invitation be sent for calendar planning.

II. Approval of Minutes

The meeting did not have quorum, so March 2026 meeting minutes were not approved.

III. Treasurer's Report (D. Dello Stritto)

Doug provided a financial update on the P&L and Budget vs. Actuals, noting that the occupancy tax collection payment from Q4 2025 has been received for the Q1 voucher to the tourism office and highlighted an insurance-related expense at 238% of budget but it is a small fiscal amount.

The meeting did not have quorum, so the Treasurer's report was not approved.

IV. Committee Reports

(a) Advocacy (C. Kasper):

C. Kasper shared an update from the Advocacy Committee, announcing that tourism support grants would open April 8, and she presented the fourth advocacy video highlighting the importance of tourism in Cayuga County.

(a) Audit & Financing (A. Gansert Dagnesi):

A. Gansert Dagnesi deferred to C. Kasper who reported that auditors had completed their work the previous week and an update on the audit timeline would be available by the end of the week or early the following week.

The meeting did not have quorum, so the committee reports were not approved.

IV. Marketing (H. Fenner)

H. Fenner provided an update on sales and marketing activities, highlighting their successful first-time attendance at the Pennsylvania Bus Association marketplace where they spoke to about

100 travel planners. She reported on an ongoing luxury campaign with FLRTC that will conclude this month, with updated metrics expected by the end of the month or early May. H. Fenner also shared that their Olympic advertising campaign generated 381,000 impressions, including 56,000 from the men's hockey championship, and that they updated their listings to be more cohesive across memberships and chambers of commerce. We are currently in discussions with Nia Boothman about joining us as a tourism ambassador and micro-influencer. This initiative aligns with our strategic plan. H. Fenner provided updates on several initiatives, including coordinated interviews with FLX Local Media for activations and live remotes, the printing of the Sweet Treat Trail brochure, and website updates. The team discussed their presence at the Sinclair wedding show and the development of a new wedding trifold marketing material. H. Fenner also announced that an intern from CCC will join the team this summer to help with social media and content creation, particularly focusing on Gen Z perspectives. She presented Zartico data on food and beverage tourism at a New York State Tourism Industry Association webinar, highlighting Cayuga Cuisine and strong local visitor numbers willing to travel up to 50 miles for experiences.

VI. PR (N. Howard):

N. Howard outlined plans for four hosted media visits in 2026 focusing on heritage, outdoor recreation, wine, and lifestyle travel, including visits from wine writers and travel influencers. N. Howard shared his experience at a winemaker's dinner at Quarry Ridge Winery, where he met the Doyle family and discussed plans for a wine region familiarization tour in the fall.

VII. Executive Director (C. Kasper):

C. Kasper presented data from the Zartico report showing high out-of-state visitation, particularly from Philadelphia, New York City, and Ohio, during off-season months. She also reported that the Market New York grant for the Go Beyond campaign had been successfully completed, with website traffic increasing by 490%, and noted that occupancy tax collections for 2025 were slightly down from predictions due to lower Q1 collections, though the year-end total was still close to budget. C. Kasper discussed tourism impacts from rising gas prices and is exploring a shifted marketing focus toward local and regional visitors, particularly promoting outdoor recreation and the Sweet Treat Trail. The Harriet Tubman NYS Byway project is on track for Phase One approval in June, with welcome parties planned for September in Cayuga County, Auburn, and other areas. A new Finger Lakes brochure Trails Less Traveled featuring Cayuga County highlights was presented, along with a recommendation to view accompanying promotional videos.

The meeting did not have quorum, so the staff reports were not approved.

VI. Unfinished Business (C. Kasper):

None

VII. Announcements:

- **M. Riley shared they had the first overnight cycling tourist noting that the season has begun.**
- **D. Dello Stritto shared information about the DEC birding guide.**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:29 am by A. Gansert-Dagnesi and seconded by D. Dello Stritto. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Approved by: Erin katzker

Recorded by Lynne Sweet