

Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from March 5, 2024
Via Zoom

Present: Erin Katzker, Sallee Ten Eyck, Erin McElhinney Kate Grindstaff, Doug Dello Stritto, Amanda Hennessey, Ahna Wilson, Sara Douglass, Andrea Seamans, Kirsten Gosch, Brian DiBernardo, Jenny Haines Chuck Mason, Nancy Gable, Kristen Lunkenheimer-Slocum, Steven Lynch

Staff: Karen Kuhl, Claire Dunlap, Dawn Lubaszewski, Ash Murray, Lynne Sweet

Absent:

Excused: Melody Smith Johnson

Guest: Kari Terwilliger

Presiding Officer: E. Katzker

Secretary: E. McElhinney

The meeting was called to order at 8:33am by E. Katzker

E. Katzker welcomed K. Terwilliger to the board. K. Terwilliger will be taking S. Lynch's ex-officio position as S. Lynch has been appointed county manager and will be stepping down from the Tourism Board.

I. Approval of February 2024 BOD Minutes

No corrections.

A motion to approve the February minutes was made by A. Seamans, seconded by E. McElhinney All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

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

The profit side of the Profit and Loss statement looks very weak, however that will be rectified by the next meeting when we receive our first quarter occupancy tax check.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by E. McElhinney, seconded by A. Seamans.

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

III. Committee Reports

a) Executive (E. Katzker):

The executive committee met in early February and discussed updating the bylaws, the lodging feasibility study, and the mobile information center. The committee also talked about the "way finding" signs. Karen talked to Finger Lakes Region about the possibility of a region wide project, they have opted not to participate because of concern of conflict of current branding. The way finding signs project for the county remains in flux. Also discussed at the meeting is the occupancy tax. The local law is up for its three-year renewal this year. B. DiBernardo asked if Airbnb and Vrbo is subject to the occupancy tax. K. Kuhl answered that yes, owners are responsible to pay the tax. If the property is registered on AirBnB or Finger Lakes Premier properties, the money will come directly from the organization, without disclosing the specific

property. Also discussed was the STR report and finding a less expensive alternative. The audit is also underway.

b) Education (K. Gosch):

The Travel Unity Individual Certificate training, which is the Frontline DEI training, will be held in May and it is being paired with the youth summit and tourism career exploration fair. Ash Murray and two others from the Inns of Aurora are taking the Travel DEI Practitioner course put on through The Travel Unity organization. Two front line FAM's will take place in 2024. The annual meeting will take place at 10/10- BBQ in Moravia at 3pm on June 4th. For the annual meeting we will be celebrating inclusive awards. We'll be looking to identify locations in the county that have gone above and beyond with regards to ADA requirements and sensory activities. So far, we have three nominations.

c) Advocacy & Outreach (K. Grindstaff):

The Advocacy and Outreach committee met, and mainly focused on Pride of Place and the DEI grant. The grant application has been released and will be due on April 15th. The notification will be out by early May. We are reaching out to organizations that we hope will apply. The Pride of Place campaign continues, and this year we specifically will highlight industry vs the individual because it will have a bigger impact.

d) Audit & Finance (S. Ten Eyck):

Based on maintaining 50% of operating costs in the reserve account, which is our CNY Community Foundation account, it is recommended that we transfer \$45,000 -\$85,000 from our operating account. K. Kuhl suggested we split the difference and transfer \$60,000 once we get the Q1 occupancy check from the county.

D. Dello Stritto made a motion to transfer the \$60,000 to maintain the 50% of operating costs in our reserve account. The transfer should occur after the Q1 occupancy tax is received from the county. E. McElhinney seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

e) Planning (S. Lynch):

This is S. Lynch's last planning report. Both the 2024 PR plan and the marketing plan were discussed. The summer FAM was discussed. The lodging feasibility study was discussed and recommended to be presented to the legislature as part of the economic development plan for the north end of Owasco lake.

E. Katzker, on behalf of the board, thanked S. Lynch for his service as a board member. A. Seamans reiterated.

f) Human Resources (A. Seamans):

New board members and a new slate of officers were discussed at the last committee meeting, and the list should be ready for a vote in the May meeting. S. Ten Eyck has sold her business, Summerhill Brewery. She will be leaving the board; however, she has agreed to remain on the board until June. We will be filling that position with a one-year term.

g) Conflict of Interest (E. McElhinney)

Nothing to report.

A motion to approve the Committee Reports was made by K. Grindstaff, seconded by A. Seamans. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

IV. Group Sales and Marketing Report (C. Dunlap):

The Heartland travel trade show was a disappointment. We're going to reach out to the organization to see if we can get more leads. The AAA club alliance webinar is taking place next week, it will be live and recorded. It will go out to 140 stores and we're hoping it will bring more visitors. The Wander app is live, and we're excited to gather data. The new webpage Discover the Black Owned Business has been launched.

V. Public Relations Report (A. Murray):

Danielle Desir Corbett visited Cayuga County for her podcast The Thought Card, which will release an episode about her experiences ahead of Harriet Tubman Day. Press releases sharing information about the Black-owned businesses webpage, Harriet Tubman poster, Harriet Tubman events grant, and Wander Maps partnership are being sent to media outlets. 2024 proactive pitches are being well-received and have generated additional media coverage. Tour Cayuga will be hosting a pre-conference FAM for the International Food and Wine Travel Writers Association.

VI. Director's Report (K. Kuhl):

The Explore National History in Cayuga County poster series, created by David Owens, has a prominent historical individual and the location within the county where you can go learn more about that individual. The Harriet Tubman poster, being launched March 10th for her birthday celebration, was done in conjunction with the National Park Service. Others in the series yet to be released : William Seward – Seward House Museum, Ted Case – Cayuga Museum, Emily Howland – Howland Stone Store Museum, and Henry Wells – Wells College. The annual report is ready and is available in the office for anyone that wants a printed copy, and copies will be taken to the next legislative planning committee meeting and it's available on the website.

The Parks and Trails of NYS contacted us regarding the application for Empire State Canal Trail town. They did not choose our joint application, but they have strongly encouraged us to reapply next year and gave us goals for the upcoming year to strengthen our application. The culinary videos are still under development. The Sweet Treat trail brochures are out for printing, and we'll be doing a market takeover at the Equal Rights Heritage Center on August 3rd.

We have been selected as a finalist for an E-Tourism award for our Where You Go Matters campaign which is a big honor considering we're up against Costa Rica and Visit St Louis for the award. Claire will be at the conference representing us and will also serve as a moderator for a panel on inclusive initiatives around the US.

A motion to approve Public Relations, Group Sales and Marketing, and the Executive Director's Report was made by J. Haines, seconded by E. McElhinney. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

VII. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business

VIII. Announcements:

- E. McElhinney announced that the I love NY photoshoot took place at the Inns of Aurora and it was a positive experience, and thanked K. Kuhl for pointing them in that direction.
- E. Katzker announced that the Rev Theatre spring after school program for grades 1-8 starts March 6th
- K. Terwilliger announced that the planning stages are under way for “Route 90 on Cayuga Lake” DRI award and encourages any ideas and suggestions. Press releases will be sent to K. Kuhl to share with group.
- K. Kuhl announced that Melody Smith-Johnson was interviewed with Spectrum News for the Black Business Owners Webpage.

A motion to adjourn was made by K. Gosch, seconded by B. DiBernardo at 9:40 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by E. McElhinney,

Recorded by Lynne Sweet