

Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from May 7, 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, Kari Terwilliger, Aileen McNabb-Coleman

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

Absent:

Excused: Melody Smith Johnson

Presiding Officer: E. Katzker

Secretary: E. McElhinney

The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by E. Katzker

I. Approval of April 2024 BOD Minutes

No corrections.

A motion to approve the April minutes was made by A. Seamans, seconded by D. Dello Stritto

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

II. 2023 Audit with Fust Charles

Christopher Timmons and Tom Knych presented the audit results. 2023 was scheduled to be a 'review' however CCCVB exceeded the \$1,000,000 revenue threshold. This resulted in a full audit. Fust Charels plans to issue a clean opinion which provides a reasonable level of assurance regarding the presentation of financial statements. Revenue is higher primarily due to the timing of the Q4 occupancy tax.

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

The reports show no surprises and following the audit report, no additional reporting is needed.

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

All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

IV. Committee Reports

- a) **Executive (E. Katzker):** Nothing to report.
- b) **Education (K. Gosch):** Nothing to report.
- c) **Advocacy & Outreach (K. Grindstaff):** Nothing to report.
- d) **Audit & Finance (S. Ten Eyck):** Met on May 1st to go over the Audit which was just presented.
- e) **Planning:** No Report, chairperson to be decided at upcoming meeting.
- f) **Human Resources (A. Seamans):**

Three people will cycle off the Board of Directors - K. Gosch, C. Mason and A. Seamans.

New Board Members to present are Jacob Hamilton, Kate Petley, Michael, Riley

Two Board members have resigned- N. Gable and S. Ten Eyck.

Two new members to finish these terms are Laura Hahn finishing S. Ten Eyck term to end 2025 and Amber Gansert-Dagnesi to finish N. Gables term to end 2028. A. Seamans asked if anyone had any names to add to the slate of presented new Board Members. No names were given.

A. Hennessy, A. Wilson, S. Douglass, and K. Grindstaff are all renewing their terms.

B. Seamans asked for a motion to approve the new slate of board members.

A motion to approve the new slate of Board Members was made by D. Dello Stritto, seconded by E. McElhinney. The new slate of Board Members was approved.

g) **Conflict of Interest (E. McElhinney):** Nothing to report.

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

V. TAP (Formerly known as BTI)

Colleen Onuffer, Director of Public Relations for TAP, led the report alongside Jessica Lewis of LaLew Public Relations. The team reported on its Q1 content creation, which included monthly blog posts for the Tour Cayuga website. TAP also highlighted the press trips which it helped secure, including Shayla Martin (NYT), Danielle Desir Corbett (The Thought Card), and Kenneth Miles (The Trenton Journal). TAP's quarterly report also lists completed media outreach and many key media placements.

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

We have a lot of marketing campaigns underway. The Cayuga cuisine campaign is underway, five videos can be found on YouTube and at least five more will be added. The Sweet Streat Trail campaign launched May 1 for its 11th season. The Historical Poster Series has launched as well. The Travel Unity Forum will take place on May 15th in cooperation with Travel Unity. It is a 3-part event that features a youth summit held at Auburn Public Theater, a TUIC (Travel Unity Individual Certificate) training and a DEI Travel Industry Discussion with both of those being held at Hilton Garden Inn. We have invited all front-line staff for the FREE training and have gathered industry professionals on both a local and regional level.

Recite Me is an accessibility tool that provides data to help us improve our website. We found some interesting insights on the quarterly report to help us implement on our website.

VII. Public Relations Report (A. Murray):

In collaboration with I Love NY, we hosted seven travel writers from New Zealand for a night in Fair Haven, where they stayed at Pleasant Beach Hotel and experienced Colloca Estate Winery, the Sterling Nature Center, and more. Upcoming trips include a pre-conference IFWTWA (International Food & Wine Travel Writers Association) trip hosted in conjunction with Seneca County and a summer tour for frontline hospitality workers. Press releases about eclipse glasses recycling, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Corridor meeting, and the Sweet Treat Trail were sent to the media. Pitches were sent out to I Love NY and targeted media lists about spring flowers, water activities, Juneteenth, and Memorial Day. Cayuga County received 130 media placements—many of which featured Aurora. A. Murray attended the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance Literature Exchange and will attend NOMADNESS Fest in September.

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

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway: led a TPA discussion at the 2024 New York State Tourism Conference in Niagara Falls, attended Lockport and Rochester public meetings and we are preparing for the Auburn Public Meeting on May 13th.

The occupancy tax law was passed as is at the Legislature meeting in April. Chair of the Board, Erin Katzker, Executive Director, Karen Kuhl, Auburn Mayor Giannettino, and Chair of the Legislature Aileen McNabb Coleman met earlier in the month to discuss the needs of the city's cultural and historical sites. The Cayuga County Tourism Office agreed to review the current grant program and identify potential ways of expanding the current structure and consider the qualification to allow for more operational and potentially capital improvement projects. We will be reviewing other grant models around the state and with the Advocacy Committee and will be developing a proposed update of the current grant program of county, cultural and historical sites.

Nikita Jankowski has been contracted to work with the tourism office on a research project relating to the Indigenous Nations in Cayuga County. The tourism office would like to ensure that the narrative we use is not only historically accurate, but also connected to the current Indigenous Nations.

We received 21 DEI Harriet Tubman grant applications. Despite efforts to reach new organizations, most of the applicants are repeat applicants. The advocacy committee has received the grant applications along with the matrix to review and approve applications. The advocacy committee will meet on May 9th to select the grant recipients and announcements will be made that same day.

Our next meeting is the Annual Meeting at 10/10 BBQ in Moravia, NY on June 4th at 3pm,

A motion to approve Public Relations, Group Sales and Marketing, and the Executive Director's Report was made by A. Seamans, seconded by K. Gosch. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

IX. Unfinished Business- No unfinished business.

X. Announcements:

- **E. Katzker:** Erin's mother was in London recently and discovered an art sculpture that had historically significant activists, writers, musicians, explorers, and political leaders from the continent of Africa and among them was Harriet Tubman.
- **D. Dello Stritto:** Thank you to all that attended the Sterling Nature Center ribbon cutting on April 24th. Approximately 250 people attended, and Rep. Aileen McNabb Coleman was the emcee.
- **S. Ten Eyck:** Thank you to the board and it has been a pleasure serving as a member.
- **A. Seamans:** The Old Erie Canal Heritage Park is now open. The senior class at Port Byron school has been very active. There are a lot of activities and events coming up.
- **C. Dunlap:** The staff had a Canal Cleanup crew for Canal Clean Sweep on April 20
- **K. Kuhl:** It is important that all the board members attend the annual meeting.

- **K. Kuhl:** The importance of Harriet Tubman as an international hero as demonstrated by the sculpture Erin Katzker described. Harriet Tubman's legacy helps to inspire travel and drive visitation in Cayuga County.
- **K. Grindstaff:** The Seward House is starting its speaker series, starting with Author Kate Clifford Larson.
- **K. Terwilliger:** Monday May 13 is the first DRI planning meeting at Union Springs Fire Hall. The ribbon cutting for the new ADA kayak launch date is to be announced.
- **E. McElhinney:** Made the board aware of Wells College closing, and the resulting impact on Aurora and the community at large.
- **K. Gosch:** The Cayuga Museum will break ground on renovations and will have a satellite location in downtown Auburn while work is going on June through Sept.
- **C. Mason:** Falcon Park will host 2 Major tournaments for the NJCAA Men's Division 3 baseball World Series in May. This will bring in a lot of visitors to Auburn and Cayuga County. The tourism office will help with welcome bags.

A motion to adjourn was made by S. Douglas, seconded by K. Lunkenheimer at 9:54am. All were in favor.

Approved by E. McElhinney,

Recorded by Lynne Sweet