

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, January 15, 2015. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Ebert, Bill Hottel, Karen Helm, Tootie Rinker, Eddie Richard, Eric Campbell

**Board Members Absent:** Theresa Gaines, Sharon Farinholt, Priya Patel

**Staff:** Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager

**Call To Order:** Ms. Rebecca Ebert, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:** Mrs. Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The November 2014 minutes were approved on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Tootie Rinker.

### **Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates**

Mrs. Coates asked the board for comments and questions on the 2014 Annual Report detailing the department's accomplishments that she distributed via email.

Mrs. Coates informed the board that the Canada geese have returned to the property after being gone for several months. The new sign for the Visitors Center along Pleasant Valley Road is complete, and it was featured with a photo in the Winchester Star. Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe has ordered the replacement of all the "Welcome to Virginia" signs across the states, and added one at Dulles Airport, as he said he would when he spoke at the Virginia Tourism Corporation conference.

Since the last board meeting, Mrs. Coates assisted several travel writers in December, writing on topics such as genealogy, antiques, and Kernstown Battlefield. This past weekend, the Convention & Visitors Bureau staffed an exhibitor booth at Shenandoah University's International Saxophone Symposium.

The Winchester-Frederick County Artisans' Trail committee has met twice, and is developing plans for Informational Sessions and a Naming Event to be held in the coming months. Mrs. Coates displayed Winchester-Frederick County's ad in the 2015 Virginia Travel Guide and the Chamber of Commerce guide. She also announced the CVB's Visitors Guide is in production, due to be released in March.

### **Visitor and Community Relations Specialist's Report – Renee Bayliss**

Mrs. Bayliss demonstrated how the Winchester-Frederick County CVB's website has been converted to a responsive website. This allows the content to scale in size to fit any size screen, including phones and tablets. This will take the place of the previous separate mobile site, and eliminates the need to make updates to two separate websites. The website's content management system software has also been updated to a new version.

### **New Business:**

#### **Report from the Finance Committee on the 2016 Budget – Bill Hottel**

Mr. Hottel reviewed the 2016 Budget with the board and distributed copies to all present. He noted that the budget proposes that Mrs. Bayliss be made a full-time employee of the CVB, and no longer shared with the Parks and Recreation Department. He also noted that the fund balance is being exhausted. This may in effect require the department to request additional funds in the next budget.

#### **Appointment of Nominating Committee to recruit two board members**

Rebecca Ebert informed the board that Theresa Gaines will be resigning from the board due to a change in employment, and she asked for volunteers to be on the nominating committee. Priya Patel agreed to participate prior to the meeting and Karen Helm also volunteered. Bill Hottel made a motion to approve the committee, seconded by Eric Campbell.

#### **Civil War Sesquicentennial: What's left? – Eric Campbell**

Mr. Eric Campbell of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park reviewed the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial events for 2015. Virginia will hold a state conference in Charlottesville and a finale concert on Memorial Day. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is asking local sites to develop events around the theme "1865 and Beyond." Winchester-Frederick County's Civil War Weekend is set to take place August 22-23, 2015.

#### **Public Comments**

Jennifer Bell noted that Old Town Winchester's Chocolate Escape will take place February 7.

Karen Helm announced that the Patsy Cline Historic House is working on a singing contest event in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 am on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Eddie Richard.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Visitor & Community Relations Specialist, City of Winchester