

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, October 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, Dan Martin, Karen Helm, Bill Hottel, Sharon Farinholt, Kristen Laise

Board Members Absent: Eddie Richard, Priya Patel, Eric Campbell

Staff: Amy Simmons, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Derek Gomes, The Winchester Star; Justin Kerns, incoming Executive Director, WFCCVB.

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The September 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Bill Hottel, seconded by Karen Helm.

Executive Director's Report – Amy Simmons, Interim Director

Mrs. Simmons reported that the CVB has been working to prepare for the arrival of Mr. Kerns by organizing the offices, board room, and storage. She has completed compiling a binder which includes the department's operating policies. Preparation is also underway for the Worlds of Work (WOW) interactive career fair that the Convention & Visitors Bureau will be participating in. The CVB has also set up a display for October at the Welcome Center on I-66 in Manassas.

Other items discussed included a recent visit from a travel writer that resulted in a blog post, "5 Reasons to Visit Winchester," and the number of leads that the CVB has received so far from the ad that was placed in Southern Living Magazine.

Q & A with new Director – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns introduced himself and gave the board some background on his education, experience, and his personal working style. He plans to be out working face to face with tourism stakeholders, and noted that he enjoys speaking to groups and connecting with the community.

Ms. Sharon Farinholt noted that she was not able to meet Mr. Kerns until today, due to conducting interviews at the same time for the new Chamber director, who has now been hired. She would like to introduce them to each other.

Ms. Karen Helm reported to Mr. Kerns that the director of the Artisans Center of Virginia would like to meet with him in November to discuss the status of the recently named “Top of Virginia Artisan Trail.” She is also requesting assistance from the CVB on the Patsy Cline Historic House’s marketing leverage grant paperwork.

Ms. Rebecca Ebert mentioned plans to welcome Mr. Kerns and introduce him to the community with a meet and greet breakfast reception.

New Business:

POS System for Front Desk – Amy Simmons, Interim Director

Mrs. Simmons informed the board of plans to upgrade the cash register at the front desk to a POS computer system. Staff has seen a demonstration from one company, and several systems will be explored before a decision is made. Mrs. Karen Helm noted that staff should ensure the system has the capability of being set up to take credit card payments when the CVB sells tickets for events held by other organizations.

Public Comments

Ms. Sharon Farinholt reminded the board of the Battlefield Half Marathon, which will be held the first weekend in November. Mrs. Jennifer Bell informed the board of OctoBeer Fest, which is this weekend, and events at the Farmer’s Market and Spooktacular the following weekend. Ms. Kristen Laise announced that this is the Battle of Cedar Creek reenactment weekend. It will be a smaller event than the 150th anniversary event last year, which drew 6,000 reenactors.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 am on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Dan Martin.

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