

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 19, 2019. The meeting began at 8:03 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Lani Pendleton, Shannon Moeck, Kristen Laise, Priya Patel, Eddie Richard

Board Members Absent: Andy Gyurisin, Karen Helm

Staff: Justin Kerns, Paige Bridgeforth (intern)

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Judy McKiernan, Winchester City Council; Cynthia Schneider, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Shawn Hershberger, City of Winchester Development Services Director; Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors, Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

Call To Order: Kristen Laise, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The August minutes were approved on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Shannon Moeck.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns told the board about a sports tourism feasibility study that is being considered as a partnership project with the Economic Development offices. They would divide the costs, but Mr. Kerns was concerned about the price, and noted that they may want to consider proposals from some other companies. Mr. Kerns discussed how he has been improving Winchester/Frederick County's information on the Virginia Film Office's website, and during this he learned that the current permitting process of the City of Winchester may turn off potential film crews, because it must be completed 30 days in advance of filming. Filming is combined with special events permitting. It was noted that Frederick County does not have a permitting process. Mr. Kerns has also been in discussion with Shenandoah University about property maintenance and placement of potential banners for the front of the building. He noted that Virginia Tourism is helping bring a group of travel writers from the UK through the area soon, and the tourism office will be hosting them. Finally, Mr. Kerns distributed the 2018 Tourism Economic Fact Sheet to the board members.

Committee Reports:

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

Members of the committee were not able to attend the meeting.

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Lani Pendleton

The marketing committee reported that they have decided on BCF from Virginia Beach as the agency for the new ad campaign, after presentations from three companies. They noted that they were impressed with the agency's solid experience, use of data, and their follow up in terms of ROI.

Personnel Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Shannon Moeck

The committee has not met. Mrs. Bayliss noted that a CVB staff meeting was held in response to the personnel committee's recommendation.

Finance Committee – Priya Patel and Kristen Laise

The committee met and they are waiting on comparative numbers from Mr. Kerns, in addition to the cost of hiring BCF, and how that will fit into the budget. They also began discussions on next year's budget.

Unfinished Business:**Tourism Ambassador**

Priya Patel suggested that there could be a printed piece detailing the Tourism Ambassador program to distribute to employees that are not able to attend due to working evenings. The board also discussed the possibility of webinars or recordings of the program that could be made available.

New Business:**MATPRA Marketplace and Newcomer's Event Planning**

Mr. Kerns discussed plans for representing Winchester/Frederick County at the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance Marketplace and plans for the Newcomer's Event in October. He mentioned distributing a flyer to advertise the event through the school system.

Ideas and Input from Board Members and Public

The board discussed the arrival of "snowbirds" traveling south on Interstate I-81 this time of year, and asked what can be done to reach this audience. Mr. Kerns noted that the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership is working as a whole to market to snowbirds, and is advertising in Florida and other areas. Eddie Richard suggested the CVB create a list of barn wedding venues for those interested in planning weddings. Mr. Kerns mentioned it is on the website, but can consider creating something. Mr. Kerns and Kristen Laise noted that the announcements will now be done after the meeting has been adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 on a motion by Eddie Richard, seconded by Priya Patel.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Creative Design and Visitor Services Manager, City of Winchester