

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 16, 2021. The meeting began at 8:04 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Laura Kerr Wiley, Arthur Kearns, Julie Shaffer, Gwen Walker, Priya Patel

Board Members Absent: Lani Pendleton, Joey Gawrysiak, Ashley Sonntag

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss, MiKayla Hatfield

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Kristen Laise, Belle Grove Plantation; Holly Redding, Old Town Advancement Commission; Cynthia Schneider, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Ken Broadbent, The Zenith Group; Matt Haene, The Zenith Group; Caroline Varona, The Zenith Group; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Amanda Carter, Charrette Agency.

Call To Order: Gwen Walker, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The August minutes were approved on a motion by Laura Kerr Wiley, seconded by Priya Patel.

Executive Director's Report

Justin Kerns thanked Kristen Laise for her service to the board. He also discussed some of the activities of the CVB in the past month, including meeting with Terry Heder from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation regarding Civil War Weekend, a project to landscape the hillside by the spring outside the Visitors Center with native plants, and another visit from the Ghost Hunters television show, which has been filming in the area. He also noted that the Shenandoah Spirits Trail is going through a rebranding.

Committee Reports:

Member & Officer Nominations Committee – Kristen Laise

Although no longer serving on the committee, Kristen Laise noted that Rebecca Taylor is expected to be interviewed, and the committee is also looking for a for-profit business to replace Josh Huff, who was representing the Bright Box Theater.

Marketing Committee – Julie Shaffer and Lani Pendleton

The committee reported that they met and reviewed conceptual designs of ads, and Julie Shaffer noted that the ads focus on experiences. An example copy was passed around to the board.

Personnel Committee – Gwen Walker and Julie Shaffer

The Personnel Committee did not meet, and they had nothing to report at this time.

Finance Committee – Gwen Walker and Laura Kerr Wiley

Laura Kerr Wiley told the board that there is an overage in the reserve fund of about \$60,000 due to

reduced spending during Covid, and that they are in talks to work on the budget for the next fiscal year. Mr. Kerns asked if anyone had suggestions on expenditures for next year's budget.

Video Featurette Ad Hoc Committee – Arthur Kearns and Gwen Walker

Arthur Kearns reminded the board that the videographer stepped down, so they are waiting on videos from two new companies that are in the works now. Those videos will help them decide which company to continue using.

Sports Tourism Ad Hoc Committee –Julie Shaffer and Joey Gawrysiak

Justin Kerns reported that the committee is working on which five sports the group will focus its marketing on, and said that it was determined that there is a need for a sports calendar on the CVB's website. It was discussed how this would be done, and that Renee Bayliss would likely be responsible for maintaining the calendar.

Unfinished Business:

Strategic Plan Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that Don Anderson will be here in person for 2-3 days for stakeholder interviews for the strategic plan update. He noted that board members should expect the October board meeting to be about two hours long.

New Business:

Presentation of Recap of Summer Ad Campaign – Amanda Carter

Amanda Carter showed the results and recap of the spring and summer advertising campaign, which ended Labor Day weekend. She reviewed the goals, target market, and campaign performance numbers such as increased in website traffic, new users, and page views. She also showed growth of hotel occupancy, ADR, and demand over both 2019 and 2020. Our area outpaced other destinations in the Shenandoah Valley. She also noted that our top origin markets reflected our media placements, which were in the DC metro area and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Julie Shaffer asked about how this will affect the fall/holiday campaign. Amanda Carter described new targeting via Amazon that will enable the campaign to reach people through their interests. She hopes that this will really improve the targeting of the holiday campaign. She also mentioned the hashtag that will be used for the campaign, #howweholiday.

City and County Liaison Comments

The liaisons were not present at the meeting.

Public Comments

Holly Redding spoke about the DIG grant for façade improvements on Piccadilly Street and a partnership with the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley regarding murals. Ken Broadbent from The Zenith Group introduced two of his new employees.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Julie Shaffer, seconded by Arthur Kearns at 8:47 am.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Creative Design and Visitor Services Manager, Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau.