

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI
Tuesday, February 25, 2020

Attendees:

Dave Richards, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (via phone)
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer (via phone)
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane, Secretary
Thomas Kravitz
Michael Gwynn
Louis Yip

Also Attending:

Dr. Robert Billington, President, BVTC
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations, BVTC
Joan Loos, BVTC Staff

1. Call to Order. There being a quorum present, Dave Richards, called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from January 21, 2020. Tom Kravitz moved to accept the minutes from the January 21, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Mike Gwynn seconded the motion and the minutes of the January 21, 2020 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Judy Fischbach presented the Treasurer's Report via phone. She explained the Balance Sheet as of January 31, 2020 as compared to the previous year. There was a question about the entry for \$13,817.56 under Other Current Assets for Pre-Paid Train GL on the Balance Sheet. Judy will look into that and report back.

Judy explained the Income Statement for July 2019 through January 2020 and stated this was done prior to audit adjustments. Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane moved to accept the Treasurer's report as presented, pending explanation of one issue. Mike Gwynn seconded the motion and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Addendum: Natalie researched the entry in question and found that the \$13,817.56 entry for Pre-Paid Train is not for pre-paid tickets, but for pre-paid insurance on the train.

4. President's Report
 - a. Green Economy Bond. The Green Economy Bond will be on the ballot in November. There are no funds in the bond to support the Bicycle Mobility Plan. Bob is working with the Paths to Progress group to recommend to the House Finance Committee that \$5 million be put into the Green Economy Bond for work on the bike path. Bob explained the history of the Green Economy Bond and the importance of having funding for the bikeway. Without these funds, there is a possibility that the bikeway may never be complete. He also noted that the top voted-in bond is the Green Economy Bond, showing that the people of Rhode Island will support the bond.

- b. Cherry Blossom Princess. The 2020 Cherry Blossom princess has been chosen. She is a Harvard student from Woonsocket and was the valedictorian of her Woonsocket High School class. Governor Raimondo is not available for the crowning, so the crowning ceremony will take place at Woonsocket City Hall.
- c. Central Falls Landing. The project is progressing and windows are being installed today. We are working with the City of Central Falls to have programs for kids on the Blackstone River. The City is prepared to get bids for canoes and kayaks and will bring in a trainer. Our goal is to have 20 canoes and kayaks at Central Falls Landing.
- d. Project ZAP. September 2022 will mark the 50th anniversary of Project ZAP and the day that 10,000 people volunteered for a day to clean up the Blackstone River. A meeting of interested parties was held yesterday, February 24, 2020 to discuss whether people wanted to mark the 50th anniversary in some way. Should we celebrate what has been accomplished and recognize what still needs to be done? Bob asked Board members to spread the word to anyone they think would be interested in participating in the planning of such an event.
- e. William Blackstone Monument. The monument of William Blackstone, which will be located at the corner of Exchange Street and Roosevelt Avenue, has been completed. We are trying to involve the Indians in the story of William Blackstone. It was suggested that artistic groups create a rendering of what this area looked like at the time William Blackstone lived.
- f. Sports and Indoor/Outdoor Recreation. John Gibbons runs the RI Sports Council of which the Tourism Council is a part. Bob had a conversation with John Gibbons and Mark Brodeur about promoting sports venues in the Blackstone Valley. We have talked with R-1 Karting and also Twin River about using some of their land for sports. We have also met with Hannah Butler, Director of Special Events at McCoy Stadium on how we can use the stadium after baseball. Bob also noted that the staff will meet with Mark Brodeur tomorrow regarding branding and recreation.
5. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee members, Mike Gwynn, Dave Richards, Tom Kravitz and Bob Billington, reached out to potential new Board members to gauge their interest in joining the Board, as follows:
- Norm Deragon (American-French Genealogical Society in Woonsocket), who is interested in joining the Board.
- Roger Peloquin (formerly of Bristol Savings Bank).
- Jean Budnick of Pepin Lumber and the Buy Local group in Woonsocket, who has interest but her family's health is not good.
- Greg Devlin (Savers Bank) who did not get approval from his superiors to join our Board.
- Paul Ouellette, who has interest but has too many commitments at this time.
- Jennifer McLeod (Home2 Suites, Smithfield), who is no longer with the Home2 Suites, but the current sales manager may be interested.
- Kathy Roberts from the Glocester Business Association is interested in joining our Board.

Contact, followup or further vetting still needs to be done with several of the above candidates, as well as Paul Santucci and John Lefrancois.

Dave Richard moved to elect Kathy Roberts to the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Board of Directors. Tom Kravitz seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. The President is directed to inform Kathy.

Addendum: Bob spoke with Kathy Roberts who was excited to accept the nomination to the Board. Bob and Dave Richards will be meeting with Kathy soon for a briefing before the next Board meeting.

6. The Blackstone River Heritage and Environmental Trust – Bob would like to set up this trust. The Rhode Island Foundation would administer the trust. A certain percentage of funds will be paid out each year as designated. After discussion, Barry Mechanic moved that the fund be established with the Rhode Island Foundation. Tom Kravitz seconded and the motion was passed unanimously to establish a Blackstone River Heritage and Environmental Trust.
7. BVTC Fund Raisers. Board members were reminded to support, and received coupons for, the following fund raisers for the BVTC:

Sunday, March 8 – 11:30 am to 10 pm at Chelo's in Rumford (20% of check of diners with the BVTC coupon will be donated to the BVTC).

Thursday, April 2 – Rhode Island Spirits Distillery, 59 Blackstone Avenue, Pawtucket - \$5.00 of every sale will benefit the BVTC.
8. Adjournment. There being no further business, Mike Gwynn made a motion to adjourn, Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by Dave Richards at 1:19 pm.



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