

**Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.**  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council  
175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI  
Tuesday, October 26, 2021, 12 noon  
Via Zoom

**Attendees:**

Dave Richards, Chairman  
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman  
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer  
Kathy Roberts  
Michael Gwynn  
Lee Eskilsen

**Absent:**

Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane, Secretary  
Louis Yip  
Mark Brodeur

**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, Chairman Dave Richards called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm.
2. Minutes from the August 17, 2021 Meeting. Dave Richards moved to accept the minutes of the August 17, 2021 Board of Directors meeting as presented. Kathy Roberts seconded, and the minutes of the August 17, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Judy Fischbach reviewed the Balance Sheet as of September 30, 2021 compared to September 30, 2020, as well as the Income Statement, Budget vs. Actual, July - September 2021 and as compared to the previous year. Judy noted the increase in assets under Bank Accounts was due to the East Providence funds for developing a tourism program and from Polar Express tickets. There was discussion that the Polar Express ticket income should be listed under Deferred Revenue. Judy will look into why this was done. Judy explained how the Income Statement reflects the effect of getting funds from East Providence to develop their tourism program, selling Polar Express tickets and an increase in the hotel tax revenue. Dave Richards moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, Lee Eskilsen seconded and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

Judy expects to hear today from Patti Cerilli about the 2020 audit and we will be starting the 2021 audit.

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#### 4. President's Report.

Glocester Scarecrow Festival. Bob complimented Kathy and the Glocester Business Association on a job well done with the Scarecrow Festival and the Trick or Treat on Main Street. Bob encouraged the Board members to visit Chepachet to see the scarecrows. He and Kathy noted that there are many new businesses on Main Street, including the Hen House and a gallery over the Stone House Antiques. Kathy shared that Candlelight Shopping is coming up in December and also that Chepachet Wine and Spirits soon will be putting up their Santa sleigh and reindeer display, complete with Rudolph.

Polar Express Train Ride. Ticket sales are going well. We are re-creating the event this year based on COVID safety requirements. We are in the process of setting up the North Pole and a tent outside the Depot where all pre-boarding activities will take place this year.

East Providence Update. We have received funds from East Providence in order to develop a tourism program for them as part of the Blackstone Valley. We have been in meetings to cultivate ideas.

Woonsocket Depot Update. The BVTC is an official tenant of RIDOT. RIDOT is supportive of our Polar Express event, and we are following their rules and regulations.

Central Falls Landing. We will set up a future time to give Board members a tour of the property.

Blackstone Valley Expeditions and Kayak Program. Our kayak program taught 160 children how to paddle this summer.

SVOG Grant. Natalie applied for a Shuttered Venue Operator Grant for Polar Express. If we receive a grant, it will help with expenses this year as well as the loss of income from not being able to do Polar Express last year.

William Blackstone Sculpture. The conversation is ongoing. Bob is waiting to hear from the Chief Sachem of the Narragansetts.

Blackstone Valley Heritage and Environmental Fund. In the last year we put money (\$10,000 that Bob won at the Twin River event and \$5,000 from our golf tournament) in a fund through the RI Foundation. The income from this fund will be used to continue our programs. In a year, the fund has increased about \$3,800.

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Blackstone Valley Visitor Center. RIPTA will continue to support our Visitor Center, possibly for another 24-36 months.

Project ZAP. Bob played a video for the Board which was created to promote the ZAP50 event in 2022. He noted that we have come a long way from the ZAP event in 1972, but the Blackstone River still isn't swimmable, fishable and drinkable. With the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events, including a clean-up event with a goal of 10,000+ people participating all the way up to Worcester on August 27, 2022 and a celebration on September 9, 2022, our goal is to encourage the next generation to continue the work to clean up the Blackstone River. Bob has been in contact with the family of Dave Rosser, who led the "ZAP the Blackstone" effort in 1972 and has since passed away. His family is very excited to be part of the 2022 effort.

Other: Bob congratulated Mike Gwynn on a successful first year with the Woosox at Polar Park. Mike expressed his hope that perhaps the soccer stadium project in Pawtucket will be as successful for the city as the Polar Park project has been for Worcester.

Dave Richards moved to accept the President's Report as presented, Mike Gwynn seconded, and the President's Report was accepted unanimously.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, Mike Gwynn moved to adjourn the meeting, Judy Fischbach seconded and Dave Richards adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff



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