

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
1420 Broad Street, Central Falls
Wednesday, October 5, 2022 - 12 noon
Via Zoom

Attendees:

Dave Richards, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane, Secretary
Michelle Keach
Lee Eskilsen

Absent:

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 present, Chairman Dave Richards called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from July 20, 2022. Dave Richards moved to accept the minutes from the July 20, 2022 Board of Directors meeting. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded the motion and the minutes of the July 20, 2022 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach presented the Treasurer's Report. After cautioning that these are unaudited financial, she explained the Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2022, compared to June 30, 2021. Judy reviewed the total assets and explained the effect of the SVOG grant and the East Providence tax money on the assets. Natalie explained how these funds would be used by the Tourism Council. Under Liabilities, Judy explained how accounts payable are affected by advanced ticket sales and the East Providence Lodging Tax. She again cautioned that the Total Equity figures are unaudited totals. Judy reviewed the Income Statement July 2021 through June 2022 compared to July 2020 through June 2021 and explained the effect of large grants, ticket sales and lodging tax. She reviewed Total Expenses and explained the Rent category as opposed to the New Office category. Dave Richards moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded the motion and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.
4. President's Report.

Project ZAP50. Bob reported on the 50th anniversary of Project ZAP on August 27 and our efforts to take back the Blackstone River to make it swimmable, fishable and drinkable. Our goal was to raise \$50,000 and we are on target for that. We set the bar higher for the Federal delegation to continue to work on the condition of the river. On September 10 we celebrated and thanked the people and agencies who have been working and continue to work on meeting the goals for the Blackstone River.

The Explorer boat has been busy in October with classes coming in. The River Classroom is being supplied with microscopes, a SmartBoard TV and a weather station.

Polar Express begins on November 11. There will be a new look for Polar Express at the Depot this year with a Christmas Village set up in the Depot parking lot. Parking will be city-side and we hope passengers will visit Woonsocket businesses along their way to the Depot. To encourage this, the Tourism Council will give every business near the Depot a gift bag to raffle off to customers who come into their business. Bob reported that we are 76% sold out for Polar Express 2022.

The Dragonboat Races and Taiwan Day Festival was well-attended on September 3. We had 27 Dragonboat teams from all over the Northeast racing.

AutumnFest in Woonsocket is happening this weekend.

The Samuel Slater Canal Boat has had guests staying on it every weekend recently.

Bob reported that the Lodging Tax funds are increasing post-Covid and also because we have East Providence as part of the Blackstone Valley.

Thirty thousand dollars of East Providence funds are being used for a consultant to assess tours and tourism activities in that city. The Tourism Council is arranging for the consultant's visit.

The BVTC Kayak and Canoe program is going very well.

The Pirates on the Blackstone fall event is currently happening on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from Central Falls Landing, and is well-received by passengers who dress as pirates and look along the Blackstone River for treasure.

There have been discussions with the City of Pawtucket and Peregrine Property Management regarding the management of the Pawtucket Visitor Center. Peregrine may want to increase rent. We would like to manage it but would need funding to manage it, at least until the new Pawtucket-Central Falls train station is completed. When the station is completed, the Tourism Council will be more connected with Boston and New York. We are in talks now with the state, RIPTA and DOT to make the station work for us.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, Michelle Keach moved to adjourn the meeting, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded, and it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 12:39 p.m.