

**Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.**

Board of Directors Meeting  
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council  
175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI  
Wednesday, July 20 - 12 noon

**Attendees:**

Dave Richards, Chairman  
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer (via Zoom)  
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane, Secretary  
Michael Gwynn (via Zoom)  
Louis Yip  
Michelle Keach

**Absent:**

Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman  
Lee Eskilsen  
Mark Brodeur

**Also Attending:**

Dr. Robert Billington, President, BVTC  
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations, BVTC  
Joan Loos, BVTC Staff  
Patricia Cerilli, CPA, Mullen Scorpio Cerilli (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order. There being a quorum present, Chairman Dave Richards called the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m.
2. Approval of Notes from May 18, 2022. Louis Yip moved to accept the minutes from the May 18, 2022 Board of Directors meeting. Dave Richards seconded the motion and the minutes of the May 18, 2022 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach presented the Treasurer's Report beginning with the Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2022, compared to May 31, 2021. Judy reviewed the total assets and explained the increase from grant money and East Providence tax money. The Liabilities increased due to the East Providence Lodging Tax. Natalie explained the reason for the East Providence Lodging Tax being in the Liabilities section, as well as the funds that are earmarked for specific items. The Income Statement Budget vs. Actual for July 2021 to May 2022 was reviewed. Judy explained that there is a lot of income from grants which has not been expended yet for the intended purposes. Joyce Koutsogiane moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, Michelle Keach seconded the motion and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.
4. Financial Audit Report. Patricia Cerilli from Mullen Scorpio Cerilli reviewed the draft audit dated June 30, 2021 for the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc. In general, the audit went smoothly, and the organization received a clean opinion, modified because a year-end physical inventory was not observed. Patty explained the account entries in the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Activities, the Statement of Cash Flows and the Footnotes, which were all standard financial statement disclosures. She assured the Board of Directors that the financial statements the Board of Directors receives are accurate and the Board can feel confident in making decisions based on the reports they receive. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane moved to accept the Auditor's Draft Report as presented, Michelle Keach seconded, and the Auditor's Draft Report was unanimously approved as presented.

5. President's Report.

The Tourism Council organized a successful River's Day celebration on June 5, a fun, free event for the community to experience the activities available at Central Falls Landing.

On June 21 the "Central Falls Revealed" event took place, to show stakeholders and the general public everything that is available at the Landing as well to acknowledge everyone who played a role in revitalizing Central Falls Landing.

Bob noted that he and Dave Richards attended the memorial service for Board member Kathy Roberts recently.

The plans for ZAP-50 are moving along. We are hoping to get 10,000+ people to volunteer and clean up the watershed area on August 27, 2022.

The ZAP-50 Celebration will take place on September 10 on the grounds of Slater Mill, with music, speeches and food.

Dave Richards explained the issues surrounding the sewage spills into the Blackstone River recently and assured all that the treatment plant has a plan to ensure the spills don't happen again.

Bob gave a tour of the River Classroom and noted that we are expecting a weather station to be installed on the observation deck, and we will be receiving microscopes. He noted the room can also be used for community meetings.

Bob shared that the Samuel Slater Canal Boat is back in the water and is booked every weekend through AirBnB.

The Council is currently organizing the Dragonboat Festival on September 3. Team practices have already started at Central Falls Landing.

The Tourism Council participated in parades in Cumberland and Lincoln recently with one of the Dragonboats and the Ghost Army Tank.

The Tourism Council is also creating a Pirates on the Blackstone event for the fall using the Explorer.

Bob updated the Board on Polar Express 2022. There will be a Village Marketplace in the parking lot of the Depot this year. We are working with Boston Productions, who is doing creative work at the Depot, in the train and at the North Pole. To get an idea of the creative talents of Boston Productions, Bob suggested that Board members visit the Samuel Slater Experience, an interactive museum in Webster, Massachusetts.

We are awaiting grants with Commerce RI to help with technology, marketing and river restoration/shell fishing in the Pawtucket River.

Dave Richards moved to accept the President's Report, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded and the President's Report was unanimously approved.

6. Director's Remuneration. After Bob Billington left the meeting room, the Board discussed his remuneration. Bob did not receive an increase last year. Judy Fischbach explained that the rest of the BVTC staff had received 10% increases, which were built into the budget, and she moved that Bob Billington receive a 10% pay increase. Mike Gwynn seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously. Bob returned to the meeting and was notified that he will receive a 10% salary increase.
7. Adjournment. After Mike Gwynn expressed his appreciation of working with the Board of Director group after his decision to resign from the Board. There being no further business, Michelle Keach moved to adjourn, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by Dave Richards at 1:10 p.m.

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff