

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
175 Main Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
January 23, 2018

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (by phone)
Dave Richards, Secretary
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane
Paul Palange
Michael Zhang
Debra Berardis
Thomas Kravitz
Michael Gwynn
Louis Yip

Absent:

Mark Brodeur

Also Attending:

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

1. Call to Order. Mr. Balfour called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from September 26, 2017. Dave Richards moved, Paul Palange seconded, and the minutes from the September 26, 2017 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach reviewed and explained the Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2017 compared to November 30, 2016 and the Income Statement from July 2017 through November 2017 compared to the same months of 2016. Judy explained the effect of Polar Express ticket sales, expenses and bills outstanding. The net income from Polar Express is \$396,000 with about \$15,000 to \$20,000 in bills outstanding at this time. Bob will send to the Board, when available, the final profit from the Polar Express compared to profit from the 2016 Polar Express.

Judy complimented the Council on the great job done on Polar Express. Bob explained that our contacts with the railroad are much fewer since the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad took over the Providence & Worcester Railroad, but that our main contact, Don Kennett, now works for the Genesee & Wyoming and supports our efforts. In past years, we have sold Polar Express tickets for the following year while the current year's event was still happening. However, this year we did not do that, as we do not have a written contract with the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad for 2018, only a verbal agreement. We will put tickets for a few 2018 dates on sale this week. Bob explained that our monetary commitment to Warner Brothers for royalties increases each year. The production gets more challenging and costly each year, but we find that our customers are still buying tickets. The Boston Surface Railroad Co. leases the Depot from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council subleases a portion of the Depot from Boston Surface Railroad Co. for our Polar Express production.

Almost 20,000 passengers rode the Polar Express in 2017 and our goal is 22,000 passengers in 2018. Each year we make improvements to the production to enhance the experience for the passengers. This year we built a new handicapped ramp. A goal for 2018 would be to find funds to help out those who might not otherwise be able to afford Polar Express tickets and get those families on the train.

Joyce Koutsogiane moved, Deb Berardis seconded, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

4. Discussion Continuation on the Chairman's Term of Office

Dave Richards proposed establishing a Chairman Emeritus Board member position and offering it to Mr. Balfour. He could attend meetings so that we could take advantage of his experience and input, but he would not have the responsibility of running the Board meetings. It was noted that Chairman Emeritus is not a voting position.

Barry Mechanic suggested passing a resolution that Mr. Balfour can continue as Chairman for as long as he wishes.

Dave Richards reminded the Board that the original task was to establish rules which would enhance succession for the Chairman, Bob Billington and Natalie Carter. However, today's agenda only addresses the Chairman's term of office, so no discussion can occur regarding succession at this meeting.

Dave Richards moved that as we have discharged our duty as stated on the agenda (at the August 22, 2017 Board meeting) that we address the matter of succession for the Chairman, Bob Billington and Natalie Carter at the next meeting.

It was suggested that the agenda be approved by the Secretary of the Board before it is distributed to Board members. Barry Mechanic asked that Board members receive the Council Bylaws for review before the next meeting and that the agenda for the next meeting shows that the Bylaws may be addressed and changed.

Tom Kravitz seconded Mr. Richards' motion and it was unanimously passed.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, Dave Richards moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Balfour at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff

Attachments: copy of BVTC Bylaws