

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI
Tuesday, August 14, 2018

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chairman
Dave Richards, Secretary
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer (via phone)
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane
Michael Gwynn
Thomas Kravitz
Michael Zhang

Absent:

Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman
Debra Berardis
Paul Palange
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. Mr. Balfour called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2018. Dave Richards moved, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded, and the minutes from the June 27, 2018 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach reviewed and explained the financials as of the end of June 2018, including the Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2018 compared to June 30, 2017 and the Income Statement July 2017 through June 2018 vs. the previous year. Questions were answered and Dave Richards moved, Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane seconded and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.
4. President's Report. Bob Billington shared a chart illustrating the hotel tax coming into the Tourism Council through the years. There has been a re-calculation of the percentage of the hotel tax received by the Council. Bob explained that the re-calculation will result in slightly more income for the Council from the hotel tax.

The Hampton Inn in Pawtucket is doing well and recently celebrated their one-year anniversary. The opening of the new hotel at Twin River will open in the fall, postponed from late summer. It was suggested that a Board meeting be held there after it opens.

Our annual meeting this year will be on October 3 at the Twin River Event Center and will be a luncheon.

We have been working with a local school on Downtown Rising Fest, an event to be part of the Pawtucket Arts Festival.

The Chinese Dragon Boat Races and Taiwan Day Festival will be held on Saturday, September 8 at Festival Pier in Pawtucket. At this time we have registered 7 corporate vendors and 6 food vendors. We are anticipating having 24 teams racing this year. Blackstone Valley Prep and the Pawtucket School Department will have teachers competing.

Bob spoke at a press conference regarding Walk in the Woods, an organization opposing a new power plant in Burrillville.

We are working on getting the Green Economy Bond passed in 2018. The Bond will include \$5 million to continue the work on the bikeways in the state. We are encouraging that a press conference to raise awareness of the work being done from the Green Economy Bond in 2016 take place at the ribbon cutting for the soon to be completed bike path section between North Smithfield and Woonsocket.

Congressmen Cicilline and Langevin participated in a "Tourism Talks" event last week in Providence which brought awareness to the impact of tourism in Rhode Island.

We anticipate meeting with a Japanese company to see if they are interested in being a sponsor of the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival. Bob spoke on behalf of the Counsel General of Japan about tourism.

The proceeds from our Annual Golf Tournament were about \$4,000 this year.

We have received grants from Keep America Beautiful, one of which is a \$10,000 grant to reduce litter and cigarette butts in the Blackstone Valley.

There was discussion about getting the public excited about the bike path. Mike Zhang suggested a photo contest to general interest in the bike path. Donna Kaehler of the BVTC Staff is working on an app that would show conveniences along the bike path.

Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane shared pictures of the Slater Mill float at the Arnold Mills July 4 Parade in Cumberland.

Dave Richards moved, Mike Zhang seconded and the President's report was accepted as presented.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, Dave Richards moved, Mike Gwynn seconded, and it was unanimously agreed to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Balfour at 12:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff