

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Special Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Pawtucket, RI
Revised Minutes
June 23, 2015

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 noon by Chairman David Balfour.

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chairman
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (by phone)
Dave Richards
Lori Urso
Michael Gwynn
Courtney Iannuccilli
Thomas Kravitz,
Louis Yip, Member

Absent:

Alexander Parmenidez
Mark Brodeur
Debra Fournier

Also Attending:

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

2. Approval of the May 12, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting

Dave Richards moved, Judy Fischbach seconded, and the May 12, 2015 Board of Directors minutes were unanimously approved as written.

3. Treasurer's Report

2015-2016 Budget Review and Approval. In lieu of the usual monthly Treasurer's Report, Judy Fischbach reviewed and explained the line items in the proposed 2015-2016 budget. After discussion, Tom Kravitz moved, Dave Richards seconded and the budget as presented was approved unanimously. A copy of the approved budget is attached.

30th Year Financial Audit Proposals. Judy explained that 3 bids for our 30th year audit had been received from accounting firms. Proposals were received from LGC&D, Ledoux, Petruska & Company and Mullen Scorpio Cerilli. LGC&D offered the highest bid, while Ledoux, Petruska & Company and Mullen Scorpio Cerilli offered identical lower bids. Dave Richards spoke in support of Ledoux. The bookkeeper for the BVTC, Kevin Silva, has a working relationship with Patricia Cerilli at Mullen Scorpio Cerilli and said that Patricia Cerilli has experience with non-profit accounting. For that reason, and because their bid was one of the two identical low bids, Judy recommended that Mullen Scorpio Cerilli be chosen for the audit. She added that we would be providing the financial statements for them to audit. Judy Fischbach moved and Tom Kravitz seconded to approve Mullen Scorpio Cerilli for our upcoming audit. The motion was passed 8 to 1.

Staff Vacation Time Liquidation Plan. In the past, the vacation policy of the BVTC was that any vacation time earned would never be lost. Unused vacation time becomes a financial liability for the company to carry forward. At this time the current liability for 3 employees with large amounts of vacation time is approximately \$11,000. These employees were asked to either take the vacation time, or as much of it as they could by July 1, 2015, and to accept a 25% buy out of their remaining vacation time. The goal of the BVTC is to go forward with as little debt liability from vacation time as possible. In order to allow employees to have some of their vacation time available to use over the summer, it is recommended that they be allowed to keep up to 2 weeks after July 1, 2015 but that must be taken by December 31, 2015. Vacation time will then be accrued on a calendar year basis. Dave Richards suggested a vacation time accrual for the calendar year but with a grace period to take the vacation time into the first quarter of the following year. January through March is a time which may not be as busy for the BVTC and when it is not as problematic to have employees out of the office taking vacation time. Dave Richards moved, Tom Kravitz seconded to endorse the plan as discussed for liquidation of labor debt. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. President's Report

Tourism Budget. Bob Billington reported on the series of meetings and suggestions to and from Governor Raimondo and staff regarding the tourism budget, the tourism tax and the Steering Committee. A Steering Committee for state tourism planning was to be formed by the Governor's office consisting of 3 members from 3 of the 6 tourism regions. Bob felt that the committee should consist of 6 members, one from each of the tourism regions.

In order to keep legislative members updated on the work being accomplished by the BVTC, we will be sending out a once monthly e-mail to legislators and other interested parties.

American Girl. The BVTC is finalizing a program with American Girl staff centered around the American Girl Doll of the Year 2015, Grace Thomas, whose story is set in the Blackstone Valley. The program involves a train trip. The BVTC is looking into the feasibility of creating a weekend series of events involving, in addition to the train, activities at Slater Mill, The Museum of Work and Culture, the riverboat and the bike path. The goal is to maximize and capitalize on the interest in the story this year centered in the Blackstone Valley.

5. New Business

30th Anniversary Annual Meeting

The 30th Anniversary Annual Meeting will be held October 1, 2015. There is a planning committee in place developing ways to make the meeting interesting and to raise money. This year we would like to showcase our partnership with Mystic Aquarium and the JASON Project on the *Blackstone Valley Explorer*. Inductees into the William Blackstone Society will be:

- John Monaghan – former editor of the Pawtucket Times and Providence Journal-Bulletin.
- William Belisle – Coach of the Mt. St. Charles Hockey team and the winningest high school hockey coach in the United States.
- David Belisle – Co-coach of the Mt. St. Charles hockey team and the coach of the Cumberland American Little League team.

Explorer in Woonsocket.

Efforts are being made to dock the *Blackstone Valley Explorer* at Cold Spring Park in Woonsocket for about 2 weeks in August and do tours from there.

6. Other Business

Mr. Balfour reported that an opening remains for the position of Secretary of the Board of Directors. The Secretary is the person who signs the official paperwork of the Board of Directors. The position was opened when Keith Fayan stepped down from the Board to work on the I-295 Visitor Center legal issues. Mr. Balfour reported he submitted a resume for a candidate for Secretary, but that person would need to be approved as a Board member first. It was noted that Keith Fayan's work for the I-295 Visitor Center is complete and it was questioned whether Keith could be invited back on the Board of Directors.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, Lori Urso moved, Tom Kravitz seconded and the meeting was adjourned by Chairman, David Balfour at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff