

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting

**175 Main St
Pawtucket, RI 02860**

November 15, 2013

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chair
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chair
Paul Eno, Member
Keith Fayan, Member
Debra Fournier, Member
Dave Richards, Member (by phone)
Jackie Boudreau, Treasurer

Absent:

Carl Freedman, Member
Louis Yip, Member
John Lefrancois, Member
Mary Lynn Bosiack, Member
Judy Fischbach, Member
Robert Conway, Member
Anthony Capuano, Member
Mark Brodeur, Member
Helen Moroney, Member

Also Attending:

Robert Billington, President
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations

Gayle Gifford, Cause and Effect Inc

The Meeting was called to order by Dave Balfour at 12:01pm with a quorum present.

2. Minutes

On a **MOTION** by Debra Fournier and Seconded by Paul Eno the Minutes of the July 25th, 2013 meeting were approved as presented and filed.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Jackie Boudreau. The reports consisted of an Income Statement for July 2012 through September 2013 dated 11/08/13 and an Income Statement YTD Budget vs. Actual – Preliminary for July through September 2013. A Balance Sheet as of September 20, 2013 dated 11/08/13 was also distributed

Due to the incompleteness of the financial reports and the percentages of line

items inconsistent the reports were not approved as presented. Keith Fayan was concerned about being over budget and wanted to further clarifications on the percentage overages. Natalie Carter explained the glitches that are left over from shifting from one accounting system to another. The Treasurer's Report was tabled.

4. President's Report

President Billington itemized the work that has been performed for the Tourism Council over the past year and brought the Board up to date on the below:

This year we have made considerable headway to complete our agency's Mission and Vision. A few of the projects we have continued to grow are the RI Cherry Blossom Festival; this year we worked to light our first Blackstone River Bridge in Pawtucket and Central Falls.

We successfully ran Pawtucket River Bridge (I-95) Lighting Ceremony for Pawtucket. We founded the Rhode Island State Society based in Washington DC. This new corporation will financially support our RI Cherry Blossom Festival. We have made two trips to the Global Headquarters for Mars Inc working on a significant financial commitment from them to help us construct the William Wheat Chocolate Factory Museum in Central Falls.

We opened up the first urban campground in Rhode Island and the first campground along the Blackstone River. We completed our interpretive signage program at the Valley Falls Heritage Park in Cumberland.

We have been working with RIDOT on opening up access points to the Blackstone River in North Smithfield, Lincoln, Cumberland and Pawtucket. We have grown the Polar Express this year and if all goes well we will be bringing 10,000 people to Main Street in Woonsocket over 12 days and nights. We are lighting the Train Depot with trim-lighting for the holiday season. We are working with several Woonsocket business people to establish a Woonsocket foundation. We continue to work in Burrillville on their Geotourism Plan and we continue to push forward with our Keep Blackstone Valley Beautiful program which is our "clean-up and green-up" program for our 9 Blackstone Valley communities. We also celebrated the 20th Anniversary for the Blackstone Valley Explorer in August. We have successfully carried over 350,000 people on the Blackstone River since 1993.

We raised the funds to construct the Ghost Army exhibit for the Museum of Work and Culture. Raised funds to construct additional exhibits for the RI Music Hall of Fame and have taken on the responsibility to manage the leasing for the Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center.

We hosted the National Park Service Director John Jarvis and the Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell this summer as we ramp-up to become a National Park. This October we hosted Elizabeth Becker, travel writer and author from the NY Times and we have been working with the RI Foundation's Institute for Non-Profit Excellence to improve the long-term viability of the Tourism Council as we prepare for our 4th decade of work for the people of the Blackstone Valley. Recently I spoke at the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce Green is Good conference with our Sustainable Tourism Laboratory project.

We maintain strong ties with Bristol Community College, Johnson and Wales University, Roger Williams University, URI, Bryant University, Brown University,

CCRI and Boston University. This connection to higher education continues to highlight the tourism council as a place for tourism learning. We continue to have at least 6 interns in the office at any one time. I now serve as on the Board of Regents of Sustainable Travel International.

5. RI Foundation INE Discussion

Dave Richards called in to be a part of the meeting. Barry Mechanic spoke about the INE process that the Tourism Council is going through. He mentioned that a spokesperson from the INE thought possibly we were not taking full advantage of all that the INE has to offer. The INE representative felt more comfortable with the BVTC's involvement after the conversation. Her concern was that she wanted to insure that the RI Foundation had not wasted their funds on BVTC. Barry Mechanic assured her RIF did not waste their grant funds and that BVTC is taking the pieces that are most appropriate for their use and that the process has been rewarding for BVTC. He noted that we are working on Board Development, Fund Development, Leadership Development, Strategic Planning and Governance.

Barry Mechanic and Keith Fayan felt that BVTC Board Member should attend the January INE training meeting at the Foundation.

Barry Mechanic noted that the INE process is not pushing BVTC to do anything in a certain way. He noted that we have to use the principles that best fit us. Jackie Boudreau noted that many people in the Blackstone Valley still do not know who we are. Paul Eno expressed the same concern.

Debra Fournier said that we should make the RIF INE process a first priority.

Barry Mechanic circulated and introduced several documents for the Board to review at a separate Board Session:

Board Member Self Evaluation
Board and Board Member Job Description
Governance Committee Job Descriptions.

Barry requested that we set time aside to discuss these documents. The Board agreed that a 3 to 5pm weekday timeframe to discuss INE would be acceptable to most members. Billington will take a poll for the best dates for members.

Gayle Gifford agreed to send a Summary Report around to the Board Members to bring them up to date.

6. Director's Compensation Discussion

Under Director's Compensation, DWB read the President's letter of November 5 to the Board. Barry Mechanic felt that the Board should have a Compensation Committee in the future. Dave Richards expressed his deep disagreement with the President for taking the BVTC into the RIF INE process. He expressed his disagreement to raising the salary of the President because of this single fact. He felt that as long as the current President is in service we would not need to turn the BVTC into another type of non-profit organization. He reminded the Board that he was the only dissenting vote for the RIF INE process two years ago and he still remains against this process for BVTC today. He felt that a robust discussion by the Board about the RIF INE process was in order.

Dave Richards felt that we run the risk of failure if we follow this INE process. Barry Mechanic disagreed because Billington is a part of each committee.

Keith Fayon noted that with the assumption that we have the funding and that we expect to generate \$98,000 over budget in revenue this year that he was included to raise the salary of the President of the BVTC \$7,000.

Dave Balfour read a letter of support for the raise in salary for the President by Mary Lynn Bosiak and Louis Yip.

Keith Fayon **Motioned** to raise the salary of the President by \$7,000 effective immediately. Debra Fournier **Seconded** the **Motion**. The Board voted **Unanimously**. Dave Richards voted in support of the raise in salary by telephone.

Upon a **Motion** by Barry Mechanic and a **Second** by Debra Fournier the meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm. The Board voted Unanimously to approve this **Motion**.

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert D. Billington, President