

## September 9, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

Prepared by: Rachel Lenda, Administrative Partnership Manager, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut

1. Called to order – Jim Bellano
2. Approval of minutes of June 10, 2021 meeting. Motion to approve – Charlie Tracy – second all in favor I. No opposition, no abstention.
3. Welcome Rachel Lenda is our new Administrative Partner at the Chamber.
4. Welcome Paige Bronk from Groton, Gary Mckeeon Ledyard, Steven Shelly from Salem. Encouraged participation and step up with a vacancy to serve on the board.
5. Nine vacancies in ERTD.
6. Three years for a board member, expirations coming up, fall and January – reappoint or appoint someone new.
7. Jill – treasurer report. Submitted financial reports: standing as of today, \$11,462.47. \$7,562.07 unrestricted from fundraising activities. Balance sheet, percentages added. Will be running tighter quarterly fiscal project projections. Approval of reports: asked for a motion to approve by Charlie Tracy, second by Barry Kaplan. All in favor, I.
8. Financials – assistant treasurer Bruce Flax; policy put in place is the pre-approval policy for any expenditure over \$500. Will help keep the budget on task. Jim – that position is within the bylaws. Jim expressed the need for more committee members in subcommittees.
9. Bylaws committee, new bylaws from new legislation from June 2021. Gives the towns the ability to share a board member. For the amendment, we took the legislation and matched to our already existing bylaws. Then we took what was not in our bylaws and added it. Section 4 – Board of Directors. Section 4.1 and 4.2. Motion to approve the new bylaws: Tom Bourner first motion, and Charlie with the second motion. All in favor, I. No opposition, no abstention. Jim expresses the need for more Bylaw committee members and to contact us for participation.
10. Nominating – Todd Babbit: 4-6 board members coming up on expiration, if they are interested in renewing to ask their first selectman or appointed government official to resubmit an appointment letter. Vacant towns: phone calls and emails made, three towns have reached out; two said last time had no interest and are interested in teaming up with a neighboring town. Rose Bove asked which towns are vacant. We can send an email out with the towns we need to serve: Rachel listed off Eastford, Franklin, Killingly, Lebanon, Lyme, Plainfield, Scotland, Sprague, and Woodstock.
11. Legislative advocacy – Cathy has access to the bill tracking software. After municipal elections are done, will see what kind of feedback to get from newly elected officials. In dormant time, talk about things we would like to push.
12. Federal and state grant opportunities: federal money through the state. ARPA act about \$24 million in tourism money coming to the state. As a board, we discuss some monies supplement our community's hospitality, leisure, target industries. Suggest a sub-committee for the ARPA funds. Tony: need to address at the planning stage as a document to guide. North Stonington visitor center – who controls it? It is hidden and could serve the region better. One item we could ask funding for. More issues to address. Produce a list of suggestions for the state to consider. Jim: an idea of a committee to function as a clearing house for this. Please let Jim know. Chuck asked if there was a timeline. Tony: we could include a statement in the newsletter to solicit ideas from the vendors for any feedback on ideas for tourism. In addition to forty-one towns, we have about 10 industry board members. We welcome their input, too. Barry Kaplan:

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asked who the industry members and Jim are read off our current list. Barry did not hear about agricultural tourism. Mia from Mansfield: discussed her bed and breakfast and how it relates to argro-tourism. Barry was curious if there were additional board members who represent agro-tourism. Jill: do we know if this is going to be a competitive grant process through the state or have we received guidelines? No, we have not. Rose stated: no, not yet. Announcement sent to Rachel and then to send to the board. Jill stated, will constituents be competing against each other. Paige Bronk – question about ARPA funding, federal government is trying to be flexible but there is an explicit reference to tourism funding. Paige is correct, specifically talking about travel and tourism. Rachel will resend the eBlast to the board members. Airline z-fold map: long term impact, the maps were scant at best, raises the question – we did not know it was being done until an economic meeting took place. Suggested more input on a local level. 29:01

13. Tony raised the concern that the ARPA money is especially important because of balancing the efforts of the shoreline and northeastern Connecticut in the effort of equitable distribution of money.
14. Administrative Report: documents have been uploaded for FY21 audit, once they are done, they will be sending out reports for the grant application. The application process is in the works but not near completion yet. Tony reiterated that it is not a grant we are applying for but legislative funds. Rachel is going through grant reporting and stated that the Regional Marketing Partnership Program needs better proof of financial reporting. Tony described the Mystic Arts Festival ERTD booth, and also suggested that ERTD might want to be involved with the Brooklyn Fair
15. Quinn & Hary media agency report: digital marketing campaign lifetime analytics in March has generated over 42million gross impressions and 185k click throughs. Organic social 1.4million impressions for August. Q&H are building a library of creative assets in effort to promote all forty-one towns. A video shoot in Mystic was done in August. The Last Green Valley on sights for early October 2021. They are still taking video of festivals and fairs. Dave also went on to discuss the two tourism marketing workshops in Mystic and in Woodstock, CT. The other item to review is the sponsorship with the Miss America organization. ERTD sponsored the off-campus activities of the Miss America organization. Mystic Chamber helped support the Miss America parade in Mystic – live streamed on Miss America social media. Two motorcoach busses donated by DATTCO wrapped in ERTD creative. Dave opened up for questions. Jim expressed the importance of the towns to funnel into Q&H what’s going on. Dave encouraged constituents to share their contact with the agency and also Rachel with the Chamber.
  - a. Barry Kaplan from Union: asked if there was going to be a subcommittee for the Miss America visitors? Jim suggested with ample time before next year’s event, there won’t be a need for a subcommittee but ERTD will have more time to prepare to get Miss America throughout the ERTD region next year.
16. COT Tourism Update – Rose Bove: shared results of the campaigns from the summer, “Say Yes” early May through August. 814 million earned media impressions, outperformed benchmarks by 135%. 6/23-8/30, drove 700k page views to ctvisit, over 400k referring clicks, impressive six minutes on these pages. Rose discussed access to the digital asset management system. COT is tripling their fall investment to \$1.4 million allocated to social media, digital videos, paid search,

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traditional TV and should increase reach by 33%. Test marketing happened with industry partners and others with the survey. Full Color Fall campaign was the most successful campaign out of the survey. Rose asked constituents to update their social and web advertising

17. Motion to adjourn the meeting. Barry motion – all were in favor.