



Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD)
Executive Committee
Regular Meeting

May 1, 2025 - 9:00AM

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89348754065?pwd=cDV1M2J5S2ZNZ2hkNWJKa3RSbXpTZz09>

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Meeting ID: 893 4875 4065

Passcode: 836268

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Fran kefalas, Bruce Flax, Stephen Gencarella, Jill St. Clair, cathay barnard,
Lori Corriveau, Todd Babbitt

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, Jill Larsen, David Quinn, Jillian Lozier

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting came to order at 9:06am
2. Approval of Minutes - 4/3/2025
 - a. Stephen Gencarella made a motion to approve with noted edit, seconded by Cathy Barnard. Three abstentions from the vote and all else in favor the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Jill St. Clair presented. She entertained a motion to remove Agenda Item 10, a private session to discuss the Administrative Partnership RFP and Mid-Contract Review for Media Agency, and to defer the review until June.
 - i. Cathy Barnard made the motion, seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor the motion passed, and the item was removed.
4. Treasurer Report - Bruce Flax presented the treasurer report.
 - a. P&L
 - i. Cathy Barnard made a motion to approve the P&L, seconded by Todd Babbitt. No discussion, and all in favor, the motion passed.
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Todd Babbitt made a motion to approve the Balance Sheet, seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates
 - a. Finance
 - i. No further report.
 - b. Marketing

- i. Lori Corriveau handed over the report to David Quinn for the Media Agency update.
- ii. David Quinn introduced Jillian Lozier to deliver the digital report -
 - 1. Jillian Lozier reported strong social media performance in April, with notable increases in engagement, particularly on Instagram. The top-performing posts featured the Slater Memorial Museum and local dining in Mystic. She noted that approved creative for the upcoming campaign had received state approval and would launch in May. Unspent budget from April will roll over to May and June, with full expenditure expected by June 30.
 - 2. New Creative that has been approved by the State was presented. David Quinn acknowledged previous concerns about the creative direction, noting that while independence had been reduced, the new materials align with the state's "Make It Here" campaign.
 - a. A discussion regarding regional representation in the ads took place, with the committee mentioning the heavy coastal imagery, and a request for more diverse and dynamic photos that reflect the broader region.
 - 3. David Quinn shared that the creative asset library is expanding, with a balance of video (80%) and stills (20%), and represents most towns in the region. He encouraged members to provide input and noted that the full deck would be shared for further review.
 - a. A discussion on public access to the media library took place.
 - 4. Upcoming influencer visits were presented. They will lean into these collaborations to communicate that story that eastern ct is not far away, an inexpensive road trip. Collaborations will include:
 - a. Tiffany Gluckin in April featuring unique foodie finds.
 - b. Victoria in May featuring outdoor activities for couples.
 - 5. Calendar of events was shared, including items posted to CTvisit and included in social media coverage.
- iii. Lori Corriveau added an additional report from the last Marketing Committee meeting
 - 1. Some board members have expressed concerns regarding the level of State involvement in the marketing committee's process and its impact on timelines.
 - 2. She reported that questions were raised about the accuracy of Arrivalist data in the scenic northeast, and that the State is reviewing whether college students should be included.
 - 3. A potential adjustment to the content development process was discussed, involving earlier collaboration between the marketing committee and Quinn & Hary, followed by initial State review prior to final committee input.
- c. Bylaws
 - i. no report
- d. Nominating - Todd Babbitt presented
 - i. [Nominating Toolkit](#)

1. Met with Andrea and talked about putting together a toolkit resource to attract municipalities with vacancies to appoint directors.
 2. He reminded the committee that industry reps can be appointed at the Annual meeting in June.
 3. Andrea Manning presented the progress on the Nominating Toolkit, a collection of information and resources for municipalities with vacancies to educate them on the value of appointing a municipal representative, and the steps to take to do so.
- e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. [Legislative Advocacy Toolkit](#)
 - ii. Cathy Barnard reported on the lack of motion toward expanded funding. The session ends on June 4, 2025.
- f. Grants
 - i. Fran Kefalas reported that outreach to recipients to remind them about the time frame within to spend their funds should take place soon. Recipients must expend all funding by June 30, 2025.
6. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
 - a. Jill Larsen reports
 - i. She shared updates on data
 1. Jill will share website traffic and trend data from April once it has been processed.
 2. Arrivalist data was discussed; while considered generally accurate, concerns were raised about the inclusion of UConn Storrs students and whether they should be counted in tourism figures. It was noted that Connecticut has over 30 universities, raising the broader question of whether student data should be excluded statewide. The Arrivalist representative has offered to attend a future meeting to answer specific questions if requested.
 3. Hotel data is being compiled. A large report was received recently but is not yet ready to share.
 - ii. Today is the last day to vote for Pizza trail
 - iii. Jill mentioned an upcoming social media campaign to promote the Pizza Trail
 - iv. The Office of Tourism hosted several successful Coffee with Rachel events in the previous month.
 - v. ConnCon 25.2 will take place on Tuesday 5/13. This event, a partnership with the University of New Haven, involves launching a student-created culinary trail at the event. The trail highlights international cuisines near train stops in Bridgeport and is called the "CT Taste Train."
 - vi. Plans to promote CT Open House Day materials were mentioned.
 - vii. Concerns were raised about the potentially divisive nature of the Pizza Trail campaign, including the exclusion of Greek-style pizza and broader questions of representation. Members asked who is making the final content decisions and whether there is an opportunity for broader input and constructive feedback.
7. Quinn & Hary Update
 - a. Report delivered in item 5.b.ii.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andrea Manning delivered the Administrator Report
 - i. previous months efforts included review of collateral for the Regional marketing Partnership Program, expansion of the legislative advocacy toolkit to include AEP6 reports and data, development of the Nominating Toolkit, calculation of remaining expenses in the FY25 budget, and updates to the Groton/New London brochure rack.
 - ii. Upcoming efforts will include attendance at the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Day at the capitol and distribution of a card-sized toolkit flyer, Moving the brochure printing and distribution along, continued monitoring of collateral and support of Regional Marketing Partnership Grant recipients, continued development of the Nominating Toolkit, collecting brochures from around the region in order to represent the full region at the Chamber's brochure racks, and preparation for the end of year reporting.

9. Other Business

- a. Arts, Culture & Tourism Day was mentioned as an opportunity to represent our region at the capitol.
- b. Jill St. Clair requested that the Executive Committee meet for an additional 30 minutes in June.

10. Private Session Discussion - Tabled to June in Agenda Item 3.

- a. Media Agency Contract
- b. Administrative Contract

11. Adjournment

- a. Stephen Gencarella motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Cathy Barnard. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 10:01am.