



**Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD)
Executive Committee**

Regular Meeting

June 5, 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: Chris Regan, Jill St. Clair, Bruce Flax, Stephen Gencarella, Todd Babbitt, Cathy Barnard, Fran Kefalas

Guests: Andrea Manning, David Quinn, Jillian Lozier, Anthony Anthony

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting came to order at 9:02am
2. Approval of Minutes - 5/1/2025
 - a. Stephen Gencarella made a motion to approve the meeting minutes noting one update, seconded by Cathy Barnard. All in favor the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris Regan delivered the Board Chair report. He noted the upcoming Annual Meeting at Great Wolf Lodge, which will be an exciting opportunity to see the new venue. Business is going well across the region, though state tourism funding will likely remain level. Emphasis will be on finding creative ways to maintain and grow the region's strength.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - i. Bruce Flax presented the P&L report, noting that spending is proceeding as planned and aligned with the budget.
 - ii. Stephen Gencarella made a motion to approve the P&L, seconded by Todd Babbitt. All in favor, the motion passed.
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Cathy Barnard made a motion to approve the P&L, seconded by Lori Coriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates

- a. Finance
 - i. Bruce Flax reported that \$7,000 in unspent funds was identified for allocation to influencer collaborations, focusing on outdoor experiences in the region.
 - ii. Jill St Clair made a motion to allocate \$7,000 for the use of influencers, upon marketing recommendation, seconded by Stephen Gencarella. The motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Marketing
 - i. Lori Corriveau reported that the Marketing Committee did not meet last month. A discussion took place around the process for moving forward with the \$7,000 influencer allocation. Discussion determined that Marketing can proceed in preparing recommendations with Quinn & Hary in advance of the Annual Meeting and the next committee meeting. Influencer focus will likely include experienced outdoor content creators, and potentially influencers aligned with live music and cultural experiences.
 - c. Bylaws
 - i. No report.
 - d. Nominating
 - i. Todd Babbitt reported that he and Andrea met to develop the slate of officers
 - ii. Two new industry representatives will also be added to the board: one from the campground sector and one from Great Wolf Lodge, classified under Amusements.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. Cathy Barnard reported that she and Andrea met to strategize future advocacy efforts. They will focus on engaging municipal leaders in the fall to strengthen grassroots support for tourism funding. Potential letter-writing events are under consideration, with space available at the Chamber or other local venues.
 - f. Grants
 - i. Fran Kefalas reported that grant recipients have been notified that funds must be spent by June 30, with final reports due by July 31
6. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
- a. Jill Larsen could not be at the meeting this morning. Andrea gave an overview of her notes, and forwarded on her full report by email.
7. Quinn & Hary Update
- a. In May, the campaign delivered over 2.1 million impressions through paid media.
 - b. Instagram saw strong growth with 412 new followers and over 101K views (a 56% increase MoM).
 - c. Facebook engagement also increased; the top-performing post achieved nearly 50K views, with additional strong performance from influencer collaborations in Mystic and Thompson focused on outdoor activities.
 - d. Recent influencer activations included Foods with Finn; upcoming influencer visits will include Mass Daytripping and a Spanish-speaking influencer.
 - e. Influencer recruitment for upcoming outdoor and music content is in progress. Board members suggested local talent, including a Canterbury musician gaining national attention and recent Food Network features Putnam restaurants.

- f. Visual Assets: \$24K budget was used to produce assets through multiple vendors; additional shoots are in progress. The policy for sharing assets was presented and will be reviewed for approval at a future meeting.
 - g. Blog content continues to evolve with seasonal themes, including seafood, breweries, lighthouses, and summer activities.
 - h. The Calendar of upcoming events for social media coverage was shared, in addition to the monthly call for content.
- 8. Administrator Report
 - a. Andrea Manning delivered the administrator report covering recent and upcoming efforts and activities on behalf of the district, including:
 - i. Continued management of the Regional Marketing Partnership Matching Grant Program with reminders to recipients about spending and reporting deadlines.
 - ii. Updated and distributed the Legislative Advocacy Toolkit; distributed toolkit flyers at Arts, Culture, and Tourism Day on 5/7.
 - iii. Brochures went to print on 5/15; delivery is expected imminently.
 - iv. Brochure distribution efforts include coordination with Mohegan Sun, Foxwoods, and CT Meetings.
 - v. Prepared the Audit Appointment Notification; awaiting invoice and engagement letter.
 - vi. Continued development of the Nominating Toolkit one-sheet.
 - vii. Preparing year-end materials and gathering final invoices ahead of the 6/30 Finance meeting.
- 9. Other Business
 - a. The committee discussed reallocating a sum of money from Special Events for gift certificates to recognize Stephen Gencarella's 10 years of service and Charlie Tracy's 5 years of service, as they both depart the board.
 - i. Lori Corriveau made a motion to allocation \$300 from Special Events (5425) to purchase gift certificates for the two departing directors. Cathy Barnard seconded the motion. All in favor the motion passed.
 - b. Todd reminded the board that if there are nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting, candidates should be prepared to speak for about 5 minutes to introduce themselves.
- 10. Adjournment
 - a. Todd Babbitt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cathy Barnard. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:44am.