



**Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD)  
Board of Directors - Meeting  
MEETING Minutes**

Thursday, June 8, 2023 - 9:00AM

Location

Windham Town Hall  
979 Main Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
Second Floor Auditorium  
*In-Person Only / No Zoom or Hybrid Video*

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Cathy Barnard, Chris Regan, Jill St. Clair, Jim Bellano, Stephen Gencarella, Todd Babbitt, Tracey Hanson, Fran Kefalas, Christine Strick, Jordan Lumpkins, Kathleen Paterson, Charlie Tracy, Paig Bronk, Bruce Flax, Catherine Foley, Cathy Mitchell, Patti Larrow-George, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Angela Adams, Stuart Peaslee

**Guests:** Rachel Lenda, Tony Sheridan, David Quinn, David Jensen, Karen Ali, Ali Herzog, Dave Gellar, Dave Jensen, Jenn Haag, Ellen Woolfe, Julia Florence

1. Call to Order
  - a. Jim Bellano called the meeting to order at 9:13am
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes 03/09/2023
  - a. A motion was made to accept the March 9, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Charlie Tracy made the first motion and Cathy Barnard made the second motion. No opposition; Chris Regan abstained. Motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
  - a. Jim Bellano welcomed the group and asked for introductions around the room. The Connecticut Office of Tourism asked to be moved up in the agenda. The group agreed that was okay. A motion was made to move item 10 (Connecticut Office of Tourism Update) to happen after the Treasurer Report. Tyra Penn-Gesek made the first motion and Catherine

Foley made the second motion. No opposition or abstention - motion passed.

- b. Jim asked for a motion that the group add an item to the agenda under number four: 4B “approval of the annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year”. Catherine Foley made the first motion and Tyra-Penn Gesek made the second motion. All in favor with no abstention/opposition. Motion passed.
4. Treasurer Report
- a. P&L Budget v. Loss and Balance Sheet
    - i. Jill St. Clair went through the P&L and the Balance sheet while discussing the line items. She also reported \$7,000 of the Dime Bank unrestricted funding into a 20-month CD.
    - ii. A motion was made to accept the P&L Budget vs. Actual and Balance Sheet as presented. Catherine Foley made the first motion and Cathy Barnard made the second motion. No abstention or opposition; all in favor - motion passed.
  - b. FY24 Annual Budget
    - i. Jill St. Clair presented the FY24 Annual Budget that was approved through the Finance Committee and the Executive Committee. The floor opened up for discussion - no questions. A motion was made to accept the FY24 Annual Budget as presented. Tyra Penn-Gesek made the first motion and Cathy Mitchell made the second motion. No abstention or opposition; all in favor - motion passed.
5. Officer Elections - Todd Babbitt, Chair of the ERTD Nominating Committee conducted the process of Officer Elections. The Nominating Committee put forth a slate of Officers for recommendation and they are: Chris Regan- Chair, Jill St. Clair - Vice-Chair, Stephen Gencarella - Secretary, and Bruce Flax - Treasurer.
- a. Chair - the election began by the Nominating Committee’s recommendation for Chris Regan as Chair. Todd Babbitt made the first call for floor nominations and Jim Bellano nominated Tracey Hanson. Todd asked two more times for a floor nomination - no other nominations were

made. A motion was made to close the nominations by Fran Kefalas with a second by Cathy Barnard. The Executive Committee requested that Chris Regan and Tracey Hanson speak on their experience and expertise as a potential Chairperson. Todd used the chair ballot provided to each Board of Director. Dave Quinn and Tony Sheridan administered the vote process by collecting and counting ballots as a neutral third party.

- i. Chris Regan 11 votes
- ii. Tracey Hanson 9 votes
- iii. 1 Blank Ballot
- iv. By show of votes, Chris Regan was elected as the fiscal year 2024 Chairperson.

b. Vice-Chair

- i. Jill St. Clair was the selected nominee for the Vice-Chair position. Todd called for nominations from the floor for Vice-Chair three times with no other nominations. Jill St. Clair was elected as the fiscal year 2024 Vice-Chair.

1. 1 ballot will be written for the uncontested Vice-Chair.

c. Secretary

- i. Stephen Gencarella was the selected nominee for the Secretary position. Todd called for nominations from the floor for Secretary three times with no other nominations. Stephen Gencarella was elected as the fiscal year 2024 Vice-Chair.

1. 1 ballot will be written for the uncontested Secretary.

d. Treasurer

- i. Bruce Flax was the selected nominee for the Treasurer position. Todd called for nominations from the floor for Treasurer three times with no other nominations. Bruce Flax was elected as the fiscal year 2024 Treasurer.

- ii. 1 ballot will be written for the uncontested Treasurer.

6. Industry Representatives - Vote

- a. Jim Bellano discussed the roster of Industry Appointees up for renewal by the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting - per bylaws. Maria Acuri of the Norwich Inn and Spa will replace Gary Baker. The Transportation Industry will stay on with a tentative for Stan Mickus. A motion was made to reappoint all of the industry appointees as presented on the roster provided. Tyra Penn-Gesek made the first motion and Catherine Foley made the second motion, all in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion passed.
7. Contract Renewals - a motion to authorize the Executive committee to enter and negotiate contracts based on the approved RFP was made. Catherine Foley made the first motion and Paige Bronk made the second motion. Discussion: Charlie Tracy shared concerns with the development of the RFP and how it was administered for the Administrative Partner. Charlie also voiced his concern for the annual contract awarded to the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. No other discussions took place. No opposition and one abstention - Charlie Tracy. Motion passed.
  - a. RFP - Administrative Partner
    - i. The Executive Committee will work with the Administrative Partner to execute their partnership contract.
  - b. RFP - Audit Company
    - i. The Administrative Partner will coordinate with Hoyt, Filippetti, and Malaghan, LLC to execute a partnership contract for the next three years. In 2023, the District will pay \$10,000, in 2024, the District will pay \$10,300, and in 2025, the District will pay \$10,500.
8. Committee Chair Reports
  - a. Finance
    - i. Finance Committee requires a new chairperson and Jill encouraged new members to come onto the Finance Committee.
  - b. Marketing
    - i. Marketing Committee requires a new chairperson.
  - c. Bylaws

- i. Bylaws Committee requires a new chairperson.
  - d. Nominating
    - i. No updates.
  - e. Legislative Advocacy
    - i. Session ended June 7, 2023. No updates.
  - f. A motion was made to add item F under “Committee Chair Reports” to add Grants Committee update - Tyra Penn-Gesek made the first motion and Charlie Tracy made the second motion - no discussion, no opposition or abstention. Motion passed.
    - i. No Grant Committee update.
- 9. Media Agency Report - Quinn & Hary
  - a. Dave Quinn introduced the Quinn & Hary team
    - i. Dave Jensen went through their presentation of the District’s impact on a small budget. Analytics, statistics, and spending with results on impressions and impact on social media, web traffic, and rebranding. Digital advertising, paid search, content marketing.
    - ii. What’s new: style of content (Tik Tok, reels, etc.) will be a focus in the upcoming months.
    - iii. This deck will be shared with the Board of Directors.
    - iv. Action item: in all communications, always leave a plug in for sending content to Julia and Rachel. A different approach for getting content is a categorized reach - agritourism, antiques... a specific content ask request.
- 10. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
  - a. Ellen Woolfe and Jennifer Haag were in attendance with the Connecticut Office of Tourism. They presented their slideshow with the current status of state tourism efforts. They discussed the statistics and analytics of the economic impact tourism has had on Connecticut to date. The slideshow is available and will be loaded onto the shared google drive.
  - b. Open forum on questions - those included the referral rate from CTVisit (data and analytics), the process of getting the District’s money and the

hold ups, TV ads question, Budget question on the spending (\$1.5 million), marketing planning calendar question - is that still available to help align with state content? Jennifer Haag is looking into it. Lastly, what is the state doing to capture and attract missed market - Asian market?

11. Administrator Report

- a. Rachel gave a presentation of the year in review with the various projects and updates on the District's year-long efforts in tourism marketing. This deck will be available to the Board of Directors.

12. Other Business

- a. Paige Bronk asked about community profit off of tourism money. In other municipalities, the host municipal community gets a portion of the hospitality sales tax revenue. It was something to put on our radar because of the disconnect between hospitality and government.

13. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:08am by Cathy Barnard and Tyra Penn-Gesek made the second motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:08am.



### Voting Record for Chairperson

\*All voting for Chairperson was done by written ballot.

	<b>Nominee:</b> Chris Regan	<b>Nominee:</b> Tracey Hanson	<b>Abstention</b>
Stephen Gencarella			
Stuart D. Peaslee			
Fran Kefalas			
Charlie Tracy			
Paige Bronk			
Bruce Flax			
Cathy Barnard			
Chris Regan			
Todd Babbitt			
Jill St. Clair (Canterbury)			
Jill St. Clair (Scotland)			
Christine Strick			
Patti George			
Kathleen Paterson			
Angela Adams			
Cathy Mitchell			
Jim Bellano			
Tyra Penn-Gesek			
Catherine Foley			
Jordan Lumpkins			
Tracey Hanson			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>