



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

Thursday, December 12, 2024
9:00am

Location

Otis Library
261 Main St, Norwich, CT 06360

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Angela Adams, Mary Arcuri, Cathy Barnard, Jim Bellano, Shannon Fagan, Robert Ignatowicz, Fran Kefalas, Jill Keith, Gina Kunst, Stuart Peaslee, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Jill St. Clair, Charlie Tracy, Mike Urgo

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, Jillian Lozier, Mila Alicea

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris Regan called the meeting to order at 9:10am.
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes 09/12/2024
 - a. Cathy Barnard made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Angela Adams. All in favor minus one abstention, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris Regan delivered a board report that focused primarily on a number of upcoming events and efforts. He focused on the need for legislative advocacy, pointing out a few specific efforts including a program in the works to expand the grant program state-wide. He emphasized the need to engage with legislators in Hartford as an organized unit. An ERTD sponsored event is being planned for early February. More details to come on this event.
 - b. Discussion takes place on how the board can best support our legislative efforts.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - b. Balance Sheet



- i. Jill St. Clair presented the Treasurer report. She noted that all funding installments have been received on schedule, all vendors are paid, and that the audit has been completed and is a clean audit for the fifth year in a row.
 - ii. Tyra Penn-Gesek made a motion to approve the P&L and Balance Sheet, seconded by Jim Bellano. All in favor the motion passed.
5. Meeting Dates for January-December 2025
 - a. Update to the July 2025 Executive Committee date was discussed.
 - b. Tyra Penn-Gesek made a motion to approve the dates with the noted adjustment, seconded by Angela Adams. All in favor the motion passed.
6. Committee Chair Reports
 - a. Finance – no further report
 - b. Marketing – Lori Corriveau could not attend the meeting but sent a report along, shared by Andrea Manning. Highlights include:
 - i. \$30k in funding was approved for expansion of visual assets for the winter months. Diversity was brought up as being very important criteria.
 - ii. Oddities and Curiosities brochure was approved and printed.
 - iii. Cooperation is ongoing with the Legislative Committee to assist with messaging.
 - c. Bylaws – Charlie Tracy informs the Board that there is nothing to report, but the group will be meeting in the coming months for some adjustments.
 - d. Nominating – No report.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy – Cathy Barnard updates the committee on the efforts of the legislative committee during the last quarter. The committee has been working hard on a legislative toolkit and a one-pager on why tourism is important for the state, region and towns. A survey has gone out to collect information from the community on the top three attractions in each municipality, and the value of tourism in each town. The timeline on this effort will match the timeline for ERTD’s Legislative event mentioned in Chris’s chair report.
 - f. Grants – Fran Kefalas reports that the application period for the Regional Marketing Partnership Matching Grant Program is open. Full submission



requirements and a new FAQ doc is available. A live Zoom Q&A is scheduled for Wed. 1/8/2025 at 12pm. The deadline for submissions is Friday 1/17/25.

7. Marketing Agency Report

- a. Jillian Lozier delivered an update from Quinn & Hary, highlighting:
 - i. 2024 Key metrics
 1. 25M impressions generated across channels, with 6.5M from blog amplification.
 2. Instagram grew by 7% in profile visits, reaching 17.9K followers.
 3. Facebook saw a 31% increase in reach and 20.7% in profile visits.
 - ii. Influencer Engagements
 1. Partners included Alaina Pinto, Sisters Snacking, and nataliextravels, with 884K plays and 24K interactions.
 2. Upcoming collaborations: Connecticut_bucketlist, Massdaytripping, and Rhodeislandnative.
 - iii. Digital Advertising Performance
 1. Sponsored Content: Achieved 672,900 impressions (October 1–December 11, 2024).
 2. OTT/Streaming Campaigns:
 - a. 79,815 impressions with a 98.22% completion rate.
 - iv. Organic social media performance remains strong with top social posts reaching up to 5,447 users, with 338 interactions.
 - v. Creative and Content updates
 1. New creative launched for holiday and winter campaigns with the tagline “From Land to Sea”, which has been approved by the state.
 2. Future social topics: holiday events, local shops, tree farms, cozy dining.
 3. Recent blogs: holiday lights, CT Christmas movie trail, and local shopping.



- vi. A calendar of events, upcoming socials calendar and blog posts is shared along with details on how to submit content and blogs for inclusion on CTvisit.
 - vii. Regional Marketing Partnership Matching Grant Program flyer and press release are shared.
 - b. A discussion on the platforms used for OTT and streaming campaigns took place, with a focus on the demand on youtube is increasing, and the ideal length of an ad of 30-60 seconds positively impacts the districts completion rate for streaming ads.
8. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
- a. Jill Larsen presents updates
 - i. Visitation Metrics is at 11.08M (down 5.5% from 2023).
 - ii. Top Visitor Markets
 - 1. Primary sources of visitation are Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island.
 - iii. CTVisit.com Website Performance is at 6.01M (down 33.3% YOY).
 - iv. Earned Media Impressions
 - 1. 2024 YTD Media Impressions: 14 billion, supported in great part by the CT Christmas Movie Trail.
 - v. Upcoming efforts of the Office of tourism include
 - 1. Upcoming webinars focusing on how to engage with the Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism.
 - 2. Updates to the events page including structuring and priority on the site with seasonal focus for organizing events.
 - 3. A quarterly industry event in conjunction with CBIA has been scheduled for Tuesday 1/28/25 at Yard Goats Stadium.
 - vi. COT requests that winter content and events be sent to Jill Larsen and/or Andrea Manning.
 - vii. Discussions take place on when to expect the Office of Tourism's spring and summer campaign, so the district can align their creative with state messaging.
9. Administrator Report



- a. Andrea Manning delivered the Administrator Report, focusing on both the efforts of the previous quarter and upcoming efforts.
 - i. Highlights from the last quarter include the receipt of funding installments, completion of a clean audit, tourism meetings attended on behalf of the district, efforts on filling board vacancies, in addition to supporting the legislative committee in the development of the legislative toolkit.
 - ii. The Chamber is planning a tourism conference for late February.
10. Other Business
- a. No other business
11. Adjournment
- a. Charlie Tracy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim Bellano. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:55am