



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

Thursday, March 13, 2025
9:00am

Location

ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86831152412?pwd=RWowMG5LYTUrRVdYWZH6a3doV016dz09>

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Chris Regan, Jill St. Clair, Stephen Gencarella, Lori Corriveau, Fran Kefalas, Cathy Barnard, Charlie Tracey, Todd Babbitt, Patti Larrow-George, Alex Formica, Angela Adams, Barry Kaplan, Catherine Foley, Robert Ignatowicz, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Ellie Greenberg, Jill S. Keith, Stuart Peaslee, Kathleen Paterson, Mary Arcuri, Shannon Fagan, Ryan Snide

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, Frank Burns, David Quinn, Jilian Lozier, Jill Larsen, Matt Reich

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris Regan called the meeting to order at 9:00am
2. CT Tourism Coalition Presenter: Frank Burns
 - a. Frank Burns presents a history of tourism funding in CT, and the Tourism Coalition's strategies for expanded funding. He noted the organization's major focus of the year and specific legislation to watch during this legislative session.
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes 12/12/2024
 - a. Kathleen Paterson made a motion to approve the minutes with noted edit, seconded by Jill S Keith. Stephen Gencarella abstained from the vote. All else in favor, the motion passed.
4. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris Regan delivered the Board Chair Report. He echoed Frank Burns's sentiments on the importance of getting in front of legislators, and getting



out in the community to engage key tourism players in the regional community to engage in this effort. He met with Great Wolf Lodge, which will see their peak season in the first quarter of the year. This off season tourism boost for the region indicates the need to market the region to engage their customer base.

5. Treasurer Report

a. P&L

b. Balance Sheet

- i. Jill St Clair presented the P&L and Balance Sheet, reporting that the district is on-target and within budget and our funding has been received in a timely manner. Over the next few weeks a draft of the FY26 budget will be constructed.

1. motion: Tyra Penn Gesek made a motion to approve the P&L and Balance Sheet, seconded by Patti Larrow-George. All in favor, the motion passed.

6. Committee Chair Reports

a. Finance -

- i. Jill St. Clair reported to the committee on the maturation of the District's Dime CD account. The account holds unencumbered remaining funds from previous years. The account will be renewed into a 22-month CD at a 3.5% interest rate.

b. Marketing

- i. Lori Corriveau shared that brochure printing and distribution are underway, with the Mystic Pizza brochure being replaced by a new Pizza Trail brochure; the brochures subcommittee will review and update all titles.
- ii. The group discussed aligning with the Tourism Coalition, with interest from the marketing committee in convening all tourism districts to promote tourism as an investment.

c. Bylaws



- i. Charlie Tracey has reviewed the bylaws to confirm there are no barriers to expanding ERTD's advocacy efforts.
 - ii. He suggested that the Tourism Coalition could potentially hold an industry rep seat on the board.
 - d. Nominating
 - i. Todd Babbitt updated the board on the progress on recruiting municipal representatives from towns with vacancies, and discussed the potential of a toolkit to be used in recruitment.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. [Legislative Advocacy Toolkit](#)
 - 1. Andrea Manning presented the Legislative Advocacy Toolkit, an open repository of tourism data,
 - 2. Construction and expansion of these resources is ongoing, and anyone with suggestions, or comments is encouraged to get in touch.
 - f. Grants
 - i. Andrea Manning updated the committee on the memo, check status and progress. Checks will go out in the mail
- 7. Marketing Agency Report
 - a. David Quinn introduced Jillian Lozier to update the report on the previous quarter:
 - i. The "From Land to Sea" campaign has delivered over 970,000 impressions YTD. Instagram grew by 23.6% with 467 new followers, and Facebook drove 825K views and 11.1K clicks to ctvisit.com.
 - ii. Top content included the Explore New London post. Spring campaign planning is underway, targeting drive-time audiences in CT, MA, and RI.



- iii. Completed visual assets span the region and consist of approximately 80% video content; the asset library will continue to expand.
 - iv. Upcoming social content will highlight farmers markets, boutiques, and seasonal topics. A call for blog submissions remains open.
 - b. Discussion was held around interest in comparing state vs. district marketing impact, involving local recreation departments in ERTD leadership, and how to suggest locations for future visual asset shoots.
- 8. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
 - a. Jill Larsen reported the updates from the office of Statewide marketing and Tourism:
 - i. The Office of Tourism saw 16 billion media impressions in 2024.
 - ii. Voting for the CT Pizza Trail will be open from March 14-May 1st. Folks can vote for their favorite 10 pizza spots across the state once daily.
 - iii. The 2025 creative and marketing campaign will continue the “Make It Here” campaign, keeping in line with the “Make” statements.
 - iv. The Office has updated the CTvisit events page, to include sorting by categories, which are updated seasonally.
 - v. A monthly data report will include CTvisit traffic including traffic to the sub-region pages, how certain articles and listings are doing for sub-regions. Any additional requests for specific data can be emailed.
 - vi. Key dates for the Coffee with Rachel series and updates on ConnCon Quarterlies were shared.
 - b. A discussion took place on the data needs of the district, and the specific items they are looking for regarding CTvisit traffic and data.
- 9. Administrator Report
 - a. Andrea Manning delivered the Administrator report



- i. Third quarter efforts included support for 11 committee meetings, administration of the Regional Marketing Partnership program from application to award, and successful execution of the Tourism Conference with 200 attendees and 13 speakers, including Lt. Governor Susan Bysciewicz. We also constructed and launched the Legislative Advocacy Toolkit, a living resource expected to undergo updates and expansion as needed.
 - ii. Upcoming efforts will focus on finalizing brochure printing and distribution, awarding and monitoring RMPP grants, collecting tourism collateral for regional outreach, and hosting Coffee with Rachel events on 3/27 and 4/17.
- 10. Round Table Discussion; Events and Attractions by Municipality and Industry
 - a. A roundtable discussion was held during which board members shared tourism updates and upcoming events from their municipalities and industries, including local festivals, performances, grant progress, and ideas for future marketing initiatives.
- 11. Other Business
 - a. No other business
- 12. Adjournment
 - a. Stephen Gencarella made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Patti Larrow George. No abstentions, all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 10:03am.