



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

Regular Meeting

July 10, 2025 - 9:00AM

Zoom:

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

Dial in: +1 312 626 6799

+1 929 205 6099

+1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 893 4875 4065

Passcode: 836268

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Jill St. Clair, Bruce Flax, Fran Kefalas

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

1. Call to Order
 - a. Jill St. Clair called the meeting to order at 9:04am
2. Approval of Minutes - 6/5/2025
 - a. Bruce made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Fran. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Jill St. Clair delivered the Board Chair Report on behalf of Chris Regan.
 - i. Departing gifts were given to Stephen (whiskey experience) and Charlie (dinner at Elizabeth Farmhouse), along with letters inviting them to return in the future.
 - ii. The board met with the districts and CT Office of Tourism about new state directives, including bid requirements over \$5,000; we're working to clarify how this applies under our marketing RFP, as it may affect time-sensitive projects.
 - iii. At our last marketing meeting, we had a great discussion with Dave Jensen about integrating AI; he plans to prepare a toolkit by September to help local entities with itinerary building and asset sharing.
 - iv. Chris will reach out to committee chairs about the three-year term limits and work on gathering a timeline of who has served in each role.
 - v. The administrative partner RFP closes July 16, with SECOG hosting; the committee will review submissions and conduct interviews as needed for August.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L and Balance Sheet
 - i. Fran Kefalas made a motion to approve the P&L and Balance Sheet,

seconded by Jill St. Clair. All in favor, the motion passed.

5. Committee Chair Updates

- a. Finance
 - i. No further report
- b. Marketing
 - i. No report.
- c. Bylaws
 - i. No report.
- d. Nominating
 - i. Andrea reported that the committee will meet in the coming weeks to discuss a strategy around industry appointments and municipal vacancies.
- e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. The 1% meals tax reallocation did not pass; it was a challenging discussion with the districts and CT Office of Tourism, and reportedly the Governor never saw the bill. Patty George from Killingly plans to champion this issue over the next year.
- f. Grants
 - i. Grant reports are due by the end of July; the committee will meet in early August to help Andrea review them. Currently, only three active members remain, so there's a need to recruit 2–3 more.

6. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update

- a. Jill Larsen presented on behalf of the Office of Tourism
 - i. Jill sent May and June CT visit metrics and STR lodging data (for internal use only) to Andrea; she's working with Arrivalist to improve the reporting and welcomes feedback on additional data needs.
 - ii. The office is in a planning phase for the new fiscal year, with a regional influencer series event planned locally (likely October) — originally hoped for August/September, but rescheduled due to the busy season and Big E commitments.
 - iii. Regional district contracts are currently with the legal team; a contract-specific meeting will be scheduled with executive committee members once finalized to address any questions.
 - iv. Plans are underway for a biannual town hall (modeled after the June session with Commissioner O'Keefe) and quarterly marketing meetings with the joint districts, where the creative team will be available for Q&A; John Packer from Arrivalist may join occasionally to discuss data insights.
 - v. The office is launching a fun pizza-themed social media campaign this week, highlighting hotline voicemails and text messages received about pizza.
- b. Discussion took place around:
 - i. A request was made to provide a redlined copy of the new contract to help new executive members understand past and future changes; Jill agreed to make that happen.
 - ii. There was discussion about a prior suggestion that municipalities contribute funding for a hospitality program, but concern was raised about tight local budgets; the group was reminded that the Tourism Coalition offers a \$10 CHAT hospitality training program as a resource.

Questions were raised about potential upgrades to CTvisit.com, including adding itinerary-building tools; Jill noted the events page was recently updated, but more advanced features may be cost-prohibitive, though she will follow up.

- iii. Concerns were expressed about web traffic levels and the need for stronger investment and clearer ROI at the local level; Jill encouraged reviewing the latest data reports and continuing the conversation.

7. Quinn & Hary Update

a. Jillian Lozier presented the report:

- i. June paid advertising campaigns delivered over 2.9 million impressions.
- ii. Instagram saw 1,262 new followers in June, a 68% increase, bringing the account close to the 20K goal.
- iii. Facebook content reached over 1 million views during the month.
- iv. Hosted two influencer trips: G. Michael (Norwich) and Mass Day Tripping (Chaplin and Old Lyme), producing three reels with over 37,000 views.
- v. Fiscal year budget plan follows past patterns: heavier spend in spring/summer, a peak in December for holiday content, and lighter spend in winter.
- vi. Maintains an active content/event calendar, posting to CTvisit and other calendars, and encouraged members to submit additional events or content suggestions.

b. Discussion took place around the following:

- i. David Quinn raised the need for a policy on sharing visual assets from the content library with partners, emphasizing that these are public assets meant to support the region broadly; it was agreed this should move to the Marketing Committee for review and recommendation to the Executive Committee.
- ii. Discussion followed on prioritizing summer event coverage, especially the Brooklyn and Woodstock Fairs and the New London fireworks, with Quinn & Hary offering to front costs until funds are available post-audit. Concerns were raised about balancing district-funded coverage with organizers' responsibility to produce and share their own content.

- c. Fran made a Motion to allocate 25% of the visual asset budget to Quinn & hary to develop a plan for \$13000 in visual assets to bring to the Marketing Committee for approval, and to capture visual assets of the New London fireworks. Bruce Flax seconded the motion. All in favor the motion passed.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andrea Manning reports on the previous and upcoming efforts, noting additional brochure distribution to Mohegan Sun concierge, and steps forward on FY2025 grant reporting, application for funding for FY2026, and steps forward on the audit process. The Nominating and Grants committee will meet in the coming weeks, and request for volunteers for the Mystic Outdoor Art Festival will go out this week.

9. Other Business

10. Adjournment

- a. Bruce Flax made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Fran Kefalas. All in favor the meeting adjourned at 9:59am.