



Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD)

Executive Committee

Regular Meeting

August 7, 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, Shannon Fagan, Jordan Lumpkins, Lori Corriveau, Patti Larrow-George

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, Jillian Lozier, Emma Briody

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris Regan called the meeting to order at 9:02am
2. Approval of Minutes - 7/10/2025
 - a. Jill St. Clair made a motion to approve the July 10, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Shannon Fagan. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris Regan delivered the board chair report, noting that the State currently has a \$420 million revenue surplus, though it is unclear how these funds will be allocated. He expressed interest in reviewing final grant reports once all are submitted to assess performance and shared that many businesses in the district reported record sales in July, indicating strong summer activity.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Bruce Flax noted that the Profit & Loss statement and Balance Sheet had been distributed in advance, with no anomalies to report.
 - ii. Jordan Lumpkins made a motion to approve the P&L and Balance Sheet, seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates
 - a. Finance
 - i. Discussion and possible action to adjust encumbered funds within line item 5115 to address an outstanding invoice.

1. Bruce reviewed an oversight involving line item 5115 (Marketing Media & Influencer Spend) in which funds originally allocated for digital media were mistakenly considered unspent and re-encumbered for influencer costs. He recommended adjusting a Quinn & Hary invoice to reduce influencer agency fees by \$743.70 and add that amount to the final media spend, keeping the total invoice at \$7,500. This corrective action ensures audit compliance and accurate QuickBooks documentation.
 2. Jill St. Clair made a motion to approve the adjustment as presented, seconded by Shannon Fagan. All in favor, the motion passed.
- ii. Bruce also noted that a shared invoice repository has been established and that year-end invoice protocols will be reviewed to avoid similar issues.
- b. Marketing
 - i. FY2025-2026 Marketing Plan Approval
 1. Jill St. Clair made a motion to approve the FY2025–2026 Regional Tourism Plan from Quinn & Hary, seconded by Chris Regan. All in favor, the motion passed.
 - ii. Lori summarized feedback from the last marketing meeting regarding seasonal budget allocations and confirmed board consensus on the Brooklyn and Woodstock Fair allocations, pending confirmation of available collateral from the fairs.
- c. Bylaws - No updates
- d. Nominating
 - i. Industry Appointment Nomination
 1. Chris presented the nomination of Nicole Cabrera from Mohegan Sun to serve as an Industry Representative, noting her marketing experience and strong connection to the region.
 - a. Jill St. Clair made a motion to approve the appointment, seconded by Shannon Fagan. All in favor, Nicole Cabrera was confirmed as industry rep for Mohegan Sun.
 - b. Chris Regan nominated Nicole for the Grants Committee Chair. Jill St. Clair made the motion to approve the appointment, seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
 2. Chris Regan presented his nomination for Legislative Committee Chair, Patti Larrow-George of Killingly.
 - a. Jill St. Clair made a motion to appoint Nicole Cabrera as Chair of the Grants Committee, seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
 3. Andrea noted that at the recent Nominating Committee meeting in July the committee recommended adding Great Wolf Lodge as an Amusement Attractions industry representative, and adding an Agritourism seat, to be voted on at the September 18th full board meeting.
- e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. Patti outlined her plan to begin legislative outreach early, identify relevant bills from last session, engage business leaders, and advocate for tourism funding

ahead of the next session. Chris Regan noted there may be a special session in the fall.

- f. Grants
 - i. Andrea reported that the grant cycle concluded July 31 with all final reports received, with two exceptions, including the Brooklyn Fairgrounds, which has not yet provided proof of payment for contracted advertising. The Grants Committee will prepare a notice of breach of contract if funds are not spent or returned promptly.
- 6. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update
 - a. Jill Larsen reported for the office of Tourism
 - i. She reported that the district's new funding agreement has completed review by the State's legal department and is now with the Office of the Attorney General for final review. Once returned, the district will receive the redlined agreement with a side-by-side comparison to the previous version, as requested. Jill emphasized that while the state review process can be lengthy, the district can use the time to prepare all necessary documents in advance to expedite the application and funding process.
 - ii. She also provided a brief overview of current statewide initiatives, including:
 - 1. Loyalty Program – A new statewide tourism loyalty program will be announced soon, with details to follow.
 - 2. The Big E – Connecticut Building – Preparations are underway, with a volunteer and literature call to be issued shortly.
 - 3. Promotional Campaigns – Continued engagement with the statewide pizza campaign; New York billboard messaging still leveraged in marketing.
 - iii. A monthly recap of top articles, visitation metrics for eastern Connecticut and related performance data will be distributed after the meeting.
- 7. Quinn & Hary Update
 - a. Jillian Lozier presented the July 2025 marketing results and campaign highlights, noting continued growth in engagement across platforms and strong summer performance.
 - i. Key metrics for July include
 - 1. On Instagram the District surpassed the milestone of 20,000 followers; profile visits increased by 37%, improving content reach beyond the existing audience.
 - 2. Paid Advertising Campaigns delivered over 1.4 million impressions in July; continued publishing blog content with paid promotion to drive traffic to CTvisit.com, generating over 500,000 impressions from blog-related ads.
 - 3. Facebook link clicks increased by 20%, largely from sharing blog content.
 - 4. Top performing posts include a carousel featuring Buttonwood Farm and a collaborative reel with the City of New London.
 - ii. The content calendar and calendar of events was shared with the committee, emphasizing the importance of board and partner submissions for events to be featured.

- iii. Recently published blog posts continue to be promoted on social media and through sponsored content.
- iv. The Visual Asset Sharing Policyh will be reviewed and voted on at the next Marketing Committee meeting.
- v. Jillian shared the ongoing request for content, and reminded members to use the content submission process and hashtags when posting to their own social channels to increase the likelihood of cross-promotion.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andre Maning presented for the administrator -
 - i. Andrea reported that all final grant reports for the Regional Marketing Partnership Imagine Grants have been reviewed, with several compliance issues. The major outstanding matter is with the Brooklyn Fairgrounds, which has yet to provide proof of payment for contracted advertising.
 - ii. She met with the Nominating Committee to discuss potential candidates for open industry representative seats and also worked with Lori Corriveau, Jill Keith, and representatives from ConnecticutGrown to explore leads for filling an Agritourism seat.
 - iii. Andrea is coordinating brochure collection from across the district and finalizing materials for the Mystic Outdoor Art Festival booth, which will be staffed over the upcoming weekend to showcase regional tourism resources.
 - iv. With the FY2026 funding application now live, she is compiling the approved budget, marketing plan, and other required documents with a goal of having a draft ready next week.
 - v. She is also preparing materials for the annual audit, incorporating adjustments approved earlier in the meeting and tracking resolution of the Brooklyn Fairgrounds compliance issue.

9. Other Business

- a. Andrea and Jill discussed promotional sticker and QR code plans for the Mystic Outdoor Art Festival, agreeing to use both new and existing stickers.
- b. Tony Sheridan shared that Connecticut tourism was positively represented at an annual tourism event in Dublin attended by leaders from the Connecticut Airport Authority.

10. Adjournment

- a. Jill St Clair made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jordan Lumpkins. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:32am.