



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

Regular Meeting

January 15, 2026 - 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: Chris Regan, Bruce Flax, Jordan Lumpkins, Shannon Fagan, Patti George, Fran Kefalas, Nikki Cabrera, Angela Adams

Guests: Andrea Manning, Thomas Sheridan, Jill Larsen, Jillian Lozier, Emma Briody

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris regan called the meeting to order at 9:07am
2. Approval of Minutes - 12/4/2025
 - a. Patti George made a motion to approve the 12/4/25 meeting minutes and Bruce Flax seconded. All in favor, the motion passed
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris shared a 2026 focus on “heads and beds,” emphasizing the importance of increasing overnight stays and improving visitor experience to drive greater economic impact for hotels, resorts, and casinos.
 - b. Chris referenced recent regional lodging data and comparative context:
 - i. Connecticut added 778 new hotel rooms via new construction (with ~1,000 added over the past two years); Massachusetts added 430, Vermont 373, and Rhode Island 24 in 2025.
 - ii. Connecticut’s 2025 average daily room rate was cited at \$152, compared with Massachusetts \$229, Rhode Island \$218, and Vermont \$184.
 - iii. Occupancy was noted as increasing slightly from 62.1% to 62.9%, with Massachusetts cited at 68.1%.
 - c. Chris reiterated concern that Connecticut is not reinvesting in tourism marketing at levels that match regional peers—particularly entering the America 250 year—and encouraged continued legislative engagement.
 - d. Chris noted the eastern region accounts for 567 of the new rooms cited and underscored the opportunity to translate lodging growth into longer stays and higher visitor spending.

4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - i. Jordan Lumpkins made a motion to approve, seconded by Patti George. All in favor, the motion passed.
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Jordan Lumpkins made a motion to approve the balance sheet seconded by Lori Corriveau. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates
 - a. Finance
 - i. No further report
 - b. Marketing
 - i. Lori Corriveau reported that the Visual Asset Sharing Policy has been finalized, with the Administrator coordinating rollout and inclusion in regular newsletters.
 - ii. Influencer collaborations continue to perform strongly, and spring creative is scheduled for review in February.
 - iii. A joint Marketing–Finance Committee meeting is planned for March to support budget planning, and recent Content Made programming was noted as useful.
 - c. Bylaws
 - i. Fran Kefalas reported no additional bylaw items this month beyond prior technical adjustments; subsequent review confirmed no further contract-related concerns.
 - d. Nominating
 - i. Angela Adams reported that a Nominating Committee meeting will be scheduled and that outreach is underway to several prospective candidates.
 - ii. Potential agritourism representatives were discussed, with multiple recommendations to be reviewed by the committee.
 - iii. Amusement attraction representation was noted as a priority, with Great Wolf identified for follow-up.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. Patti reported ongoing outreach with municipalities and business associations to build support for tourism-related priorities.
 - ii. Work is underway to re-engage support for SB 1456, which previously advanced with strong bipartisan committee votes but did not reach a floor vote.
 - iii. A questionnaire is being circulated to gather town-level project needs and guide coordinated legislative advocacy efforts.
 - f. Grants
 - i. Nikki Cabrera announced the grant submission period has closed and the district received 21 proposals.
 - ii. The committee is beginning initial review for eligibility, feasibility, impact, and budget justification; funding recommendations are anticipated in early February, followed by outreach to applicants.
6. Connecticut Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism Update
 - a. Jill Larsen provided a brief update, including:

- i. Staff change: Anthony Anthony will be leaving the office; his final day is February 6. Replacement plans are not yet confirmed and will be determined through the Governor's office.
- ii. Content Made follow-up: a post-event survey is underway; Jill will share CT Collab (Content Creator Collective directory) information with the Administrator for distribution to municipalities as helpful.
- iii. Upcoming All-Regions quarterly marketing meeting: January 28 at 11:00 AM; potential inclusion of Arrivalist content/insights.
- iv. Arrivalist: SMT reported Arrivalist will build a dashboard and provide one unique login per district at no cost, enabling districts to view data in closer-to-real time; timing TBD.
- v. Loyalty program: "Perks and Recreation" is scheduled to launch January 29 via press conference (location TBD), with additional details to be provided for sharing.
- vi. America 250: SMT is coordinating with CT Humanities / America 250 leadership to use CTVisit for event uploads and curation; questions were raised regarding a reported \$250,000 mention by Governor Lamont, and Jill committed to follow up.
- vii. Discussion included requests from Chris for information on loyalty program development cost and planned promotional spend; Jill committed to gather and report back.

7. Quinn, Hary & Gellar Update

- a. Jillian Lozier provided a Q4 performance update highlighting continued growth across platforms, including 661 new Instagram followers, 137,000 Instagram views, and 1.5 million Facebook views, a 49% increase over the previous period, along with approximately 9,000 link clicks driving traffic to CTVisit blog content.
- b. During a lower seasonal spend period, paid advertising delivered 2.35 million impressions, and amplified blog content generated an additional 742,000 impressions.
- c. Influencer collaborations and organic content continued to perform strongly, including the Lobster Trap Tree reel, which drove significant organic engagement and follower growth, and spring creative is scheduled for review on February 20 ahead of the ramp-up to peak season.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andrea Manning reported the audit was completed, clean, and submitted to the state.
- b. Grants: 21 completed proposals were received; outreach reached many additional prospective applicants, with eight new applicants noted this year.
- c. Visual Asset Sharing Policy: an e-blast will be distributed as soon as the public-facing asset catalog details are finalized; Emma Briotti was acknowledged for extensive work completing asset descriptions.
- d. Upcoming efforts will include a Nominating Committee meeting to be scheduled, a few Grants Committee meetings upcoming, and a Legislative Committee meeting scheduled for 1/20. Andrea anticipates the February 5 Executive Committee meeting will include a slate of recommended grant recipients for approval.
- e. Legislative Committee meeting scheduled for the 20th.

- f. The Administrator announced a Chamber/ERTD tourism conference planned for Friday, February 27 (8:30 AM–2:00 PM) at Great Wolf Lodge, with state updates, keynote, marketing panel, expo tables/networking, and breakout sessions (legislative advocacy, AI marketing, event tourism, and an influencer workshop hosted by Morgan Nyerick from the Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism.
- 9. Other Business
 - a. Chris noted interest in sharing grant program performance outcomes with the Central and Western districts after awards are finalized, as a strategy to demonstrate value and encourage expanded state investment.
- 10. Adjournment
 - a. Bruce Flax made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Fran kefalas. All in favor the meeting adjourned at 9:46am.