



Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD)

Executive Committee

Regular Meeting

October 2, 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: Jill St. Clair, Nikki Cabrera, Lori Corriveau, Shannon Fagan, Bruce Flax, Fran Kefalas, Jordan Lumpkins

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

1. Call to Order
 - a. Jill St. Clair called the meeting to order at 9:06am
2. Approval of Minutes - 9/4/2025
 - a. Motion was made by Fran Kefalas, seconded by Jordan Lumpkins. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Deferred until Chair Chris Regan could join.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. No activity yet
 1. Lori made a motion, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates
 - a. Finance
 - i. The Treasurer reported on prior discussion regarding agency fee percentages on recent invoices, noting that fees of 30–40% on certain projects appeared high and merited review to ensure alignment with the scope of work and responsible use of state funds.
 - ii. David Quinn explained that a 30% fee is standard for digital marketing management due to the labor involved in daily monitoring and optimization,

and that the same rate applied to recent visual asset production to cover coordination, scheduling, and cataloging of regional content.

- iii. Committee members discussed the need for clearer distinctions between digital and production tasks, stronger quality assurance of visual assets, and greater transparency in reporting and deliverables.
- iv. It was agreed that Finance and Marketing Committees will hold a joint session with Quinn & Hary to review fee structures, refine expectations, and incorporate guidance into the next RFP cycle to ensure consistency and accountability.

b. Marketing

- i. The committee reviewed the fall “Make It” campaign creative with Quinn & Hary, providing feedback on imagery and alignment with the statewide campaign standards. Adjustments were made to strengthen visual relevance and consistency, and the updated creative has since been approved by the State.
- ii. Members also discussed initiating a performance review of Quinn & Hary in accordance with the current contract. A review template has been circulated, and the agency will submit responses prior to the next committee meeting.
- iii. The final review and any related recommendations will be completed at the next Marketing Committee meeting later this month.

c. Bylaws

- i. Fran kefalas had no updates. Andrea noted some potential changes that may be required through the new contract. A full review is in progress.
- ii. The committee requested a redline copy of the contract for review. State to follow up on the official redline distribution.

d. Nominating

- i. No report. Andrea will convene a meeting to address vacancies (noting a Preston vacancy and a new Montville director to be onboarded).

e. Legislative Advocacy

- i. Patti Larrow-George reported on recent progress and committee activity included outreach to Northeast Chamber members (business associations, municipal EDCs); Putnam meeting scheduled this month; Plainfield Business Association targeted for November; Jordan Lumpkins expressed interest in joining; next formal committee meeting likely after November with interim behind-the-scenes work.

f. Grants

- i. Nikki Cabrera reported on last month's approvals of final reports and that the committee is scheduled to meet in the coming weeks to discuss the process, streamlining, updating documents delivered to applicants and timing of the roll-out of this year's program.

6. Connecticut Office of Tourism Update

a. Jill Larsen updates from the Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism

- i. Big E representation was strong, with approximately 1.5 million attendees and robust visibility for all three tourism districts. Additional brochures and materials are being distributed to state welcome centers to replenish supplies.

- ii. The Connecticut Pizza Trail launched this week with media coverage and new listings on CTVisit, highlighting the top 100 restaurants statewide by popular vote.
- iii. Districts were asked to submit winter event and attraction highlights to the Office of Tourism and Adams & Knight for inclusion in upcoming statewide promotions.
- iv. A joint statewide marketing meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, October 24, bringing together all regional marketing partners and vendors.
- v. The Office of Tourism is coordinating with DECD on contract redline distribution and review, and exploring opportunities for joint brochure distribution among districts to reduce costs.,
- vi. Jill St. Clair alerted the committee that she reached out to Jill Larsen regarding a collaborative contract with the brochure distribution company across all three districts, as there is a common distributor across the state.
- vii. A brief discussion of Arrivalist platform and the state's contract with this vendor took place.

7. Quinn & Hary Update

- a. Jillian Lozier reported for Quinn & Hary -
 - i. The agency reported continued growth in digital reach, gaining 380 new Instagram followers in September and delivering over 94,000 video views on Instagram and 280,000 views on Facebook. Link clicks to CTVisit increased 43%, reflecting stronger engagement with regional content.
 - ii. Paid advertising campaigns generated approximately 545,000 impressions in September, while paid blog promotions delivered an additional 120,000 impressions, helping to sustain consistent traffic to CTVisit.
 - iii. Recent top-performing content featured the Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival in New London and apple-picking at Holmberg Orchards, both showing strong reach and interaction.
 - iv. The first outdoor adventure influencer trip has been completed, generating over 11,000 views and 700+ interactions to date. Additional influencer visits are scheduled, including the creator known as "Mountain Queen" (63K+ followers, featured in a Netflix documentary).
 - v. The team continues to update seasonal blog content and regional event listings, encouraging partners to submit upcoming events directly for inclusion in the CTVisit calendar.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andrea Manning delivered the administrator report -
 - i. The Administrator reported that the first grant installment has been received and all outstanding vendor invoices have been paid. The annual audit is now underway to ensure continued eligibility for future disbursements.
 - ii. A new director from Montville has joined the board, and outreach is in progress to fill the Preston vacancy following a recent departure.
 - iii. The Regional Marketing Partnership Program will reconvene to update timelines, materials, and resources, with draft documents to be prepared in advance for review.

- iv. Committee recruitment remains a priority, and board members were encouraged to recommend potential participants to strengthen representation across the region.
- v. The next district newsletter will feature the Visual Asset Sharing Policy, accompanied by recent marketing metrics. The Administrator and Quinn & Hary will finalize the internal process for reviewing and routing asset requests through the Marketing Committee.

9. Other Business

- a. Tony Sheridan briefed the committee on efforts to secure a direct flight from Hartford (BDL) to London Gatwick, noting business and tourism demand from major Connecticut employers. Members were encouraged to support state funding approval for a revenue guarantee to advance the proposal.
- b. Discussion followed regarding travel trends and perceptions, including safety concerns and international student travel; members expressed optimism for long-term recovery and reaffirmed the region's tourism strengths.
- c. Fran Kefalas shared new National Park Service data showing 34,000+ visitors and \$2.4 million in spending at Connecticut heritage and historic sites, with plans to circulate the report if publicly available.
- d. The Chamber will distribute federal government shutdown resource links to the board to support members and partners during potential disruptions.

10. Adjournment

- a. Motion was made by Jordan, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor the meeting adjourned at 9:47am.