



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

Regular Meeting

February 5, 2026 - 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, Jordan Lumpkins, Shannon Fagan, Nikki Cabrera, Angela Adams, Fran Kefalas

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, Jill Larsen, Jillian Lozier

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris Regan called the meeting to order at 9:01am.
2. Approval of Minutes - 1/15/2026
 - a. Bruce Flax made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Chris Regan shared that after watching the Governor's speech, he is not optimistic about additional tourism funding this session, noting that tourism was not mentioned and that the short session may limit what advances. He expressed frustration that tourism continues to be overlooked despite delivering a return on investment to the state, and emphasized the need to continue making that case to legislators, particularly as the election cycle approaches.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Jill St. Clair made a motion to approve the P&L and Balance Sheet seconded by Jordan Lumpkins. All in favor the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates
 - a. Finance
 - i. No further report
 - b. Marketing

- i. The Marketing Committee did not meet in January. Updates were deferred to Quinn, Hary & Gellar.
 - c. Bylaws
 - i. No update.
 - d. Nominating
 - i. Outreach to municipalities with current vacancies is ongoing. Conversations are also underway regarding potential board shuffles and reappointments.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. Jordan Lumpkins reported that a bill was submitted by Senator Heather Somers proposing a reallocation of the 1% meals tax, with a portion directed back to tourism, municipalities, and free or reduced lunch programs. The committee discussed that multiple meals tax proposals may be circulating and noted the importance of monitoring developments and aligning support efforts accordingly.
 - f. Grants
 - i. Grants Committee Official Recommendations for FY25 Grant Recipients
 1. The Grants Committee reported receiving 21 completed applications representing a diverse range of regional marketing initiatives.
 2. After three rounds of review, 17 projects were recommended for funding, totaling \$80,000 in grant awards and leveraging \$160,000 in regional marketing investment through required matching funds.
 3. The recommended portfolio reflects a balanced mix of digital marketing, cultural and heritage tourism, culinary and agritourism initiatives, outdoor recreation, influencer programming, event-based promotions, and America 250-related heritage projects.
 4. Members noted strong geographic representation across the district and collaboration among applicants.
 5. Shannon Fagan made a motion to approve the Grants Committee, seconded by Fran Kefalas. Angie Adams, Jordan Lumpkins, Chris Regan abstained. All else in favor, the motion passed.
- 6. Arrivalist Data Access Policy
 - a. The committee discussed incorporating Arrivalist data access into the District's existing visual asset sharing policy, limiting use to tourism-related purposes and mirroring current digital content guidelines.
 - i. Fran made a motion to adopt the amended policy language to include Arrivalist data access, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the motion passed.
- 7. Connecticut Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism Update
 - a. Jill Larsen presented on behalf of SWMT -
 - i. The statewide rewards program is expected to launch later this month, pending final technical adjustments.
 - ii. Leadership changes were announced within the Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism, with Morgan Nyerick stepping into the Director role following Anthony's departure.
 - iii. Discover New England 2027 will be hosted at Foxwoods, likely in March 2027, bringing additional visibility to the district.
 - iv. Coordination is underway to finalize ERTD's Arrivalist login access.

8. Quinn, Hary & Gellar Update

a. Jillian Lozier Presented for Q&H -

- i. January represented the lowest seasonal spend period; paid media remains light but consistent with historical benchmarks.
- ii. Organic engagement was strong, with notable follower growth and increased content views across Instagram and Facebook.
- iii. Blog amplification efforts delivered approximately 98,000 impressions during the month.
- iv. Influencer collaborations are in development for late February and April.
- v. Spring creative will be presented at the upcoming Marketing Committee meeting as paid media ramps up heading into peak season.
- vi. Event updates were shared.

9. Administrator Report

a. Andrea Manning presented the administrator report -

- i. The Regional Marketing Partnership Grant process required significant administrative coordination, including three rounds of proposal review.
- ii. The visual asset sharing policy implementation is underway, including development of intake procedures and adjustments to hosting logistics within ERTD's Google Drive.
- iii. Legislative Committee members continue grassroots outreach to business associations and regional stakeholders in support of the meals tax proposal.
- iv. A new municipal representative for Preston will be onboarded in the coming weeks.
- v. Planning for the February 27 Tourism Conference at Great Wolf Lodge is progressing, with four breakout sessions, legislative focus, and a keynote from Foxwoods leadership. Promotional efforts are ongoing, and board members were encouraged to participate.

10. Other Business

- a. Brochure inventory and reprinting needs were discussed in advance of the upcoming season and budget cycle.
- b. Materials will be distributed for upcoming regional events, including the Mohegan Sun Home & Garden Show.

11. Adjournment

- a. Fran made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:29am.