



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

Regular Meeting

March 5, 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, Jill St. Clair, Fran Kefalas, Angela Adams, Jordan Lumpkins, Nikki Cabrera, Shannon Fagan

Guests: Andrea Manning, Tony Sheridan, David Jensen, Jillian Lozier

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chris Regan called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
2. Approval of Minutes - 2/5/2026
 - a. Bruce Flax made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Jordan Lumpkins. No abstentions, all in favor, the motion passed.
3. Board Chair Report
 - a. Bills to watch
 - b. Chris thanked Andrea and Tony for their work on the Tourism Conference and shared concern about several tourism-related bills currently under consideration in Hartford, particularly proposals related to the meals tax and tourism funding including 305, 55, 205, 5136. He emphasized the importance of directing those funds toward tourism marketing rather than municipalities.
 - c. Chris also encouraged members to continue supporting local businesses, noting concern about economic uncertainty and the importance of shopping local.
4. Treasurer Report
 - a. P&L
 - i. Fran Kefalas made a motion to approve the P&L, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the motion passed.
 - b. Balance Sheet
 - i. Angie Adams made a motion to approve the balance sheet, seconded by Nikki Cabrera. All in favor, the motion passed.
5. Committee Chair Updates

- a. Finance
 - i. Policy and Procedure discussion - moving to ACH payments
 - 1. Bruce reported that the Finance Committee has no major updates and will be meeting jointly with the Marketing Committee to discuss the upcoming budget.
 - 2. A revision to the payment policy to consider ACH payments will be placed on the next Finance Committee Agenda for 3/30.
 - b. Marketing
 - i. Jill St. Clair reported that the Marketing Committee discussed brochure updates, improving brochure tracking and return-on-investment measurement, spring creative approvals, and the need to better reach Asian visitor markets and communities.
 - ii. Jill also noted early budget discussion around supporting Discover New England when it comes to the region, and raised concern about changing food industry trends that may impact local restaurants.
 - c. Bylaws
 - i. No update
 - d. Nominating
 - i. Nikki Cabrera appointment to Hotel & Spa industry designation
 - 1. Nikki Cabrera resigned from her position as the Mohegan Sun industry rep.
 - 2. Jill St. Clair made a motion to appoint Nikki Cabrera to the Hotel & Spa industry designation, seconded by Fran Kefalas. No abstentions, all in favor, the motion passed.
 - ii. Lori Corriveau appointment to Event Venue industry designation
 - 1. Jill St. Clair made a motion to appoint Lori Corriveau to the Event Venue industry designation, seconded by Fran Kefalas. No abstentions, all in favor, the motion passed.
 - e. Legislative Advocacy
 - i. Jordan Lumpkins shared a brief report on behalf of Patty Oat, noting that Chris had already covered the key legislative issues discussed at the Tourism Conference.
 - ii. Andrea offered to begin sending the Chamber's weekly legislative bill tracking report directly to the Executive Committee.
 - f. Grants
 - i. Nikki Cabrera reported that the grants process is moving forward smoothly, with award notifications sent and paperwork now being returned.
 - ii. Andrea noted that recipients have until March 13 to submit contracts and W-9s in order to accept their awards and said the committee would be notified if any significant issues arise.
6. Connecticut Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism Update
- a. Jill Larsen presents
 - i. Jill Larsen reported that the state's rewards program rollout has been pushed back to allow for a more intentional launch under new leadership, with May discussed as a tentative timeframe. Adjustments are also being made to include mid-level prizes to better sustain participant engagement.

- ii. Connecticut Open House Day is scheduled for June 13, and the program is being reviewed following a focus group to improve communication, timing, and the early release of promotional toolkits for participants.
- iii. Upcoming statewide initiatives include a Taste to Table culinary trail launching in June and development of a fall spooky trail highlighting both family-friendly and darker historical or haunted experiences.
- iv. The state is also planning a spring Northeast Corner social media feature, with interest in highlighting outdoor recreation, fishing, and farm visits. Members encouraged drawing from existing regional materials, including ERTD's Oddities & Curiosities content.

Jill shared that Discover New England 2027 will take place March 8–10, 2027 at Foxwoods, with booth pricing still forthcoming. Discussion also touched on continued demand for highway maps, potential bus association participation, and whether the state is collaborating with surrounding states beyond Discover New England.

7. Quinn, Hary & Gellar Update

- a. February campaign performance showed continued organic social growth, including 950+ new Instagram followers, approximately 145,000 Instagram views, and nearly 230,000 Facebook views, generating about 2,300 link clicks to CTvisit blog content.
- b. Paid advertising delivered 408,000 impressions during the lower-spend winter period, while promoted blog content generated 174,000 impressions, an increase over January following a refresh of boosted content.
- c. Top-performing social posts included a collaborative post with Olde Mistick Village promoting the Chowder Festival, a short-form Instagram reel that generated strong engagement, and a collaborative post highlighting an Asahi bowl location in Preston.
- d. Upcoming work includes finalizing spring creative for state approval, planning an April influencer visit with Elena Pinto, and increasing paid advertising spend as the campaign transitions into the spring tourism season. Members were encouraged to share upcoming events and collaborative content opportunities.

8. Administrator Report

- a. Andrea reviewed upcoming meetings, including a Nominating Committee meeting next week, the Board of Directors meeting on March 19, and the Marketing Committee meeting on March 20.
- b. The brochure printing and distribution RFP process is underway, with bids due March 23 and tabulation review scheduled for the March 30 Finance Committee meeting. Members were encouraged to share the RFP with potential vendors.
- c. Administrative updates included confirmation that ERTD's 1099 filing was accepted by the state and that checks for January and February payments are being prepared for signature.
- d. Andrea provided a brief recap of the Eastern Connecticut Tourism Conference, noting 186 attendees, 17 display tables, four breakout sessions, and remarks from Michael Shea (Connecticut Airport Authority) and Jason Guyot (Foxwoods). The event emphasized regional collaboration, partnerships, and the need for stronger legislative advocacy for tourism funding, with positive feedback on ERTD's Legislative Toolkit.

- e. Discussion on expanded ERTD board engagement and attendance, scheduling ahead to avoid regional conflicts and surveying the wider community for input for shaping the event next year took place.
- 9. Other Business
- 10. Adjournment
 - a. Jill, Angie. All in favor the meeting adjourned AT 8:45am.