

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the  
Western Connecticut Tourism District**

**Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 3 pm, at the Heritage Hotel and Conference Center**

Directors present were: Gregg Dancho, chair; Jack Baker, Mark Barnhardt, John Baroody, Steph Burr, Annette Einhorn, Michelle Falcone, Mady Flynn, George Frantzis, Lorenzo Gaudio, Sabrina Godeski, Ginny Gordon-O'Neill, Rachel Kelly, Craig Nelson, Dawn Nielsen, Ben Paletsky, Christal Preszler, Karen Reddington-Hughes, Carmen Romeo, Mare Rubin, John Voket, Jen Wastrom, Carey Weber and Rowena White. Others present included: from Storytellers, Joe Giaccone and Chris Smith; from Fairfield University Julie Marella, Sally Caron and Kelly Frank; from the Waterbury Regional Chamber, Terry Macary; from the DECD, Ellen Woolf; guests Michelle Gorra and Lisa Piazza.

**Welcome**

Mr. Dancho called the meeting to order at 3:15 pm. All those in attendance introduced themselves.

**Election of Temporary Chair**

Mr. Dancho reviewed the process for the annual meeting. Mr. Romeo nominated Ms. Nielsen as temporary chair, seconded by Ms. Kelly; the motion carried.

**Election of Officers 2023**

Ms. Nielsen read the slate of officers as presented by the Nominating Committee: Chair: Gregg Dancho, Stratford; Vice Chair: Jeff Dunn, Thomaston; 2nd Vice Chair: Lorenzo Gaudio, Roxbury; Secretary: Michelle Falcone, Easton; Treasurer: Carmen Romeo, Industry Representative; Assistant Treasurer, Rachel Kelly, Torrington; Past Chair: Craig Nelson, Warren; At Large: Ben Paletsky, Morris; Jen Wastrom, Redding; and Bob Burns, Waterbury. Ms. Nielsen noted that the representative from Danbury is no longer able to serve on the Executive Committee and so removed his name from the proposed slate. Ms. Nielsen asked for nominations from the floor; no nominations were given from the floor. Ms. Einhorn moved to accept the slate of officers as presented; Mr. Baroody seconded. The motion carried.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned to the Regular Meeting at 3:35 pm.

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the  
Western Connecticut Tourism District**

**Welcome**

Mr. Dancho called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm. The Directors remained present for the Regular Meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Gaudioso moved to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2023, meeting as presented; Mr. Frantzis seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Preszler abstained.

### **New At-Large Board Member**

Ms. Macary reviewed the section of the By-Laws that allows for up to 20 At-Large directors to be added to the Board. Mr. Paletsky moved to accept Jack Baker of Litchfield Distillery as an At-Large director. Mr. Romeo seconded; the motion carried.

### **Financial Report**

Ms. Macary reviewed the year-end financial report, noting that as required by the contract with the state, all state funds had been spent for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Mr. Nelson moved to accept the financial report as presented; Ms. Einhorn seconded. The motion carried.

### **Coupon App Update**

Ms. Marella of Fairfield University, along with graduate students Sally Caron and Kelly Frank, gave an update on the progress of the coupon app. Engineering student Jack Fetzler was unable to attend, but recorded a short video to demonstrate the app. The Fairfield University team explained the next steps, which include market and consumer trend research.

### **State Update**

Ellen Woolf of DECD gave an update on the state's new branding campaign as well as on the marketing plans for the state Office of Tourism. The new branding, "Connecticut: Make It Here" was launched in Bristol and is designed to highlight the state's entrepreneurial, scientific and artistic strengths.

### **Marketing Committee/Storytellers**

Ms. Smith reviewed the year in marketing efforts for the District, including increases in Facebook and Instagram followers and engagement. She also reviewed the promoted video and billboard campaigns. She asked all directors to engage with the social media platforms as well as sending in ideas and suggestions for future promotions.

### **Suggestions for the Good of the Order/Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Macary  
Administrative Partner