

Board of Director Minutes

**Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, April 23, 2010
Tourism Council Conference Room
175 Main Street
Pawtucket, RI**

1. Roll Call

Attendees:

Dave Balfour, Chair
Sue Tessier Mackenzie, Secretary
Najwa Murphy, Member
Moe Rondeau, Member
Dave Richards, Member
Judy Fischbach, Member
John LeFrancois, Member
Rich Murphy, Member

Absent:

Jackie Boudreau, Treasurer
Helen Moroney, Member
Louis Yip, Member
Ted Garille, Member
Robert Conway, Member
Anthony Capuano, Member
Mark Brodeur, Member
Also Attending:
Robert Billington, President
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations

2. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm with a quorum present.

3. Minutes

On a MOTION by Mr. Rondeau and seconded by Mr. Richards, the Minutes of the February 19, 2010 meeting were approved as presented.

4. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Billington and Ms. Carter presented the details of the budget. They noted significant changes and a reduction in size from last year's budget by approximately \$50,000. Billington explained that the Council's long-term debt was being paid through revenue over expenses beyond the budget being approved today.

Mr. Murphy spoke in favor of somehow lowering bank fees and ticket selling costs by possibly using staff to sell tickets direct to customers. He noted that since our customers are known, this could be a more profitable way in the future. This effort could be customer- incentive to save the Council and the customer money and thereby lowering BVTC fees. He suggested other companies be considered for the ticketing services.

Mr. Richards suggested that, to save money, the Council should research a way to own its system for ticket selling versus purchasing the service. Mr. Billington will to research methods to cut costs in this area. Currently, these costs are approximately \$11,000 annually.

Prior to the vote and under Discussion, Mr. Richards noted that he felt the budget was "overly optimistic" for these times. Ms. Fischbach noted that the reduction in the size of the budget from last year was a good thing to meet these economic times.

On a MOTION by Mr. Richards and seconded by Ms. Tessier-McKenzie, the BVTC 2010/2011 Budget was approved unanimously.

5. President's Report

Mr. Billington updated the Board of Directors on the following:

An Urgent VC partners proposal to write a sustainable cities grant to USHUD, USEPA and USDOT. The partners of Urgent VC have been working with the Council and attended Sustainable Tourism Labs and felt that they wanted to work closely with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the work we are doing in sustainable tourism and sustainable community development. A proposal was designed and brought forward by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and URGENT VC to the Blackstone Valley Partnership, a group of organizations and cities and towns representing the Heritage Corridor communities. The Tourism Council felt that the BVP and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor represented a larger group of communities than the BVTC and might be interested in a working together on a proposal to the federal government that would provide up to \$5,000,000 in funds to create a Valley-wide sustainable communities effort. The Council then led a fund raising effort that will provide \$10,000 to hire Urgent VC to write the grant application to the federal partners listed above. The application is due in May.

The first annual Rhode Island Cherry Tree Blossom Festival

The GoGo Cast videocast project in the Lincoln and Pawtucket Visitor Centers

The Blackstone Culinaria Tour

The Lincoln Train Excursion to Woonsocket

The nomination of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council by Ashoka Changemakers for a \$5,000 award in their latest Changemakers contest

The Roger Williams/William Blackstone road striping project from the bottom of the Blackstone bikeway in Cumberland to the top of the East Bay Bikeway in Providence. RI Housing will financially support the installation of the stripe for this project.

The invitation of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to attend the World Travel and Tourism Summit in Beijing. Billington noted that a local foundation is supporting his trip to the World Tourism Summit and will be traveling there with Board Member Louis Yip.

The Blackstone Valley Navigant Credit Union Heritage Golf Tournament.

The Pawtucket Foundation Annual Awards Celebration honoring Board Member Louis Yip.

Billington was asked to be an Expert Commentator for the Revelation to Action Ashoka

Changemakers contest.

The Council's hosting of the Discover New England Tourism Summit and International Marketplace in Newport.

The upcoming Annual Dinner. John Chan is working to bring Cumberland's Farrelly Brothers to the meeting to be recognized for their artistic contributions to Rhode Island.

The speaking engagement at the Marion County Indiana Tourism Conference that was cancelled due to the flooding here in Blackstone Valley.

6. New Business

Mr. Rondeau noted that the Council should work with the Cumberland Lincoln Boys Club on their Rubber Ducky race in 2010.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board of Directors, the Board adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert D. Billington
President