

**Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.**

Board of Directors Meeting  
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council  
175 Main Street  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
May 16, 2017  
**Corrected Minutes**

**Attendees:**

David Balfour, Chairman  
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (via phone)  
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer  
Dr. Joyce Hindle Koutsogiane  
Paul Palange (via phone)  
Thomas Kravitz  
Michael Zhang

**Absent:**

Dave Richards, Secretary  
Mark Brodeur  
Courtney Iannuccilli  
Michael Gwynn  
Louis Yip  
Debra Berardis

**Also Attending:**

Dr. Robert Billington, President, BVTC  
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations, BVTC  
Joan Loos, BVTC Staff

1. Call to Order. Mr. Balfour called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from March 21, 2017. Joyce Koutsogiane moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the minutes from the March 21, 2017 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach reviewed and explained the Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2017 compared to March 31, 2017 and the Income Statement from July 2016 through April 2017. Joyce Koutsogiane moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

2017-2018 Budget. Judy reviewed the proposed 2017-2018 budget and explained several changes that were made in budget line items from last year's budget.

Natalie explained that to comply with the State of Rhode Island regulations, we have just undergone a full audit. Organizations with budgets over \$500,000, if they engage in fund raising, need to have a full audit every year – we qualify for a full audit.

Bob thanked Natalie, Kevin Silvia from Finance Management Services and Judy for their hard work with the audit as well as preparing the budget.

Joyce Koutsogiane moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the 2017-2018 budget was unanimously accepted as presented.

4. Director's Report:

- Bob welcomed new Board member, Mike Zhang from Johnson & Wales University. Mike is the Director of International Admissions and currently there are approximately 1,600 international students at Johnson & Wales. Mike explained how the students contribute to the Rhode Island economy.
- Resolution of Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center. The issues regarding the use of the Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center have been resolved. We are still under contract to provide visitor services but are no longer under contract for a restaurant. A settlement was accepted from the State by the restaurant vendor. A settlement was also accepted by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, which amounted to rent due from the vendor.
- Cruises on the Blackstone Valley Explorer are underway for the season. Any Board member is invited to take a cruise as our guest.
- A Resolution has been sent to the nine Blackstone Valley cities and towns, asking the Town/City Councils to adopt the Resolution to keep the hotel tax formula as it is for a year. If the hotel tax formula reverts to the previous formula, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council would lose approximately \$40,000 of revenue.
- We have been working on cleaning up the Central Falls Landing site. We hope it will be the next location for the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council offices.
- Bob participates on a Statewide Tourism Commission, chaired by Representative Lauren Carson. A new Chief Marketing Office, Lara Salamano, has been hired. By the fall, a formal tourism campaign should be launched.
- Natalie has been working with our computer support company, Lucid Solutions, to protect our computers against the recent computer hacking incidents around the world.
- Office staff worked with Paul Palange of the Pawtucket Times/Woonsocket Call to create a Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide that is being distributed around the Blackstone Valley and the state. Mr. Balfour complimented all who worked on the Guide.
- Our Annual Meeting will take place at the Pawtucket Visitor Center on September 28, 2017. One of our honorees will be John Taylor, CEO of Twin River. Mr. Balfour reminded the Board of the difficulties with acoustics and disruption at last year's meeting. Barry suggested closing the bar during the award presentations. Bob reported that we are addressing the problems with a different layout for this year's meeting.
- Our Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament will take place on June 12, 2017 at Crystal Lake Golf Club. Bob asked Board members to let us know if they would like to play golf or can refer to us anyone they know who plays golf. The sponsor for the hole-in-one hole is Colonial Toyota of Smithfield, the sales manager of which used to work at Lexus of Warwick, which was the hole-in-one sponsor at last year's tournament.

- Bob circulated the Economic Impact Report for Tourism in Rhode Island, as well as a booklet on the History of Tourism in Rhode Island.

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- The BVTC has inspired a project called Broad Street Regeneration in an effort to make Broad Street through Pawtucket, Central Falls and Cumberland an economically viable street. Bob reviewed the history of the Broad Street Regeneration project. Through a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, a Broad Street Coordinator has been hired for a year. Bob introduced the Coordinator, Jillian Finkle, who is working with the Planning Departments of the 3 communities. At this point, Jillian has walked the length of Broad Street, documenting every building – homes and businesses – and is also working on a Facebook page and updating the web site. Through Business Development workshops business owners are encouraged to take advantage of funds available for things such as façade improvements. Jillian works out of the BVTC office. Her goal at the end of the year is to have a solid design plan and to have a face-to-face meeting with each business owner and other stakeholders on the street. The Board officially thanked Jillian and offered support of the work she is doing.
5. Designer Show House Project. Joyce reported on the planned Designer Show House fundraiser for the BVTC. A house has been found – the Baker-Hanley House at 67 Park Place in Pawtucket, the location of The Samaritans of Rhode Island. Joyce has a list of 15 designers to contact and the goal is to get a designer for each room signed on by June 1. The designers will be able to promote their work, the house will get refurbished, and the event will be a fundraiser for The Samaritans and for the BVTC.
  6. July 4<sup>th</sup> Arnold Mills Parade. Joyce reported that Santa George will be a part of the July 4<sup>th</sup> Arnold Mills Parade and will be promoting The Polar Express. We will ask some of our Polar Express Chefs to participate as well.
  7. Adjournment. There being no further business, Tom Kravitz moved, Joyce Koutsogiane seconded and the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Balfour at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff