

**SULLIVAN COUNTY VISITORS ASSOCIATION MINUTES**  
**100 Sullivan Ave., Ferndale, NY, January 27, 2015**

**Present:** Roberta Byron-Lockwood, Herb Clark, Phyllis Andrews, Franklin Trapp, Rick Lander, Alan Rosenblatt, Elaine Fettig, Sonja Hedlund, Elaine Giguere, Stacy Cohen, Jennifer Grimes

**Absent:** Ivan Weinger, Steve Vegliante, Jean Tulp, Paul Carlucci, Richard Glisson, Darlene Fedun

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. It was conducted via conference call due to inclement weather.

New Board Member, Jennifer Grimes, was welcomed.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the December meeting were emailed & attached. A motion to accept the corrected December Board minutes was made by Fettig and seconded by Trapp. Approved.

**Financial Report:** The Profit & Loss Comparison for 2014 was emailed and attached. Questions:

- 1) Rosenblatt asked about Tourism Initiatives, why they were down from 2013 and should we try to raise it up in 2015. Tourism Initiatives are the dollars that come in for CATS promotion, CFA participation, state legislator member item, etc. The state legislators no longer do member item bills, CATS promotion dollars come in and then go out to the CATS region for promotion and CFA dollars are used by the overseeing entity for/from a number of counties/organizations to be used for a specific purpose. We really have no control over this figure, and it will rise or fall in any given year.
- 2) Fettig asked if there is still some 2014 bed tax dollars to come in. The final 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bed tax receipts won't be in till the end of March or beginning of April.
- 3) Lander asked if "Flip Key" and "Air B&B" entities are paying bed tax. They are supposed to since the state has determined that these accommodations, if located within a county that has a bed tax, must charge/pay bed tax. We will be talking to the treasurer to come up with a plan on how to accomplish compliance. Hedlund suggested that we invite these accommodations to become members; noting to them that they must have a bed tax ID number. Fettig suggested that this be tabled until the next meeting to be discussed along with a general membership recruitment plan.

A motion to accept the financial report was made by Cohen and seconded by Giguere. Approved.

**Membership Report:** Jennifer Grimes was thanked for bringing in 6 new members. Please see notation in Old Business regarding out-of-county membership. A motion to accept the new members was made by Lander and seconded by Fettig. Approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

**Executive Board** – The Executive Board, consisting of officers and Ms. Fedun, met last week. It was decided that they would take on a bigger role than in the past. Issues discussed include:

- 1) A goal is to increase staff to include a mid-level management position to be filled by someone with tourism experience as well as a junior level employee. The Executive Board will work toward finding a way to fund these positions.
- 2) Board meeting frequency should remain at monthly for the time being.
- 3) We currently have 14 Board members but can have up to 17. We will remain at 14 for the time being.
- 4) The committees have not been meeting. The Executive Board will look at what committees we have, which ones to keep and what new ones we may need. They also will decide on how to structure them. Perhaps with each committee containing a Board member to chair the committee and a few member businesses that represent each particular committee's makeup.
- 5) Out-of-county membership – see notation in Old Business below.
- 6) Outside consultants: Fisher Mears is doing a fantastic job. We should have Large Media and Media Solstice come in and discuss with them what each do or can do for us. We would then decide what of these can be done in the office and which would be done by them.
- 7) Staff salaries should be reviewed by taking into consideration what like-sized counties are paying staff. It was also determined that we should consider hiring a part-time bookkeeper or accountant.

All the above will be discussed further as the Executive Board meets in the future.

**Sportsman Expo** – This year's Sportsman & Outdoor Expo is scheduled for March 21, 2015 at SUNY Sullivan from 8am-6pm. Last year there were over 3,000 people in attendance. We have thus far had a greater response from vendors and sponsors than last year. We are hoping to bring in between 4,000-5,000 people.

**Board Retreat** – This year's retreat will be held on either March 16 or 18. We will let everyone know the particulars once a location is determined.

**Committee Restructuring** – As referenced above, it needs to be determined which of the existing committees should be retained and which new ones should be put in place as well as how to "people" them. A Membership Committee is one that should be added.

**Casino** – The committee was a compilation of Sullivan County organizations interested in bringing casinos to the county. Grimes mentioned she watched the presentations live and said the committee was very professional and their presentation was very impressive.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**County Contract** – A resolution authorizing the execution of our 2015 contract was presented, voted upon and approved. We will be working with them and the treasurer to

develop a plan to identify accommodations not paying bed tax and bring them into compliance.

**Brew, Spirit, Wine Trail** - This brochure is in the planning stages. We are working with I Love NY (Taste New York).

**Motorcycle Maps** – We are waiting for O’Toole’s Harley Davidson to provide us with the trails.

**Membership Drive** – The committee needs to meet to determine how to move forward with this.

**Simple View** – We will be integrating a new software program into our website which will enable members to enter their own information as well as any stories printed about them. Everything that goes live on our website will also automatically be sent to the I Love NY website. We will be meeting with Simple View to learn how the program works.

## **UPDATES**

**2015 Travel Guide** – The guide was ready in the first week of January and recently went to the first show of the 2015 season. It has received a great response thus far. It will be ready on our website as a flip book.

**Social Media** – Our social media “library” and popularity continues to grow each year. They are all being well received and used.

**E-Commerce** – The e-commerce site has a few partners with some traffic. We want to have full packages available for travelers to purchase on the site. A packaging seminar is currently under consideration for sometime in February.

**I Love NY Promotions** – We have been working with Brand USA (China Ready, Australia Ready, etc). We now have a member who will be doing inbound receptive work.

**Casino Update** – We will keep everyone informed as things develop with the casino process. Adelaar will be visiting the area in February.

**Shows** – We will be attending 20-21 shows this year. Our member businesses will be assisting with staffing them.

**Membership Communications** – Future membership communications will be done through Simple View. After we have received training on it, we will hold a seminar for members to learn how to use/access it.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- 1) Hedlund stated that 2015 is WJFF's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They will be holding a celebration on February 12 with on-air call ins. She was requested to send us the information so that we can send it to our membership. She also referenced that Farmstock is taking 2015 off. Unfortunately, they did not receive any outside funding for it this year.
- 2) Trapp said that the Forestburgh Playhouse will be rolling out a new website this year. They will also be raising funds for capital improvements and will be participating in beautification of the grounds.
- 3) Byron-Lockwood will again be participating in the Heart-A-Thon which will be held on February 14 from 8am-5pm at The Sullivan. Donators will be mentioned live on WSUL/WVOS. Assistance in manning the phones would be greatly appreciated.
- 4) The Boys and Girls Club will again be holding a Celebrity Waiters Dinner. Our table(s) will be Team Shrek.
- 5) We have been working with the Congressional offices toward getting the conus per diem status raised. It's a good possibility now with a casino to be sited in Sullivan County.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The out-of-county membership discussion will be tabled for either the next Board meeting or the Retreat when there will be more time to adequately address it.

**Next Meeting** – Tuesday, February 24, at 9 a.m. in the SCVA Conference Room.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m. with a motion by Lander and a second by Fettig. Approved.