

SULLIVAN CATSKILLS VISITORS ASSOCIATION

Chairman Eric Frances called the meeting to order at 8:32 am

Present: Donna Hemmer, Rocco Baldassari, Paul Carlucci, Scott Samuelson, Eric Frances, Mark McLewin, Talya Regan, John Pizzolato, Shawn Lang, Franklin Trapp, Tanya Hahn, Sims Foster, Roberta Byron-Lockwood, Herb Clark, Isabel Braverman, Lori Solomon

Joining by video/phone: Matthew Orley, Phil Vallone, Brian Facquet, Ariel Shanberg

Not In Attendance: Anthony Bruno, Rick Lander, Richard Lowe, Lauren Seikaly, Jay Quaintance, Ira Steingart, Josh Potosek

Minutes: The minutes from the March Board Meeting were attached. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Scott Samuelson and seconded by Paul Carlucci, all in favor. Motion carries.

Membership Report: A motion to accept new members was made by Paul Carlucci and seconded by Mark McLewin, all in favor. Motion carries.

- SCVA showed a breakdown of members by type, and by number of rooms as per lodging as had been requested by the board. Board Member Sims Foster noted that the growth of short-term rentals who are members has rapidly increased. SCVA President/CEO Roberta Byron-Lockwood said that more rooms are needed as the goal is to continue to promote the Sullivan Catskills to accommodate all visitors.

Financial Report: Treasurer Tanya Hahn reported that the SCVA received bed tax from the second quarter. She also reported that membership dues are up. The line item “promotion” has increased due to Catskill Cuisine, but SCVA President/CEO Roberta Byron-Lockwood reported that grant funding will cover those costs. Byron-Lockwood also reported that reconciliation money from Sullivan County came in at over \$1 million. Board Member Talya Regan asked what falls under “promotion” in the budget line item as opposed to “marketing” or “advertising.” Byron-Lockwood responded that “promotion” includes events, such as Catskill Cuisine. A motion to accept the financials was made by Scott Samuelson and seconded by Talya Regan, all in favor. Motion carries.

Executive Committee: Chairman Eric Frances reported that the Executive Committee met in April and discussed holding Board Meetings every other month. Secretary Franklin Trapp said he will check the bylaws to see what the language is regarding how frequently meetings must be held.

Finance Team: No report

Marketing Committee: The Committee reported that the view rate for digital ads for the Sullivan Catskills is above the industry standard. The Committee also noted that advertising for Catskill Cuisine is now running on print, digital, radio, cable, and social media. Board Member Talya Regan requested that the Marketing Committee should see the ads before they go live. Board Member Phil Vallone agreed.

Short-Term Rental Committee: Committee Chair Matthew Orley reported that the committee will meet tomorrow. Orley also reported that he would attend the Town of Bethel meeting the following night where a proposed law on short-term rentals would be discussed. Orley and Byron-Lockwood reported that they both wrote letters to the town asking for reconsideration of the proposed law. Orley said he would share the proposed law with the other Board Members.

New Business

SCVA response to the County RFP: Chairman Eric Frances reported that the Executive Committee discussed responding to an RFP from Sullivan County by proposing a plan to hire a person to find promoters and people who want to hold events in the Sullivan Catskills. The position would be independent but a part of the SCVA. The goal is to fund the position with funding from the county's room tax fund. Frances said the next steps would be to create a job description and outline the goals and objectives of the proposed role. Board Member John Pizzolato asked if the role could also be part of the Film Commission. Board Member Sims Foster noted that the county is looking for events that would help in the promotion of tourism. Chairman Frances introduced a motion to put the pre-RFP plan together to present to Sullivan County. A motion was made by John Pizzolato and seconded by Paul Carlucci, all in favor. Motion carries.

Old Business: Roberta Byron-Lockwood reported that they are still waiting for the state budget to come in.

A motion to adjourn was made by Eric Frances and seconded by Scott Samuelson

Adjournment 9:41 am

Next meeting: May 30, 2023