



Board Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2024

Sussex County West Administrative Complex

In attendance: Anne Angel (proxy for Mike D.), Scott Anthony (Board Co-Chairperson), Drew DiFonzo, Kevin Evans, Carol Everhart, Karen Falk, Ben Gray, Bonnie Hall (Past Chair), Maggie Lingo, Fred Mast, Kristin Miller, Matt Parker (Board Chairperson), Bill Pfaff, Linda Price, Patrick Ruhl, Kevin Thompson, Scott Thomas, Jaclyn Hulihan (subbing for Jessica Welch), Alison Schuch, Fred Thompson

Absent: Terry Carson, Mike Dunmyer, Morgan Edgar, Betsy Reamer, Jo Schmeiser, Lauren Weaver

1. Call to Order time: 9:30am by Matt P.

2. Welcome and Introductions: Matt P. welcomed everyone and those in attendance introduced themselves through alphabetical roll call. In addition, Scott introduced new board members, Alison Schuch and Fred Thompson and they expanded on their backgrounds. Quorum confirmed by Scott T.

3. Approval of the October 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Bonnie H., **Seconded by:** Ben G., **Passed by** the Board.

4. Committee Reports

- **Finance** – Presented by Matt P.
 1. The PAT Revenue for the 2nd quarter is down \$152,183 from this same quarter last year (23% decrease). Year to date, the PAT Revenue is down \$211,782 from last year (16% decrease).

Typically about 80% of the annual PAT Revenue is collected by this point of the year. When comparing PAT Revenue to prior years other than last year: Current year PAT Revenue is down \$156,111 (12%) compared to 12/31/21. Current year PAT Revenue is up \$481,247 compared to 12/31/20. Current year PAT Revenue is up \$233,840 compared to 12/31/19.

2. Included in the Grant Income account is \$130,110.53 that has been received from the EDA Grant, less the \$11,563.20 that was for the City of Seaford. Because this is a reimbursement type grant, this is reimbursing eligible grant expenses that have already been spent - SDT isn't holding these funds for later use.
3. On 12/31/23, there was \$635,430 in the checking account. \$4,837.41 of this is reserved for the Culinary Coast campaign. There also is \$131,657 in SDT's reserve (money market) account.

Alison S. asked a question about the Education line item being 470% above budget YTD. Scott T. stated he will further examine and suspects that it is because the Destinations International Annual Conference was added in July.

Motion to approve the 2nd Quarter Financial Statements by Linda P.,
Seconded by Bonnie H., **Passed** by the Board.

- **Policies & Procedures** – Presented by Ben G.

The committee continues to work on standard operating procedures for SDT succession planning starting with a framework/flowchart on voluntary and involuntary exits and absences of the Executive Director (ED) position.

The committee determined that they would implement the following action items to continue our discussion:

Check signing: Need to update signatories besides ED and JUDS – include the current chairperson.

Identify who would be the immediate decision maker in ED's absence.

Formation of hiring committee

Updated job description for the ED

ED to create a list of responsibilities/daily activities and important calendar dates / deadlines.

Bank accounts, passwords, website credentials all in one place.

Drew D. commented that an SDT staff person should be considered to manage day-to-day operations in addition to the chairperson.

Karen F. commented that SDT used to have at least 2 staff personnel (including the ED) attend board meetings to help with the flow of information in the event that one staff person becomes unavailable.

- **Marketing** – Presented by Bonnie H.

Bonnie outlined and called out highlights of SDT's Second Quarter Marketing Report that was shared and posted in the Boardroom. Bonnie referenced the SDT Media Coverage Report, powered by SDT's subscription to Muck Rack. SDT's advertising value equivalency (AVE) this quarter was \$1,580,000 with nearly 171 million unique visits per month to the publications cited in the report.

Bill P. suggested adding a yearly comparison column to the Adara Chart.

Scott T. provided the board with an update of SDT's Tourism Ambassador Training rollout and build outline. There was discussion on promotion tactics with the chambers to their members as well as the Delaware Restaurant Association, Delaware Hotel Lodging Association and Sussex County Association of Realtors. Incentives (i.e. discount/promo cards to area attractions and restaurants) were also discussed for those who complete the certification.

- **Advocacy** – Presented by Drew D.

HB 168 has been officially filed (STR inclusion into the PAT) and scheduled to be introduced this legislative session. A copy of this bill has been posted in the SDT Boardroom.

5. DTO Update – Presented by Jaclyn Hulihan

- DTO / SDT/ State Parks exhibited in one booth at the Chicago Travel & Adventure Show (1/13-14) and engaged with many of the 11,000 who attended.
- DTO/SDT/GWCVB are set to promote in a combined 20x20 exhibit at the New York City Travel & Adventure Show taking place 1/27-28.
- DTO will be exhibiting at the Atlanta Travel & Adventure Show in March.
- DTO exhibited at the American Bus Association Marketplace in Nashville
- Working on Valentine's Day and Black History Month promotions for February
- In March, DTO is rolling out a new E-newsletter
- In April, DTO is revamping its website using a Simple View Platform
- Still fielding applications for the Sports Facilities Grant
- A Sports Tournaments Capital Fund is being considered using the same framework as the Sports Facilities grant.
- DTO is sponsoring a volcano at this weekend's Fire & Ice Festival.

6. Other Business / Announcements

- Scott T. was a guest speaker at Milford High School's Tourism & Hospitality Class and announced that, as a result of Morgan E.'s help, SDT is getting a student intern from February through May. Her name is Joy Moultrie and she is super-bright.

7. Next Board Meeting is on April 25, 2024 from 9:30am - 11:30am at the Sussex County West Administrative Complex / Main Conference Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34am.