



Board Meeting Minutes from October 16, 2025

Sussex County EOC Building

In attendance: Scott Anthony (Board Chairperson), Terry Carson, Mike Dunmyer, Carol Everhart, Ben Gray, Bonnie Hall (Past Chair), Maggie Lingo, Fred Mast, Matt Parker (Past Chairperson), Linda Price, Betsy Reamer, Jo Schmeiser, Alison Schuch, Fred Thompson (Board Co-Chairperson), Kevin Thompson, Scott Thomas, Lauren Weaver, Jessica Welch

Absent: Heather DeMarie, Drew DiFonzo Kevin Evans, Andrew Harton, Patrick Ruhl, Jim Smith, Tom Summers, Nadine Timpanaro

1. Call to Order time: 9:36am by Scott A.

2. Welcome and Introductions: After recognizing and celebrating board member Carol Everhart's retirement at the end of the year, Scott A. welcomed everyone and those in attendance introduced themselves through alphabetical roll call. Quorum confirmed by Scott T.

3. Approval of the July 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Linda P., **Seconded by:** Bonnie H., **Passed by** the Board.

4. Committee Reports

Finance – Presented by Scott A

- Total PAT Revenue is up 82.7% over the prior year, primarily because of the inclusion of short-term rentals. Excluding short-term rentals, the regular PAT revenue is up 13.3% over last year.

- Budgeted Revenue for the year was \$1,900,000. If SDT only collects what was collected last year for the remainder of the year (which did not include short-term rentals for the next 3 months) then SDT will end up about \$220,000 over the budgeted revenue.
- There were some changes to the chart of accounts beginning in July, so you will notice that not all of the accounts line up with the prior year anymore. This will create some variances between the current year and comparing it to the prior year accounts.
- One note - beginning this year, an additional employee decided to be added to the health insurance plan - therefore that expense has increased and most likely will end up over budget.
- At 9/30/25, there was \$513,179 in the checking account. Of this amount, none is reserved for the Culinary Coast campaign. There also is \$219,290 in SDT's money market account. The Edward Jones investment account had a current cost basis at 9/30/25 of \$76,185.

Motion to approve the First Quarter Financial Statements by Linda P.,
Seconded by Mike D., Passed by the Board.

- The Finance Committee has committed to meet more regularly over the next 90 days, because we're looking at a surplus of over \$300,000 to come up with different marketing allocations.
- The charge to the Finance Committee is, how do we spend that in a fiscally responsible way? And how do we also spend, as we agreed as a board, 80-20, 20% organizational changes, 80% marketing changes, without just throwing money at the Marketing Committee, without an actual long-term plan in place that shows a true ROI.
- And as a member of the Marketing Committee, I know, obviously Bonnie is going to be deeply involved in that, as well as all the members of the Marketing Committee, but the impetus is on the Finance Committee to say, this is where we believe the money should go, and trusting the Marketing Committee to use it in a fiscally responsible way.
- Goal #1: follow the Southern Delaware Tourism formula, 80% marketing, 20% administration.
- Goal #2: Discover new business resources, review new business resources to explore using additional revenue to help with strategic planning.

Investment – Presented by Matt P.

- SDT's Edward Jones Account currently has a balance of \$81,744 and has generated a return of a 8.58% which is over our goal of 6.8%.

Motion to transfer \$20,000 from SDT's Bank Account to its Edward Jones Investment Fund by Matt P., Seconded by Ali S., Passed by the Board.

Policies & Procedures – Presented by Ben G.

- We're going to have continued dialogue with the Division of Revenue to ensure that all hotels are accounted for with a Delaware Business License. We have two full goals with the Division of Revenue, one for hotels, one for short-term rentals. On the short-term rental side, were, as a committee, are going to continue to monitor the impact of revenue distribution strategy and how bylaws, short-term rentals, minimum allocations, to Bonnie's point earlier, and board voting are impacted. P&P will also focus on auditing the list of short-term rentals from the state to ensure accountability and proper collection procedures. It's a two-fold goal there with the Division of Revenue.
- Our third goal is going to be adjusting the Section III (SDT Expenditure Spreadsheet) language in the SDT Funding Application.
- We sent a letter to the Division of Revenue on September 30th basically highlighting the dollar amount discrepancy between the state's PAT reporting and AirDNA reporting, using the June 2025 Report as an example. So that means instead of \$2.5 million (STR taxes) for the state in June alone, the state collected \$1.1 million, So there's a big discrepancy in the difference in the tax collected to the tune of \$1.3 million.

Marketing – Presented by Bonnie H.

- The marketing committee met on October 7th. we examined the FY26 budget, where we were as far as expenditures, our advertising, messaging, and the markets that we target. We also discussed the ambassador training program, which has been really exciting. The FY26 goals were submitted to the executive team. And our next marketing committee meeting is scheduled for November 13th at 10 a.m.
- Bonnie outlined and called out highlights of SDT's First Quarter Marketing Report that was shared and posted in the Boardroom.
- There was a discussion regarding strategically planning events throughout the county among our chambers.

Advocacy

- Lauren W. addressed the Bethany Beach access closures that are currently in place (due to the storm erosion) in the heart of the boardwalk's commercial area including the Bethany Beach Ocean Suites. She reflected on last year's beach access closures that existed well into the spring break time period. Jessica W. indicated that she will contact DNREC Secretary Patterson to get an update and call for action as far as their answers to avoid repeating the spring break frenziness from this last year.

5. DTO Update – Presented by Jessica W.

- There is \$10 million available in the Sports Capital Investment Fund. We have an informational webinar November 6th where we're going to talk to sports potential applicants and sports capabilities just to explain the process of how they apply and what is needed.
- The application period will open November 12th and run through December 11th.
- On October 30th, our office is sponsoring the Delaware State University, North Polk State football game at the Lincoln Financial Field up in Philly.
- We are working on a new State Travel Guide and planned to be released sometime in January. Also working on a new, updated State Transportation Map.
- We worked on some restaurant videos with a company out of Wilmington, 1440.
- Erik Raser –Schramm has taken over the lead for DE 250 at the state level.
- World Cup Soccer viewing parties are being planned for each county.

6. SDT 2025 Awards Luncheon

- Scheduled for December 10th at the Lighthouse Cove Event Center in Dewey. Invitations are going out.
- Patti Grimes is the featured speaker.

7. Other Business / Announcements

- Bonnie H. announced that the Nanticoke Indian Tribe will be part of a PBS Documentary, Liberty of Conscience: The Founding of Colonial Maryland, and the premier is 10/23.
- Jo S. announced that the inaugural Foodie & Poker Run Motorcycle Event is taking place in Milford on 11/1.
- Carol E. updated on Sea Witch Parade / Festival parking policies in downtown Rehoboth.
- Carol E. and Ben G. announced that Kate VanVorst has accepted the RBDB Chamber President / CEO position.

8. Next Board Meeting will be on January 15, 2026 from 9:30am to 11:30am.

9. Meeting Adjourned at 11:18 am.