



Minutes for Visit Beloit, Inc. Board of Directors January 2024 Meeting

01/24/2024 | 08:00 AM - (GMT-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)

Visit Beloit

Attendees (12)

Gloria Bradley; Patricia Diduch; Regina Dunkin; Jerry Gabrielatos; Jacquelyn Jackson; Mr. Drew Pennington; Mr. Celestino Ruffini; Jesse Seykora; Aimee Thurner; Mr. Spencer Waite; Mr. Roy Ward; Maria Elena White
Celestino Ruffini, Pamela Garland-Gjestson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m.

Establishment of Quorum

A quorum was established. Hoppes, Smith, Vohs, and Webster were absent. Staff member Tracy Bliss was present.

- **Introduction of Maria Elena White and Jesse Seykora**

Waite introduced the two newest board members, White and Seykora, and they provided brief introductions of themselves.

- **Board icebreaker**

Ruffini led the board in an icebreaker activity to get to know one another better.

Consent Agenda

- **November 29, 2023 meeting minutes**
- **Minutes for Visit Beloit, Inc. Board of Directors November 2023 and Annual Meeting**

There were no questions or comments regarding the November 29, 2023 meeting minutes.

- **Destination Marketing Accreditation Program file review**

- **Governance**

- **1.3 Board Policy Manual - FINAL 012124**
- **1.5.1 DMAP Code of Ethics 032719**

- **1.11 Transparency of Expenditures of Public Funds - FINAL 012124**
 - **Planning**
 - **2.1 Vision Mission Values - 092519**
 - **2.3 Annual Budget Linkage to Strategic Plan - 012124**
 - **Advocacy and Education**
 - **3.1 Advocacy Plan - 012124**
 - **3.2 Stakeholder Relationships - 012124**
 - **3.3 Professional Involvement - 012124**

Ruffini explained the eight documents are up for review for the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) re-accreditation process. He reviewed several modifications and edits to the documents to bring them up to date, as well as clarified some existing processes.

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Dunkin and seconded by Ward. The motion passed unanimously.

Continuing Education

- **2024 marketing plan and 2023 marketing recap presentation**
 - **2024 Marketing Campaign presentation - 012424**

Tracy Bliss, director of marketing and public relations, presented her 2024 marketing plan and 2023 marketing recap. Bliss will continue the brand promise “Beloit, Where Stories Begin” into this year. The presentation included marketing campaigns, tactics, markets, and strategies.

- **Lodging data update**
 - **Lodging Data as of 123123**

Ruffini presented the current lodging data. December was a good month and 2023, even with minimal growth, should be a record high for room tax revenue collections as they are currently projected to be ahead by 1.1% compared to 2022.

Ward asked what the city is doing regarding the Beloit lodging property not remitting room tax collections. Pennington confirmed he’s had several conversations with the property owner and there are penalties that can be assessed, but no payments have been made yet. Gabrielatos said there will be an update by the next board meeting.

New Business

- **2023-2026 Strategic Plan**
 - **Goal One - Building Complex**
 - **Goal Two - Welcoming and Inclusive Environment**
 - **Goal Three - Enhancement and Development of the Destination**
 - **Goal Four - Place Brand**

Ruffini noted that the staff is updating the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and an update will come at the March meeting.

- **Biographies/Head Shots, Board Evaluation Survey, Confidentiality Statement, Conflict of Interest, DEI Demographics Survey**

Ruffini asked board members to complete the following items in BoardEffect by Wednesday, January 31.

Informational updates

- **Board Chair**
 - **Acknowledgement of Ruffini's annual performance review**

Waite discussed Ruffini's annual performance review that was completed by the executive committee and explained the review process. Ruffini received a score of 4.2 out of 5 which puts him in the "exceeds expectations" category. Additionally, he stated that part-time staff were given \$100 bonuses and full-time staff received \$500 bonuses.

- **CEO**
 - **Staff thank you's**
 - **Thank You - Bosen**
 - **Thank You - Garland Gjestson**
 - **Tourism Roundtable events**
 - **Tourism Roundtable with Visit Beloit**

Ruffini shared thank you's to the board and commented on the new Tourism Roundtable series which is open to board members, tourism-related businesses, partners, and stakeholders. The first one is on February 15.

- **Board of Directors**

Gabrielatos thanked Ruffini for his work during his first year on the job, as well as for his help during the recent structure fire. He noted that he always provides thorough responses when he has questions.

Dunkin also thanked Ruffini for his openness and work regarding diversity, equity, and inclusivity efforts.

Diduch thanked the city of Beloit for being so friendly to the village of Rockton and updating them about the recent fire.

White added that she appreciated that the messages regarding the fire were also delivered in Spanish.

Jackson announced the Soul Food Lunch is on February 20 at Blackhawk Technical College. Also, Caritas will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in Beloit this year. There will be an open house in May and a gala in September.

Seykora announced that DEVIATE will return on September 28 for the third year.

Bradley announced several events at Beloit College celebrating Black History Month in February. "The Loyola Project" will be showing at the Powerhouse on February 18 and there will be a Q&A afterwards with the narrator.

Pennington added that Beloit is hosting another group of crew members from the U.S.S Beloit.

Diduch announced February 7-10 is Rockton Yeti Fest which includes a hot cocoa crawl, Snow Ball, dog-sledding demonstrations, among other activities.

Lastly, it was noted that Beloit Winterfest is this weekend.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 am. A motion to adjourn was made by Ward and seconded by Bradley. The motion passed unanimously.