



Minutes for Visit Beloit, Inc. Board of Directors September 2022 Meeting

09/28/2022 | 08:00 AM - (GMT-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)

Visit Beloit

Attendees (12)

Erica Daniels; Sonya Hoppes; Jacquelyn Jackson; Ann Sitrick Joyce; Jan Smith; Aimee Thurner; Jeff Vohs; Mr. Spencer Waite; Mr. Roy Ward; Mr. Jonathan Webster; Elizabeth Krueger; Mr. Drew Pennington

Staff: Celestino Ruffini, Pamela Garland-Gjestson Guests: Michael Phalin

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Establishment of Quorum

A quorum was established.

Consent Agenda

Waite encouraged all board members to feel comfortable to speak during the meeting and provide input wherever they could.

Waite asked the two newest board members to introduce themselves. Drew Pennington, interim President/CEO of the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, interim Economic Development Director, and Director of Planning & Building Services with the city of Beloit and Beth Krueger, interim City Manager with the city of Beloit, introduced themselves.

The consent agenda included:

1. Approval of May 25, 2022 meeting minutes
2. Approval of July 27, 2022 meeting minutes
3. FY2022 Q2 financial report
4. Destination Marketing Accreditation Program file review
 1. Technology
 1. 7.1.2 IT Data Backup Policy - 062822.pdf

2. Brand Management

1. 9.1 Brand Strategy - 060922.pdf
2. 9.2 Brand Protection Policy - 060922.pdf
3. 9.3 Stakeholder Engagement in Branding - 060922.pdf
4. 9.4 Brand Promise - 060922.pdf

3. Marketing

1. 10.3 Comprehensive Website - 070622.pdf
2. 10.4 Collateral Materials - 070622.pdf
3. 10.5 and 12.8 Opt-Out of Communications - 070622.pdf

4. Communications

1. 11.1 Communications Strategy - 070622.pdf
2. 11.2 Crisis Communications - 070622.pdf
3. 11.4 Media Protocol - 070622.pdf
4. 11.5 Media Press Kit - 070622.pdf
5. 11.6 User-Generated Content - 070622.pdf

5. Sales

1. 12.1 Sales Plan.pdf
2. 12.10 Site and Familiarization Inspections.pdf
3. 12.11 Meeting and Convention Services.pdf
4. 12.12 Sales Process Feedback.pdf
5. 12.13 Customer Experience Feedback.pdf

6. Visitor Services

1. 13.2 Trained Staff for the Leisure Market - 091222.pdf
2. 13.3 Visitor Information - 091222.pdf
3. 13.4 Full Destination Information for Visitors - 091222.pdf
4. 13.5 Membership Partnership Terms and Conditions - 091222.pdf
5. 13.6 Performance Reporting Membership Partnership Definitions - 091222.pdf
6. 13.7 Membership Partnership Benefits - 091222.pdf
7. 13.9 Tourism Related Partner Feedback - 091222.pdf

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Sitrick Joyce and seconded by Vohs. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. FY2021 audit presentation

Michael Phalin with Siepert presented the FY2021 audit. This audit includes the financials from both the 501(c)3 and the 501(c)6 organizations. Siepert provided a clean opinion in the audit committee's letter. Footnotes in that letter touched on the consolidation of the two organizational financial statements. The consolidating schedules were split between the two organizations and will be as presented moving forward.

The internal control letter states that there were no material weaknesses to be reported. The management letter notes that the prior year points include an ongoing issue due to the size of the organization, which means the board needs to remain actively involved in the finances because it's not big enough for the necessary checks and balances. A second point issued last year was related to the recording of the construction costs last year, but the issue has since been resolved. There were no additional points issued this year.

A motion to approve the FY2021 audit presentation, including the audit committee letter, internal control letter, management letter, and financial statements, was made by Sitrick Joyce and seconded by Ward. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Resolution of Visit Beloit, Inc. and Beloit Convention and Visitors Bureau Charitable Foundation, Inc. in support of a transfer of financial assets

Waite explained that this resolution is for the transfer of funds from the 501(c)3 to the 501(c)6 as of January 1, 2021. Ruffini added that this resolution states that an agreement was made between the two entities and is a procedural move in order to file our tax returns.

A motion to approve the resolution of Visit Beloit, Inc. and Beloit Convention and Visitors Bureau Charitable Foundation, Inc. in support of a transfer of financial assets was made by Ward and seconded by Jackson. The motion passed unanimously.

3. FY2023 budget – draft review

Ruffini reviewed the FY2023 draft budget. This is the fourth draft of the budget as the executive committee has been reviewing it since July. It will come to full board for final approval in November. Ruffini went over a few highlights within the budget.

Room tax collections continue to be forecasted conservatively. Other revenue notes included that the \$27,200 in Welcome Center sponsorship revenue is higher than last year and \$16,500 in ticketed revenue was generated from events, predominately the Broadcast

Symposium. Lastly, the \$52,475 in private grants is from our sponsorship agreement with Travel Wisconsin for the Welcome Center.

The biggest change in wages includes budgeting for a new full-time staff member focusing on public relation efforts. This new hire will report directly to Tracy Bliss.

Additional expenditures discussed included tentative numbers for travel to conferences and tradeshows, a familiarization trip for the Welcome Center staff, website expenses, sponsorships, postage, and occupancy costs.

4. Strategic Plan RFP

The last strategic plan was completed late in 2018 and this request for proposal is to solicit vendors to help update the plan. The tentative schedule is to have a new plan approved at the March 2023 board meeting.

A motion to approve the Strategic Plan RFP was made by Sitrick Joyce and seconded by Hoppes. The motion passed unanimously.

Continuing Education

1. Destinations International EDI Assessment

Ruffini spoke on the Destinations International Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Assessment. Our international trade association is creating an assessment to gauge how tourism entities, such as ourselves, are doing individually as well as compared to other destinations. The responses will be tabulated and will hold us accountable. The assessment was launched and Ruffini added in our responses and now we await the compilation of everyone's data. Ruffini confirmed an organization named Tourism Diversity Matters assisted with the creation of the assessment.

2. Lodging Industry Performance

Data from the hotels continue to trend ahead of last year. The biggest metric we will continue to watch is the occupancy percentage. Since June, we've been hovering around the mid-60's, which is great. It would be ideal to get up into the mid-70's and higher. Pennington asked what is the high-water mark for occupancy. Ruffini believes that is was around 70-75% and would follow up with the board with historical data.

Informational updates

1. CEO Updates

Ruffini shared updates on a few marketing projects. We recently sent our Spanish translated visitors guide to print. The new website should launch in October. Our new digital trail platform will go live soon and the first trail to be launched will focus on outdoor public art. Additionally, a new city of Beloit map is in final proof and will be printed.

Ruffini highlighted a few recent media opportunities he was included in which provided positive coverage of Beloit's growth in recent years.

2. Board Updates

Weber shared that the Geronimo Hospitality Group event, Deviate, is coming up October 15. More than 500 tickets have been sold so far. Additionally, the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association board met with Anne Sayers, Secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, to announce a new grant program to help lure meetings to communities.

Turner said October 19 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. is the Taste of Chamber at the Eclipse Center.

Daniels said President Bierman is leaving the Beloit College and they are launching a national search for his replacement.

Krueger said the Ho-Chunk Nation's casino resort construction should start in 2023.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.