

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Date: June 16, 2025**

**Time: 2:00 PM**

**Board Members Present (Voting):**

- Patrice Belcher
- Sam Wolford
- Henry Jones
- Kim Jones
- Ansel Ponder
- Jeff Disibbio
- Grant Bennett
- Greg Puckett (via Zoom)
- Susan Williams (via Zoom)
- Todd Boggess (via Zoom)
- Sam Lusk (via Zoom)

**Board Members Absent:**

- Justin Maynor
- Phil Lane
- Donna Lowe
- Candace Wilson
- Bill Regas

**Staff Present:**

- Jamie Null, CEO/Director
- Karen Morris, Assistant Director
- Valerie Hendricks, Community Marketing Manager
- Emma Mullins

**Guests:**

- Cat Grygiel

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM.

## Approval of Minutes

The board reviewed and approved the minutes from the February 2025 meeting.

**Motion by:** Greg Puckett

**Seconded by:** Sam Lusk

**Motion carried.**

## Financial Report

The financial report was presented and accepted.

**Motion to approve by:** Jeff Disibbio

**Seconded by:** Patrice Belcher

**Motion carried.**

A recent audit review for 2024 was completed with no discrepancies. The board voted to pursue annual reviews for the next three years to maintain financial compliance. Form 990 is prepared and pending board review prior to filing.

## Pineapple PR Updates

Presented by: Cat Grygiel

- Year-to-date media results include 4.8 billion impressions and \$134 million in editorial value with a 74% quality score.
- Spring pitching emphasized outdoor adventure, culinary and cultural features, including themed campaigns: *Spring Awakening*, *Bird Watching Bliss*, *Gateway to Adventure*, and *Waterfall Wonders*.
- Continued emphasis on Mercer County as a certified arts community and an adventure base near the New River Gorge.

## Media and Influencer Visits

- Confirmed: Barbara Kennedy (BBC/Washington Post/National Geographic) for a summer culture and arts tour.
- Completed: Nedra McDaniel (Adventure Mom) featured local attractions; article syndicated on MSN.
- Scheduled: Emily Moore via the WV Tourism Creators Initiative.
- Representatives attended a Travel Media Meetup in Washington, D.C.

Digital Relativities Updates – Presented by Jamie Null

## Website Redesign

- Website redesign is underway, led by Emma Mullins.
- Updating 300+ partner listings with new images, alt text, and descriptions.
- A new media room is being developed.

## Ad Campaigns

- ATV and outdoor-focused digital campaigns are showing high performance:
  - 62,000 ATV campaign clicks
  - 24,000 Facebook clicks
  - 55,000 impressions and 3,905 clicks from Google's "Things to Do"
  - Female voiceovers are testing better with the target audience.

## Analytics and Performance Metrics

- Website users increased 104.7% year-over-year; sessions up 90%.
- On-site partner clicks up 28%.
- New visitor guide requests increased 20%.
- Newsletter signups decreased due to changing user behavior.
- Top visited pages include: ATVs, Outdoor Recreation, Calendar/Events, Lake Shawnee.

## CEO/Director's report

- Despite a \$500 Facebook/Instagram ad campaign, partner newsletter yielded zero signups.
- Continuing challenge to engage new businesses that do not identify as tourism adjacent.
- Plan to improve messaging and outreach.

## Brushcreek Holler Mountain Coaster Update

- Project nearing completion; awaiting two inspections from the West Virginia labor board.
- Final touches including signage and landscaping are in progress.
- Local residents have begun trial rides. Media coordination will proceed upon full readiness.

## Community Marketing Manager's Report

- 30 cases of visitor guides delivered to local hotels and restaurants.
- 16 cases were sent to state welcome centers.
- Approximately 500 direct visitor guide requests through the website.

## Mobile Visitor Center Outreach

- Participated in *Thrive Outside* (Bedford, VA) and *USA Cycling Pro Road Nationals* (Charleston)
  - Charleston event had \$4.9 million economic impact
- Upcoming events include Pipestem Car Show, Railroad Days, Burke's Garden, and Bridge Day
- Focus remains on meeting visitors where they are

## Staffing and Board Updates

- New Hires:
  - Emma Mullins (Website support)
  - Bryson Fanning (Event and weekend staff)
- Board Changes:
  - Ansel promoted to interim president
  - Susan Williams and Donna Lowe rejoined the board
  - Sam Wolford and Jordan Maynor joined to represent the Bluefield and Mercer County EDAs respectively
  - Kit McCarthy resigned

## Next Meeting

The next board meeting is scheduled for **August 2025**. Calendar invites have been sent.