

# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

## Chamber Boardroom

February 24, 2021 - 9:00 am

**Attendees:** Rachel Beckerman, Clay Brittain, Woody Brownson, Stuart Butler, Pablo Chavez, Tracy Conner, Kenny Generette, Radha Herring, Alex Husner, Theresa Koren, Steve Mays, O'Neil McCoy, Seth McCoy, Billy McGonigal, John Rutenberg, Alberto Semidei, Samantha Slapnik, Eileen Siosson, Amy Stevens, Atiya Stokes Brown, Ryan Swaim, Alicia Thompson, Tom Tse, Heidi Vukov

**Absent:** Ryan Moore

**Guests:** West Long with CleverRX, John Sheehan, Celica Chamber of Commerce.

**Staff:** Karen Riordan, Diana Green, Cindy Gettig, Jimmy Gray, Randy McKeel, Bob Harris, Diane Charno, Rebecca Edgar

### **Call to Order / Approval of Minutes**

Billy McGonigal, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was established for the meeting via Zoom.

The January 27, 2021, meeting minutes were reviewed. Rachel Beckerman made a motion to approve the January 27, 2021 minutes as presented. John Rutenberg seconded the motion, which passed upon a unanimous vote.

### **Presentations:**

West Long and gave a presentation on the CleverRX program which targets Chambers across the country as a benefit to members. He gave an overview of the benefits and compensation to MBACC as an affinity partner. John Sheehan, with the Seneca Chamber of Commerce discussed the value of the program to their chamber and membership.

### **Division Reports**

#### *Community Engagement*

Clay Brittain reported that the first meeting of the Community Engagement Committee was held on February 22. The Committee goals were presented in the meeting and discussions centered on promoting the importance of tourism and the benefits provided therefrom for local residents.

#### *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Atiya Stokes-Brown reported that the first DEI meeting of 2021 will be held on February 25. Greg DeShields will address the group regarding the Chamber DEI assessment. The 2021 year planning includes initiatives focusing on area CEO's. The Leadership Grand Strand Board of Regents voted in favor of the Bennie J. Swanns memorial scholarship to assist LGS students with program tuition. The

group will reach out to other organizations in an effort to add multiple scholarships. The DEI Council has partnered with Alicia Thompson and Burr Forman on DEI initiatives.

### *Legislative*

Radha Herring reported for the Advocacy Council. In the February 8, 2021 meeting, the group reaffirmed the 2021 strategic priorities. The highlight of the meeting was the guest speaker, Senate Majority Leader, Shane Massey. Senator Massey engaged the Council in discussion on issues important to the MBACC. The next meeting of the Advocacy Council will take place on August 12, 2021 with Governor McMasters in attendance.

### *Investor Relations*

O'Neil McCoy, Business Development Committee Chair, presented 13 new member investors for approval. Upon a motion made by Ryan Swaim and seconded by Rachel Beckerman, all members were approved upon a unanimous vote.

The Business Development Committee unanimously approved the partnership with CleverRX in a previous meeting. Further discussion on the program included the benefits of an affinity partnership for member-investors, the community and the potential nonrestricted revenues to MBACC. Kenny Generette made a motion to approve CleverRX as a Chamber affinity partner. Seconded by Rachel Beckerman, the motion passes upon a unanimous vote.

All Business Development committees have held their first meetings of the year. Upcoming events include a drive through job fair on March 16, Member to Member expo on March 23 and the Annual Meeting on April 1.

### *Tourism Marketing*

Diane Charno reported that the Marketing division is moving forward with the creative direction of the new brand rollout. Ms. Charno gave a presentation of the campaign progress which started in May 2019 and is based on the results of extensive research by MMGY. The core focus will be to connect emotionally with visitors to reawaken their desire to visit the Grand Strand, with the brand essence being "You Belong at the Beach" and a new Visit Myrtle Beach logo and style guide. A formal update for the Chamber and membership is planned for late April- early May. Ms. Charno reviewed the spring media campaigns that have been launched. The summer campaigns will begin in May.

Two new staff members have joined the marketing team: Jen Brunson, Marketing Coordinator and Katie Hunter, Content Coordinator.

### *Tourism Sales*

Bob Harris reported that Group Sales has stayed busy with several virtual events and meetings. The first in-person tradeshow will be RCA in Charlotte and 6 virtual shows are planned for the next month. Site inspections are taking place both virtually and in-person. The team has received more inquiries for fall from all market segments. Tour bus groups are ready to travel and receiving vaccines. Sports teams interest is higher than in 2019 with high schools and college events taking place in the Spring and there are several other groups bookings for late spring, summer and fall.

TIP sales efforts continue with the addition of new partners while still working on former partner businesses.

### *Finance*

John Rutenberg informed the board that the 2020 audit is in progress and they anticipate review by the Finance Review Committee and presentation to the Board of Directors in March. The Chamber's PPP application was approved and funding received.

Total net assets are \$25.7M. Liabilities include refundable advances on things that have not yet taken place and accrued expenses reflect \$600,000 for a vendor that has not yet been billed. PPT funds will populate in revenues. Operating expenses continue to stay low due to the continued efforts and success with expense control.

### **CEO Report**

Karen Riordan reported that staff have been very busy gathering information for the DEI organizational assessment. We continue to gather documents for POWER 10 Capital Campaign Management company, which includes information on downtown redevelopment, infrastructure and workforce talent.

The search for a CMO is still ongoing and a Communications Manager candidate is being finalized. The Chamber is working with Coastal Carolina University on establishing a memorial scholarship in the name of Scott Head, who passed in February, 2020. The scholarship will serve as recognition of his work and contribution the CVB team.

Ms. Riordan reviewed the recent changes to the MBACC Bylaws, which addresses the process of reviewing new member applications from adult entertainment establishments. Memberships will not be denied, however, the businesses will not be allowed to advertise to other members investors. Furthermore, the Nominating Committee and Board member nominations process was updated with the DEI chair listed formally in the committee.

Upon a motion made by Clay Brittain and seconded by Alicia Thompson, the revisions to Bylaws of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce dated February 24, 2021 were approved upon a unanimous vote.

### **Director's Comments**

Kenny Generette gave an update on Horry County Schools. Administration is in the process of filling the HCS Board of Director's position that became vacant upon the passing of John Poston. It is anticipated that the position will be filled by April 12. The school system is moving toward a 5 day in class schedule for elementary students. Two attendance areas were opened in Myrtle Beach and Socastsee. They hope to have middle and high schools open with the completion of plexiglass installation by mid-March. Winter sports have wrapped up and spring training has begun. Proms and graduations are under discussion and the system is continuing efforts to recruit teachers.

**Adjourn**

Upon a motion made by Kenny Generette and seconded by Pablo Chaves, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

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