

**Explorers' Edge Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**

**Present:** Jeff Suddaby, Anthony Rizzo, Curt Dunlop, Drew Rachar, John Miller, Kim Loader, Jackie Leung, Michael Simonett, Gary McMullen, Rob Wallace

**Regrets:** Hilary Chambers, Karina White, Nicole Saulnier, Andrew Vitch, Dympna Hayes

**Resource:** Laura Hernando

**Staff:** James Murphy, Cindy Kaupp

**Welcome and Introductions: Conflict of Interest:** N/A

**Approval of Agenda – January 17, 2017**

**Motion:** Anthony Rizzo

**Seconded:** Drew Rachar

**Discussion:** n/a

**Carried.**

**Approval of Minutes – December 13, 2016**

**Motion:** Anthony Rizzo

**Seconded:** Drew Rachar

**Discussion:** n/a

**Carried.**

**Call to order & Chair Remarks:** Chair Leung called the meeting to order at 9:17am.

**Financial Presentation – January 13, 2017 Income Statement & Balance Sheet, ED Murphy**

ED Murphy spoke to additional funding; FedNor funding came through. Therefore, the budget has changed in some areas, and money has been put back to where it originally was in September. FedNor and OTMPC are investing in the U.S./U.K. program.

International Marketing:

- FedNor - \$49,000.00

- OTMPC Northern - \$25,000.00

Trade Mission (Deerhurst Resort)

- OTMPC Northern - \$3,000.00

**Motion to Approve Financials**

**Motion:** Jackie Leung

**Seconded:** Curt Dunlop

**Discussion:** n/a  
**Carried.**

### **Executive Director Update, ED Murphy**

ED Murphy discussed current Partnerships: Resorts of North Muskoka, Oar and Paddle, Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, Clublink, Deerhurst, Bracebridge BIA, Almaguin Highlands. We are partnering with content in areas all across the region. As a last minute change over the course of the year, related to partnership, the strategy required to pull off on content program has been put over onto the Director of Communications, this is an additional unexpected project oversight that had not been planned for. None the less with content such as 'Do More & Dine in Huntsville' content – it meets the need of the consumer.

Regarding partnership the RTO has already had a few requests for 2017-2018, high level they include; Parry Sound Cruise Ship Program, Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, and JW Marriott Breakfast Television will be doing a live broadcast to kick-off summer season.

ED Murphy also spoke to Partnership Training; we are learning that the training piece is important. Moving forward, it would be beneficial for mandatory training to help partners / stakeholders understand content and social media. In regards to self- assessment; if you are participating you should also have to complete a self-assessment in the TEN program.

Discussed were draft recommendations to take forward to the TOR committee regarding the partnership process, they included:

- Mandatory Training
- March 2017
- Tourism Excellence North – Self Assessment
- Event Marketing including Mandatory Package Development & Mandatory Training

International Program; we will soon be ready to launch to target ex-pats to have the vote and win a package to our region. Discussed was the goal of collecting emails for lead nurturing which is important for leading consumers down the purchase funnel and will also be an important component when speaking with airlines. Currently the Director of Communications and the third party consultant are working on the launch of the campaign.

In regards to Product Development, ED Murphy mentions that the Paddling content with Birchbark media is now complete. It was shared with Steve Bruno of OTMPC (paddling project on the way). There are three self-guided tours (Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery, Bike Cottage Country, and Cottage Country Beer Trail) – Cottage Country Beer Trail is completed with content being currently uploaded.

ED Murphy discussed the MTMA 3% Tourism levy; RTO invited to discuss next steps concerning a proposed 3% mandatory tourism levy. MTMA proposes to use 100% of the 1.9 million directed towards

tourism initiatives. MTMA has expressed their desire to be the sole delivery agency of a Muskoka Tourism Levy with the application of funds being determined by the MTMA board. At this point, the RTO does not have a position on this, but will attend these meetings, as well as the province. Chair Leung mentioned that this is something that needs a bigger discussion and perhaps we should include time for a larger discussion in the future.

ED Murphy spoke to Commercial Air Service: it is becoming more and more promising as the business case and communication plans are being developed. A District update is taking place this Thursday to bring the Planning and Economic Development committee up to speed.

- Industry interviews completed
- Airline Interviews completed
- Identified gaps; the last mile and lack of product awareness

Initial consultant feedback determined that it may be in the best interest of the project and timelines to consider looking at a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier airline because it allows you to have more frequency and be more flexibility regarding trips to the destination. It is also financially responsible as CATSA may not have to be engaged as 2<sup>nd</sup> tier airlines could operate dirty flights via Billy Bishop.

ED Murphy discussed projects currently on the slate for the remainder of the year:

- MTCS Operational Plan Extension & Amendment
- Content- RTO12
- Partnerships, contracts, content, invoicing
- US/UK Canada 150 campaign
- Craft Beer Mobile Tour
- CYQA- airline meetings (Articulation of Worldly Wise – last mile)
- Drafted postings for RFP Product Development & Strategic Development
- Partnership Manager job posting
- District Presentation (Thursday)
- Intermittent staff vacations

### **2017 – 2018 Draft Operational Plan, ED Murphy**

The board approved the high-level budget. Chair Leung noted that the draft will become the final once the Ministry has been provided time to give feedback. ED Murphy discussed that the operational plan stays the course and aligns with the final year of the three year strategy. The International component, commercial air service momentum, partnerships and product development strategy offer depth and lay the foundation for destination development.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion:** Jackie Leung

**Seconded:** Curt Dunlop **Discussion:** n/a  
**Carried.**