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Explorers' Edge Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Tuesday June 30, 2020
Webinar

Present (Webinar): Jeff Suddaby, Michael Simonett, Brenda Scott, Don MacKay, Scott Doughty, Angela Pollak, Hilary Chambers, Curt Dunlop, Gail Burrows

Resource: Laura Ross, Regional Development Advisor, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Staff: James Murphy & Kate Monk

Welcome and Chair Remarks: Chair Suddaby began the webinar at 9.00am, thanked the directors for joining the call remotely. Chair Suddaby noted that the AGM would be held July 15, 2020 and that this would be his last meeting as chair. He thanked the board and staff for the last six years with the organization.

Conflict of Interest: N/A

Approval of Agenda – April 22, 2020

Motion: Brenda Scott

Seconded: Michael Simonett

Discussion: n/a

Approval of Minutes – June 3, 2020

Motion: Hillary Chambers

Seconded: Curt Dunlop

Discussion: n/a

ED Murphy and treasurer Simonett presented updated financials considering COVID 19 activities. Overall little spending has taken place. ED Murphy noted that the office would be going through renovations as a deep clean is in order before welcoming staff back to the workplace. The cleaning would be offset with new paint and office furniture as the office has not been updated in ten years.

Motion to approve the Income Statement, Balance Sheet for the period ending June 28, 2020

Motion: Gail Burrows

Second: Hillary Chambers

Discussion: n/a

Carried

Simonett and Murphy presented the Draft Year End Audit 2019-2020 completed by Brandy Harris. Simonett reviewed the audit with the board highlighting that we were \$80.00 under budget for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. Fed Nor internship funding offset the Salaries and benefits expense line as well as the partnership allocation. Simonett touched on several expense lines explaining that we were able to hit targets and spending allocations as set out at the onset of the fiscal year.

Motion to approve the 2019 – 2020 Audited Financial Statements year ending March 31, 2020

Motion: Hillary Chambers

Second: Angela Pollak

Discussion: n/a

Murphy presented the updated budget and business & operational plan. Murphy noted that the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries recently announced funding for a hyper local tourism. In addition, the organization has funding applications into Fed Nor and NOHFC which will impact overall programs and the partnership allocation. Murphy reviewed the funding allocation spreadsheet that considers the different funding streams and associated programs. Overall, the budget will consider five different funding agencies that impact different expenses across the RTO. Dunlop asked about timing of funding, Murphy shared with the directors that the Destination Ontario funding would be the first to arrive followed by Fed Nor, NOHFC and other partners such as Georgian College. Brenda Scott applauded the team for assembling an ambitious workload and bringing together multiple funders. Murphy spoke to the main items of the original operational plan, many of which have not changed rather the scope of projects have been expanded, for instance the RTO is able to update photography and video assets due to the additional Destination Ontario allocation. Overall budget recommendations include:

- Catalyst Housing Feasibility
- Transacting (support & tracking of hyper local campaign)
- Partnership Update (website)
- Domestic Marketing (Step Two)

Motion to approve the updated budget and additional operational plan components as outlined

Motion: Don MacKay

Second: Curt Dunlop

Discussion: n/a

Carried

Murphy and Senior Director Monk provided the board with an update on work completed to date including a recap, funding partners, hyper local development etc.

As an update the board was provided with a recap on guest speakers John Stackhouse, SVP Office of the Chair, RBC, “Small Business, Big Pivot” & Frederic Dimanche, Director, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality & Tourism Management. Directors were updated on the framework for re-opening and updated on RTO plans that coincide with the opening:

- Statement from RTO12 for travelers
- Measured approach to marketing timeline
- Competitive advantage, outdoors
- NOTO “Health & Safety Protocols for Resource-Based Tourism
- Destination Northern Ontario re-opening suggestions

The Federal Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) was also reviewed at the director level as it applies to tourism businesses based in Northern Ontario, the RRRF is available for those applicants who are:

- Based in Northern Ontario and/or offer support to businesses located in Northern Ontario;
- A Canadian or provincially incorporated business, Indigenous organizations such as Indigenous/First Nation/Métis Settlement owned businesses;
- Not-for profit organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Industry or Sector Associations, and Tourism organizations;
- Carrying out commercial activities, and that are positioned to support SMEs regarding COVID-19;
- Facing funding pressures with operational costs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Have applied to other Government of Canada COVID-19 emergency relief measures, for which they are ineligible or declined; and
- Planning to continue to operate its business or resume operations.

Related to the updated budget directors reviewed the Fed Nor program as Phase One was approved:

- Professional Development / Training \$80k
- Research & Development \$100k
- Telecommunications \$80k
- Marketing / Promotion \$200k

Suddaby shared with the board the need to motion the application and Phase Two submission. Simonett provided a motion:

Motion to approve the Phase Two submission of the Fed Nor application

- **Motion:** Michael Simonett
Second: Brenda Scott
Discussion: n/a
- **Carried**

Directors were also provided additional information on Minister MacLeod’s Announcement:

- Sunday, June 14, 2020

- \$350K for RTO12 to access from Destination Ontario's Recovery & Rebuild Plan (not a blank cheque)
- Application process
- Hyper-local tourism / "preparatory work" for broader marketing initiatives
- Content alignment for Destination Canada's national & international marketing

The budget will be broken out as follows, it may be adjusted through-out the year:

- Strategy, Creative & Development \$30,000.00
- Video \$20,000.00
- Photography \$26,000.00
- Content Marketing Facebook \$200,000.00
- (100k immediate, 50k winter 2021, 50k spring/summer 2021)
- Ad Trafficking of Content (18%) \$36,000.00
- Local Media (Radio, Print, Social) \$18,000.00
- Website Updates \$20,000.00

Next steps marketing:

- Hyper Local Tourism Campaign (Step One), Cottage Country Spirit
- Domestic Marketing (Step Two), Fuel and Fun

Director Monk outline Hyper Local Tourism Campaign (Step One):

- Incentivize travel and purchase in the region by permanent and seasonal residents
- "Heal the divide" (one region, one love)
- New voucher program
- Participating Attractions & Accommodations (must sign contract)
- Seasonal & permanent residents eligible (one package per residence only)
- Must has residence within a specified municipality
- 5 X \$10 in spending vouchers
- Estimated 3000 pkgs available (staggered release over 6 weeks)

In addition to the work completed on the development side:

- The program will be hosted on EE
- Chambers and Business Associations to push out participating businesses in their catchments (if desired)
- EE to provide media spend to do so (and oversight)
- Aligns with #OntarioSpirit
- Content to promote local tourism
- Photography / video development (also future Destination Canada assets)
- Local media spend

- Cottage Associations & Municipalities and Mayoral promotion
- Estimated launch July 13 to Labour Day Weekend
- “Rocks, Trees, Lakes & Shared Love for the Region”

To compliment the hyper local program swag will be reviewed and chosen to compliment the program, ideas include:

- Pennants (like camp or regatta pennants) for packages and operator window/properties
- Flags (municipal flagpoles, golf courses, marinas etc)
- Branded face masks

Moving forward ED Murphy outlined immediate next steps for the team:

- Hyper Local Cottage Country Spirit
- Final Report MHSTCI
- Phase Two Fed Nor
- Catalyst Housing Project Launch

Board directors were briefed on work internally to ensure a safe environment. The “POST” PROMISE was presented and outlined to directors (people outside safely together), a program that is being supported by organizations such as:

- Business Council of Canada
- Building Owners and Managers Ass. of Canada
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- Canadian Global Cities Council
- Retail Council of Canada
- Restaurants Canada

Related to the budget update ED Murphy shared with the board details on the development of a safer working environment at the Taylor Road RTO Office that included updates on:

- Equipment Upgrades
- Office Cleaning
- Office Painting
- Office Furniture

In speaking to the RTO office renovations/updates ED Murphy then spoke to investments by regional operators in safety protocol:

- Major investment in PPE
- Leading the province in protocols – no one wants to take a step back
- Municipalities – Huntsville sidewalks / plans

Finally, ED Murphy and Senior Director Monk share with the board information related to the Tourism Industry Awards of Excellence, Tourism Innovator of the Year submission and details on the upcoming Cottage Country Spirit Q&A Webinar on Monday July 6, 2020 1pm – 2pm.

Governance Update was provided by Brenda Scott who spoke to the protocols around the upcoming AGM and the process for the post meeting to elect the executive committee. Director Scott thanked the directors for their time and commitment as she is stepping off the board wishing the entire team success in the organization's future endeavours.

Directors, MacKay, Chambers, Doughty, Burrows, Pollak and Simonett thanked the retiring directors for all their hard work and volunteer hours.

Motion to take board of directors in camera with ED.

Motion: Brenda Scott

Second: Jeff Suddaby

Discussion: n/a

Carried

Motion to take board of directors in camera without ED.

Motion: Gail Burrows

Second: Scott Doughty

Carried

Motion to come out of in camera without ED

Motion: Gail Burrows

Second: Hillary Chambers

Discussion: n/a

Carried

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Michael Simonett

Discussion: n/a

Carried.