



Maryland Tourism Development Board (MTDB)

General Business Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday, April 15, 2021

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

I. Chair Welcome and Call Meeting to Order

Judy Bixler, Board Chair, welcomed everyone and called the virtual meeting to order informing all of the recording of the meeting. She also reminded Board members it is imperative to file their financial disclosures by April 30th and that there will be an opportunity to provide updates/good news at the end of the meeting.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Bixler welcomed everyone and asked Ms. Bouie, MTDB Liaison to proceed with the roll call.

In attendance:

MTDB: Delegate Wendell Beitzel, Judy Bixler, Heather Braue, Ashley Chenault, Juan Carlos Linares, Dan Spedden, Al Spence, Cassandra Vanhooser

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: Kevin Atticks, Debra Carter, Amanda Fenstermaker, for Greg Pizzuto, Terry Hasseltine, Amy Roher, Mary Presley, Ross Peddicord, Ruth Toomey, Marshall Weston,

SPECIAL GUEST: Kristin Hanna, Maryland Tourism Council, (MTC) Legislative Chair

DMO: Ashli Workman, Becky Bickerton, Clint Sterling, Daniel Singh, George Cooley, Hilary Dailey, Jamie Williams, Jana Carter, John Fiesler, Leslie Graves, Melonie Pursel, Clint Sterling, Susan Seiferd

COMMERCE: Tom Riford, Liz Fitzsimmons, Cynthia Miller, Lucy Chittenden, Brian Lawrence, Rich Gilbert, Marci Ross, Rianna Wan, Greg Bird, Julia Bouie

III. Approval of Minutes A motion was made by Dan Spedden and seconded by Ashley

Chenault to approve the MTDB February 18, 2021 minutes. Hearing no request for additions or changes, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. MTDB Announcements

Judy Bixler provided a budget update and then introduced MTC Legislative Chair, Kristin Hanna. Ms. Hannah gave an update on the makeup of the committee, and a legislative bill recap with supported bills and bills opposed. Delegate Beitzel also provided an update on the passage/non passage of several bills and State funding. Amy Roher asked a question on the American Rescue Plan fund distribution earmarking a 25% of funding opportunity to each state for the hospitality industry and if so how to access those funds? Liz Fitzsimmons responded that there are multiple pots of money and a plan is underway for distribution. Delegate Beitzel advised that a good place to find the breakdown of fund allocation of all the money is to go to the Supplemental Budget 5.

V. Executive Director Report - Liz Fitzsimmons

Assistant Secretary, Remarks - Tom Riford greeted everyone and shared his updates:

The Maryland Center for Hospitality Training (MCHT) and the Ocean City

Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (HMRA) are partnering on an out-of-the-box initiative to attempt to address the worker shortage issue with a “Connecting Marylanders with Maryland Jobs” program. Through the program, potential hospitality workers will be recruited, vetted and trained by the MCHT and then connected with Ocean City HMRA members to help fill out their summer workforce rosters.

<https://mdcoastdispatch.com/2021/04/13/tourism-groups-request-marylands-help-with-labor-shortage/>

Emergency Relief Grants are on going for more info visit:

https://govstatus.egov.com/md-coronavirus-business/financial-assistance?utm_source=Maryland+Department+of+Commerce+%28MAIN+LIST%29&utm_campaign=b0b1c5aa44-Business_Pulse_08_27_20_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f78deb20ad-b0b1c5aa44-215393827

Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) is closing on the review of all of the thousands of applications for \$5 million available through the 4th round of the Emergency Grant Program created in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Emergency Grants provide funding to arts organizations and artists for losses sustained because of programming, operations, and events that have been modified or cancelled.

Maryland Commerce Secretary Kelly M. Schulz announced that she is running for Governor of Maryland in 2022. The work of Commerce will continue and will not play any part in the political campaign. We are excited for her and wish her much success.

<https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/04/14/maryland-commerce-secretary-kelly-schulz-announces-gubernatorial-bid/>

OTD Presentations:

A copy of all presentations will be forwarded to participants after the meeting. The following

reports were presented by OTD Staff:

Cynthia Miller, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Public Relations

National Tourism and Travel Week National Travel and Tourism Week 2021

Brian Lawrence, Assistant Director, Advertising and Content

Recap of Q1 Winter Campaign/Open for it TV spots/Spring/Summer Campaign Storyboard

Marci Ross, Senior Assistant Director, Tourism Development

400 Years of African-American History Commission

Liz Fitzsimmons, Managing Director

Executive Director's Report

Liz thanked staff for all of the presentations which represent our forward facing efforts and support our marketing initiatives. Liz talked about various projects within OTD: *Trail Systems Second to None* - Varied exciting Maryland trails to bike, hike. The *C & O Canal* is a cooperative partnership with our county and all about transactional outcomes, getting people off trails into the canal towns that surround them, staying longer and spending more. *Chesapeake Bay, Loop and Storytellers*, OTD has a whole series and guide coming out and training. These efforts are being funded by a partner, the National Park Service (NPS). This represents a gold standard, when the NPS provides funding to us, and is an endorsement of our past and future efforts. *The Most Powerful Underground Railroad Destination in the World*. OTD awarded four fellowships from a \$20,000 grant from the *400 Years of African American History Commission* to work with us on the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland program at the Maryland State Archives. The work that our amazing fellows are completing telling the story of the underground railroad authentically is huge. We should be able to turn these sites into applications for funding by NPS. There will be an upcoming press release on an archaeological find on Maryland's Eastern Shore where the site of the home where Ben Ross, the father of famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman, once lived has been discovered. At this very moment Secretary Schulz is delivering remarks at the Bay Bridge Boat Show at a live event, that is a pretty big deal. Rich Gilbert, OTD Travel and Trade, provided an update on the travel and tour rebound process. Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources Jeannie Haddaway- Riccio, and Secretary Kelly Schulz, continue to deputize *Outdoor Recreation Ambassadors* at the request of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic (MORE) Commission. Our grant work has been a very humbling experience watching the resiliency of our DMOs and partners and their passion to help in any way they can. \$750 million dollars was dedicated to tourism marketing and promotion with \$25 million specifically for outdoor recreation by the Economic Development Authority (EDA). Liz Fitzsimmons is chairing a leisure sub-committee making recommendations for outdoor recreation to the US. Secretary Department of Commerce on how to make it easier for us to apply and for the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to distribute funding. In this new funding environment we should be cognizant that words matter and definitions matter more. She also plans to get a working group together to provide guidance and assistance to those seeking funds. Our next meeting in June will focus on our FY22 Marketing Plan.

VI. Report Outs:

- Dan Speeden, Visit Hagerstown, reported with great joy that after 20 years, The Maryland General Assembly has approved a bill allowing the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue bonds for a new Hagerstown ballpark to be leased by an Atlantic League team. They have also prepared a 1/2 million dollar funding request for the Washington Counties American Rescue Plan to help our travel and tourism industry and a \$250,000 request for the city of Hagerstown American Rescue Plan money. We encourage all the DMOs to do the same.
- Juan Carlos Linares, Tanger Outlets, reported that they have had significantly less operating hours. In spite of condensed hours they have exceeded their January- March 2019 traffic numbers. Things are starting to return and they anticipate more good news with the Gaylord reopening in July.
- Judy Bixler, Board Chair, encouraged the Board to promote National Tourism Week in their respective businesses.
- Kevin Atticks, Grow and Fortify, reported that major legislative bills affecting their industry have been passed.
 - HB12/SB205 - Restaurants, taverns, and bars selling and delivering alcohol to go within county lines.
 - HB1232 – Alcohol Manufacturing Bill; allows breweries to deliver and ship directly, streamlines the event permits, and allows up to 32 events for breweries, distilleries, wineries per year.
- Amy Rohrer, Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association, reported that there are two major issues of concern for their industry. 1) The continued restriction on gathering size in Montgomery County currently at 25 people maximum. 2) Rehiring, there are not enough workers; the scheduled interview no show rate is quite concerning and realize that Federal level decisions affect this area as well. A call was held with the Governor's Workforce Development Board, a representative from the Department of Labor and a representative from the Ocean City Hotel and Motel Association on the seasonal workforce problem. They have also written a letter with signatures from Marshall Weston and Ruth Toomey, and Ocean City representatives to Secretary Robinson asking for 1) the removal of the temporary exemption of the search for work requirement still in place in Maryland and 2) Fear of Covid is still a suitable reason to not look for work and to continue collecting unemployment benefits. Upon looking at the U.S Department of Labor requirements they found that it is only applicable if your worksite is not up to local, state, and national safety standards related to Covid. They feel most workplaces are compliant and that this should not be a suitable reason to not come back to work.
- Amanda Fenstermaker, MDMO Vice President, reported that they are extremely grateful for the support they have received. There are transitions taking place in several DMOs and they welcome the new members.
 - *Kristen Pironis*, Executive Director, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
 - *Dave Ziedelis*, Executive Director, Visit Frederick - City & County

Tourism Council of Frederick County, Inc.

- *Clint Sterling*, Director Recreation and Parks & Tourism, Somerset County
- *Barbara Sopato*, Executive Director, Visit St. Mary's MD

- Ross Peddicord, Maryland Horse Industry Board, reported that the Preakness is running at its usual date, May 15th, Fairhill 5 Star is scheduled for October 10-14, and the Maryland Million, October 23rd.
- Mary Presley, Maryland Motorcoach Association, reported that much of their industry is sitting idle and they are looking for more funding help. Schools are still virtual and are not doing field trips so drivers are seeking employment elsewhere. They anticipate that to be a huge problem with securing drivers when things pick up again. On a positive note, their "Travel Talks" feature will be starting and she will be attending the UMA Expo Show in Florida and the Maryland and Virginia Operators Meeting and other upcoming events.
- Terry Hasseltine, Maryland Sports, reported that they are also working on the Maryland 5 Star at Fairhill (<https://maryland5star.us/>) in October, the Maryland Cycling Classic (<https://www.marylandcyclingclassic.us/>) during Labor Day Weekend and are currently waiting for confirmation from Fifa on the 2026 Fifa World Cup site visit date. The bid and Decision Day for this event will be December 11, 2021.
- Ruth Toomey, Maryland Tourism Coalition, reported that her group will be setting up a round table to discuss the labor shortages businesses are experiencing. Please stay tuned.

Ms. Bixler thanked everyone for attending and thanked all the staff who helped make this meeting happen. The next meeting is a full General Business Board meeting on June 10, 2021, 1-2:30 pm.

VII. Adjournment - The Board Chair called for adjournment. A motion to adjourn was made by Ashley Chenualt and seconded by Dan Spedden and the meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Upcoming Meetings

MTDB GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, June 10, 2021 1:00 - 2:30 PM
Thursday, November 8, 2021 @ MTTS (In person)
Time: TBD

MTDB UPDATE CALL

Thursday, September 16, 2021 1:00 - 2:00 PM
Thursday, October 7, 2021 1:00 - 2:00 PM