

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Galena Country Tourism

Wed., Feb 13, 2019, 1 p.m.

Admin Office

101 Bouthillier St., Galena, IL 61036

The Strategic Planning Committee met to review goals and objectives for end of the FY'19 and the upcoming annual contract review. Present: Committee Chair, Mark VanOsdol, Merri Sevey and Nancy Shady. Other: Rose Noble. Absent: Colin Sanderson

To start, Noble presented a Community Relations plan (noted in previous meetings as Community Advocacy) to the Committee that outlined stakeholders & relationships as well as a planning timeline extending through FY'2020. Noble asked the Committee to review the plan and provide feedback. She noted that the idea of the plan is to have goals and objectives set for the CEO, organization and Board to track and reference when discussing community relations, interactions and support. The plan outlines everyone the organization has contact with, from legislative to local stakeholders, and a timeline for when to meet. Noble noted that the plan has been labeled for reference on the organization's involvement already with groups. Including groups that currently receive no communication from the organization, little communication and consistent communication. She said that many of the groups in the plan are in good standing with the organization and receive constant interaction from the organization. Noble said she intends to be the main contact for presentations but there are some group meetings that admin staff will be able to attend on the organization's behalf, such as Chamber meetings event meet-ups and association gatherings. VanOsdol agreed that it is important to recognize that some interactions will require the CEO present for credibility reasons but other interactions can easily be handled by admin staff. He noted that since Noble has come on board she has been adapt at determining what a marketing person can take care of and what the CEO should be handling. Noble added that she wants staff to be able to correctly address questions so they would not be sent to a meeting they are unable to handle. Noble said she will create a summary statement for the plan for the board and organization to have, in addition to the relationships outline and planning timeline. Noble said the plan will be a good benchmark and something we can build over time. The plan will hold the organization accountable when it comes to communications and delivering information to stakeholders partners. Everything from sending monthly eNewsletters to stakeholders to preparing for the City/County quarterly reports and Lobby Day with state legislative to community meetings attendance and involvement.

VanOsdol said the mission statement for this plan should include reference of uniting two entities to one due to the lack of County-wide involvement by the former CVB. He noted the smaller villages need our presence and active support. Shady asked if this plan is something Noble intended to send out to the stakeholders. Noble answered that she intends for this to be a tool the organization utilizes and stakeholders will receive more interactions and updates in return. Stakeholders will receive another easy-to-follow Marketing Initiatives plan to follow for FY'20, like they received for FY'19.

Noble read an email from Board Chair, Colin Sanderson, that stated he would like emails sent to stakeholders every 10 days and that we aren't doing enough to inform stakeholders. Noble agreed that aren't informing enough but told the Committee she disagreed with sending eNewsletters every 10 days, for many reasons. The Committee agreed. Sevey said no one will look at them if they are coming every 10 days. VanOsdol compared it to writing a mini newspaper, saying it would be a full-time job to send every 10 days. He also said that eBlasts sent too frequently have the opposite effect and people don't pay attention. VanOsdol said the information needs to be selective. Noble said she believes stakeholders would like to receive more curated information that comes in the form of her meeting with them and/or setting up a timeline of when we update information. She also wants to be sure the organization is communicating to stakeholders that we do have great information on our website, including all upcoming events through 2019. Shady pointed out that monthly eBlasts with events and other information are already being sent. Noble confirmed. Noble also mentioned that the new guide has a great calendar of events through 2019. Noble finished this topic by saying there are other ways to have information available without having to send out an eBlast every 10 days.

Next topic of discussion was the annual contract review and meeting with the County. Noble referenced an article posted Jan. 23, by the Galena Gazette. Said article highlighted County Board Member, John Lange's, request to State Representative, Andrew Chesney, to support an amendment to allow a 1% tax on hotel/motel bills to help fund public safety and infrastructure. Noble noted that John Lange is one of the Board Members appointed to the County Board Tourism Committee. Even though it hasn't been proposed, Noble wanted the Strategic Planning Committee to be ready to discuss the option of the County Board possibly asking to use tourist taxes to support endeavors beyond the tourism promotions statute. VanOsdol said some past County Board Members thought the County should be able to use tourism dollars for other projects. Sevey said she believes this is why the County's previously requested to keep \$100,000 of the hotel/motel tax. VanOsdol said the sales tax that comes in from tourists offsets the services used by tourists. Sevey agreed, and said that the County needs to make cuts, not dip into tourism tax. She said the hotel/motel tax generates a compounding effect. The committee agreed. Sevey said there are County Board Members who do understand this. Noble said this is why she wanted to meet, to prepare for this conversation with the County Board. She noted that we have a contract with the County with the funding as is, until July 2021. Sevey said she wants to see a distribution of tax collection duties from the County. VanOsdol believes the County needs to consider monies collected via other taxes in direct result of tourism. Noble reminded the Committee that we also have this contract with the City of Galena. She said the City provides excellent reporting. Noble would like to ask the County to consider modeling their report after the City's. Sevey asked if Noble can show the County what the City provides. Noble confirmed she plans to review that with the County. Noble suggested she would send an outline of the topics the Committee should be ready to discuss with the County Board at our annual contract review. Sevey thinks we need to consider inflation when discussing the \$18,000 but that's it. She wants to see a breakdown of expenses the County is claiming, laid out like the FY'15 CVB Administrative Report. She thinks we need to have the County show GCT exactly why they need \$100,000. Then we can fully understand and make an informed decision. Shady suggested GCT consider employing another person to do the oversight of hotel/motel tax

collection, which would be considerably less than \$100,000. Shady asked if the persons collecting and recording the hotel/motel tax in the Treasurer's Department are older and therefore doing it an old-school way. Sevey said no, it's just the way they've always done it. She said there is County-wide support to keep the tourism promotion funding as is. Noble stated that she is looking forward to meeting with key County Board Members, as outlined in the Community Relations Plan, to educate them on the effects of GCT's promotions. Sevey agreed and said the more information we can give them, the better. Noble said she will inform the Committee when the County Board Tourism Committee reaches out to meet. She would like the GCT Strategic Planning Committee to be available to attend the meeting.

Noble reminded the Committee that the organization will need to hire a lawyer to prepare for negotiations with the County for the next contract. She has begun looking for a lawyer and believes the organization should have someone who is capable of negotiating and providing council on other matters requiring counsel that may or may not arise. Noble will pull the Finance Committee in on the decision before hire.

Noble moved the discussion to reading off Sanderson's email where he asked that the organization have a list of tradeshow we are attending, available for stakeholders. Noble said this was a topic for the Marketing Committee to discuss. Strategic Planning Committee agreed. Next on Sandersons' email was a mention to discuss the open Sales position. Noble noted this was not the Committee to discuss but she has restructured the position and has an applicant in mind to hire that, she feels, fits the role. She will keep the Board updated on any progress.

Noble ended the meeting by noting the agenda stated "public delegations" but wanted the recording to show we allowed for "public comments", which there were none, and the agenda topic was simply a copy and paste error.Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.