



QUARTERLY MEETING

10 a.m., July 16, 2021 | Hybrid Meeting | Howard County, Maryland

Call to Order

Matt Scales, Chair-Elect

Anna welcome and introduction

Meeting Host Greeting

Crystal Abrom, Howard County, MD

Welcome/Housekeeping

Matt Scales, Chair-Elect

Anna introduces new board

Jen Sigal, past chair; Krista Boothby, treasurer; Matt Scales, chair-elect; Anna Chair

Thank Cory Van Horn and Melissa for all their previous work.

Nominations were accepted until Wednesday. Vote will go out soon

Marketplace 2022-question about format or anything out, reach out to midatlantictourism@gmail.com or past chairs. We are open to a collaborative approach like doing this year or the traditional format. Deadline August 20, 2021. This is a great way to reintroduce media to your area.

Also put out a call for 2022 quarterly meeting locations. Next meeting is October 15 and still looking for a host. We encourage meeting hosts to be prepared to do hybrid set up. Must provide meeting space, \$15 lunch service and overnight room rate of \$125 a night or less. Reach out to Matt if interested

Approval of Minutes - April 2021

Jen Sigal, Past Chair

Motion to approve: Morgan Christopher

Second: Josiah Jones

No opposed: Motion passes

Approval of Treasurer's Report and Budget

Krista Boothby, Treasurer

Budget- we didn't take membership dues last year; gained two new members at half the cost (\$100 each)

Motion to approve FY21: Josiah Jones

Second: Ed Stoddard

No opposed: Motion passes

FY22 Budget. The board has gone over extensively and looking to add some additional items. One being administrative support fees. With the growth of organization, changes in job roles we need support. Looking at close to 80 members and volunteers are hard to come by. We felt if we could hire at 10 hours a week, it would be helpful.

The board and marketing talk about advertising in associations. Wanting to do more for our membership, talking about spring media blitz in a big city to reach new journalists and provide other opportunities for members.

Question Nicole Warner-how would we pick who gets to go and the ratio of journalists to media.

*Good question, need to look into it

Question Joel Lancaster – Total expenses versus revenue, make sure to keep an eye on that.

*Krista answered, we are monitoring that closely.

Cory : What we keep hearing from members is how to keep feeding the journalist pipeline. There is no real engagement with writers besides press releases for a full year.

Anna- not interested in burning all our cash in one year. We've asked at meetings in the past what we can do to help build media relationships. This will be a rebuilding year with an eye on the future.

We do have line items for potential strat plans and hire an agency to give us guidance moving forward. Right now working to get the organization back to where we were in January 2020, getting a board together, volunteers lined up and moving forward. We want to listen and hear what you want to say to keep this organization going for another 20 years.

Alicia Quinn- All of these ideas were on table years ago when we started adding dues. Media blitzes are a great idea and a way to get into the big cities.

Ali Morris- I do think it is a great idea to do a media blitz and the idea is MATPRA's 20th anniversary. Maybe we plan accordingly and make room for it. VTC deals with having a lot of people to apply for opportunities like this, and can ask for their ideas. Think it would be way to move organization forward

Morgan: Any opportunity to reach out to new media is a great opportunity. Media awards program is another idea. Do dinner with winners of awards. For admin- think of the difference between an admin and a director. We need someone who can run with it.

Matt: The awards are in discussion. I've heard from others that it gets competitive and we don't want hurt feelings or animosity towards us.

Anna: I love all the enthusiasm and hope it transfers over to your participation.

Justin Kerns: Look at the price of admin to up it to \$20 an hour. Get a better pool of candidates.

Nicole: Do we need to do strat plan first to see if we need to hire an executive director, handle what the committees are doing. We need consistency with someone.

Cory:Great points but we need help now. We are way over our heads and need help.

Ed- the time to invest is now.

Anna: membership wants to increase hourly rate, increase weekly hours, job title of organizational manager or something more than an admin.

Membership was involved in budget process

Motion to approve as is with an addendum to update the line item on the staff item
Corey Motion to Approve
Nicole Motion to second
All in Favor: motion carries

Committee Reports

Website Committee

Ali Morris

Some recent website updates include a Media Marketplace page with information on events, hotels, link to register, etc. Added an alert banner on top of the website. Right now it is for marketplace registration. Other big projects this year include adding a destination video gallery. Add video to profile page and it will go to video gallery. Another big change was to the destination pages. Click on a destination and then open to additional information with photos, itineraries etc.

Google analytics: July 2020-July 2021, seeing about 10k unique visitors. Pre Covid numbers July 2019-July 2020 we were around 23k unique visitors. Certainly a jump in traffic around marketplace time. Most traffic is organic from members and facebook redirects. Events are what people are looking at, make sure to add yours- encourage bigger events or annual ones.

To find your listing: go to member login and can add everything on the back end. There are also resources to show how to do it.

We have \$2k set aside for website updates next year. Looking to improve the functionality of the website.

Social Media Committee

Vanessa Junkin

We split socially so every member of the committee has 1/5 of the membership to focus on. Did one ad at the end of FY21 to direct people to our website. Our budget is \$2k, \$500 will go for advertising marketplace 2022, \$1000 spread out to promote content on websites or articles featuring numerous members.

Share story ideas with your rep or to Vanessa.

Media Committee

Morgan Christopher

30 people registered who have been accepted. This week will send reminders to people who have not responded. Two people who were accepted had to decline due to scheduling. Will add two from the "maybe" list. Room on committee for new members. One project we started in spring, there are several master media lists out there and we are working to update and compile all into one. One thing we have seen is a lot of our veterans have left writing post COVID and moved into new roles. One thing I would like to do moving forward, look at journalist request forms to add more questions about who they will pitch to, not just look at who they wrote for. Another goal is to look at what publications/writers we are not working with.

Question- how do we refer journalists to MATPRA? Can we add a writer tab on the website, which gives them Morgan's contact and info on what MATPRA can do for them.

Morgan- one of our great tools is the website. We do need to create a promotional plan to bring people into MATPRA. There is an about us page on a website people can go to.

Connie- From a historical perspective, the media list was developed by recommendations from DMOs. Can you share with us who has left the industry and maybe add a website link that says add me to your media list.

Directive- Marketing and media connect to update media one sheet. Connect them to Ali for what we can do for the website.

Can we hire a videographer or photographer for the marketplace? We did in Richmond but Ed plans to have a videographer at the marketplace.

Brenda Black volunteer for media committee

Membership Committee

Nicole Warner

This past year we did member outreach, update contact information. We have four new members who joined since the last meeting: Visit Staunton, Lewistown PA, Visit Lawrence County PA, Tour Stafford VA.

Marketing Committee

Rachel Wright/Cory Van Horn

Press release topics for editorial calendar

Marketing committee is in transition as both Cory and Rachel need to phase out. Looking to recruit new people. Marketing committee updates the one sheets as well as group press releases. We talked about doing more cross promotion with press releases and social content. We would tweak the press release form to include photo submission as well for social use. In the future, I would also like to share press release open rates. Plan to create forms for all releases ahead of schedule so people can work ahead. Do we want to do a MATPRA press release? 20th anniversary etc.

Topics

August: Last vacation before school starts

September: Lead Peepers Paradise

October: Ghostly brews

November: holiday happenings

December: New year, new travel

January: Romantic getaways

February: Comfort foods

March: Cabin Fever

April: hidden gems

May : If you like this, you will like that

June: pick your paradise

Question: Can we have a full MATPRA wide calendar with all themes and pitch points for the year. Courtney from Stafford is ready to join the marketing committee.

2021 Marketplace Update

Marketplace Co-Host Team

Ed- Happy to share the happiest place on earth with you. Marketplace is Oct 4-6.

Check in and open reception at Overlook grill. Tuesday will kick off with breakfast at Hyatt Place and then a marketplace event. Afternoon is fam tours ranging from the tasting trail to outdoors and sports. Dine around dinner. On Wednesday, another round of farms in neighboring destinations.

Options throughout the event will include weapon throwing, Elk visitor center, rock tours. Focus on Altoona's role in the country, railroad industry, Sept 11 memorial trail, Raystown Lake region kayaking, hiking, golf, coffee/caves/cupcakes, auto museum.

Professional Development Session

Matt Scales, Chair-Elect

Roundtable discussion of projects, trends, opportunities, etc.

Closing Comments / Adjournment

Matt Scales, Chair-Elect

Morgan: Motion to adjourn

Ali second

All in Favor: Motion carries.