



Meeting Minutes

Call to order

A meeting of MATPRA Board of Directors commenced at 10 a.m. on Oct. 20, 2023, in Culpeper, Va., during the organization's quarterly meeting.

Attendees

- Board attendees included Chair Morgan Christopher, Chair Elect Claire Aubel, Secretary Eric Knopsnyder, Treasurer Nicole Warner.
- Robert J. Weil ("Lawyer Bob") was a guest speaker.
- Full list of MATPRA attendees is available on Google Drive.

Members not in attendance

None

Approval of minutes

Did not approve prior minutes.

Executive Committee

Pursuant to a unanimous vote by the Executive Committee in compliance with the organization by-laws, Nicole Warner has assumed the office of Treasurer after the departure of Krista Boothby from her role as the official representative of Talbot County, Maryland. The announcement at this meeting makes official Nicole Warner's position on the Executive Committee of MATPRA per the alliance guidelines. The official slate of officers for the remainder of the 2023-2024 fiscal year is as follows:

- Morgan Christopher (legal name, Morgan Christopher-Kice) – Board Chairman
- Claire Aubel – Chair Elect
- Nicole Warner – Treasurer
- Eric Knopsnyder – Secretary
- Past Chair role will remain empty per the by-laws after the departure of Matthew Scales and with no former chair of MATPRA willing to step into the role at this time. Role will remain vacant until the change of officers on July 1, 2024.

Motions

- Motion by Ed Stoddard to approve budget as delivered by Treasurer Nicole Warner. Seconded by Brenda Black. Motion passes without dissent.

Reports

- Treasurer's report – by Nicole Warner
 - Additions have been for membership payments and related to Marketplace (sponsorships, etc.)
- Website – by Nicole Warner (for Ali Morris)
 - Committee is seeking more members
- Marketing -- by Eric Knopsnyder (for Catherine Jenkins)
 - Theresa Meeker Pickett has agreed to join as social media chair
 - Marketing chair Catherine Jenkins has been working on ways to make editorial content more relevant for journalists and reach more people by tying content to social media posts
- Media – by Claire Aubel (for Carl Whitehill)
 - Looking to work on master media list, making sure info is correct
 - Currently have 400 names, but not all information is accurate or current
 - Would like three to four new committee members
 - Looking for representation for all states, but considering duplicates from larger states (Pennsylvania and Virginia)
- Membership – Morgan Christopher (liaison)
 - Nicole had been committee chair. Will be replaced by Lisa Haggerty.
 - Heidi's presence should help reduce workload.
 - Lindsay Arcuri has joined the committee

Unfinished business

- 2023 Marketplace wrap-up, as delivered by Heidi Schlag:
 - About \$2,000 in overage will be added to MATPRA's general account
 - Survey results were "fabulous"
 - DMOs
 - Rated it as good, very good or excellent
 - Every DMO reported meeting with seven or more journalists
 - Positives were: Innovative experiences, good networking opportunities, professional development, and makers event
 - Suggestions: Streamline registration with FAM tour registration and diversify journalists (markets, not background)
 - Journalists
 - A range of new and returning journalists
 - Agreed that it was a valuable experience
 - Walked away with a wide range of story ideas

- Positives: Loved makers event, pre- and post-FAM trips; networking was great for story idea generation
 - Marketplace: Many loved it; some said it was hard to navigate, too loud and not long enough
- Marketplace 2024 report, as delivered by Kathryn Lucas of Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge
 - Plans are progressing for Aug. 27-29 event
 - Finalized lodging agreement with Hotel Roanoke, which has
 - Free shuttles from the airport and is on Amtrak line
 - Can handle in-room gifts
 - Looking for sponsorship opportunities to be finalized by beginning of November
 - Registration should be available in January
 - Working with website committee to add information to MATPRA website as well as Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge site
 - Said that Cory Van Horn shared information via Dropbox about 2023 Marketplace before leaving his position with Visit Montgomery County
 - VVBR plans to build on success of makers' event
- Society of American Travel Writers update, as delivered by Morgan
 - Matthew Scales had been talking with SATW about working together with MATPRA
 - Morgan followed up on that discussion
 - Exploring what opportunities are available
 - SATW might have a representative attend MATPRA's January meeting
 - Formal proposal will not come until after Jan. 1
 - Morgan said that if MATPRA wants to grow the caliber of journalists who come to Marketplace, we might need to work with other organizations
 - Group needs to come up with parameters as to what we are willing to do
 - Nicole asked if MATPRA can negotiate better rates for its members to join SATW
 - Morgan said SATW might be willing to eliminate \$50 application fee
 - Morgan said MATPRA might be able to join as a member
 - Representatives of several small DMOs said that reason for MATPRA membership is that its connections could help in meeting journalists
 - Morgan said that SATW requires influencers to meet requirements as far as number of hours of content that they create to be eligible for membership
- Morgan talked about influencers and their evolving role in MATPRA
 - Organization needs to come to a decision on how to handle influencers for 2024 Marketplace. Media committee should steer the discussion
 - Morgan is looking to have a December call with interested MATPRA members so that a policy can be set by January
 - Claire says that roundtable discussion at Marketplace was a good starting point for decisions on influencers
 - Brenda Black says that Media committee was torn. Some committee members want influencers to attend Marketplace, some don't.

Announcements

- Morgan introduced Heidi Schlag, who is serving as MATPRA's administrative coordinator.

- Heidi hopes to serve as the “information center” for the organization by handling details about committee activities, board activities, schedules and Marketplace. She is creating a shared calendar on Google Drive that will house upcoming meetings, editorial deadlines, etc.
- She has implemented Wild Apricot CRM, which will help with many things, including registrations
- QuickBooks is being implemented, which will work with Wild Apricot
- Morgan announced that Matthew Scales has left his position with Harford County and will no longer serve as past chair. MATPRA bylaws allow for the past chair to remain empty, and it will continue to be so until July 2024, when Claire is scheduled to take over as chair and Morgan moves into past chair role.
- Morgan said that organization is undergoing many changes and asks for grace period until Jan. 1 to get everything organized
- Krista Boothby is serving as a consultant, working 15 hours per month to help with transition to Nicole Warner and with QuickBooks addition
- Claire discussed her attendance at the West Virginia Governor’s Conference on Tourism in September, where she discussed MATPRA memberships with representatives of individual CVBs in that state
 - She said that West Virginia Department of Tourism’s MATPRA membership has helped CVBs see the value in joining the organization
 - Ten CVBs signed up expressing interest in joining MATPRA
 - Most had no knowledge of MATPRA prior to her appearance there
 - Morgan noted that West Virginia and Washington, D.C., were both heavily involved in the formation of MATPRA but in recent years have had little to no representation

Adjournment

- Adjournment motion made at 1:35 p.m. by Nicole Warner, seconded by Brenda Black. Unanimous vote ended the quarterly meeting.

Eric L Knopsnyder

Secretary

Oct. 20, 2023

Date of approval