



Virtual Meeting 1/17/2025

Previous meeting minutes approved by Ginny Colella and seconded by Morgan Christopher

Treasurer's Report by Jake Wynn

We officially have Quickbooks up and running, and all line items are broken down. Some fine-tuning is needed on the QB process and then line items from Marketplace 2024/2025 will make more sense. MATPRA made a \$10,000 profit from Marketplace this year, thanks to Heidi's hard work.

Motion to approve the budget, approved by Sue Swales Vitullo and seconded by Katie Burger.

Marketplace 2025 Update by Lisa Haggerty

Currently working through the possibility of fireworks for the opening reception and what all can be used for sponsorship opportunities. As for FAM tours, her team is thinking outdoor adventure, history & culture, and then maybe a Main Street USA, and possibly send people to Boyertown after Marketplace on Wednesday for different tour options. They are still working on the dine-around concept and instead of a lot of FAM tours, maybe spend the morning at one place and do lunch and a Makers Market after lunch. The bus company is lined up.

Heidi Schlag chimed in and asked membership to let her know by next week if they're interested in hosting a pre or post FAM for '25 Marketplace

Committee Updates

Media Committee Update by Carl Whitehill and Ginny Colella

They are getting ready to launch the application process in the first week of February. They will send an invitation to media and open the doors on social and website to encourage journalists to apply for Marketplace and get as many people as possible. The capacity for journalists is 60, and last year 82 applied. They are trying to attract new journalists this year, and people that have never attended Marketplace in the past.

They shared that April 24 is the day when the committee is going to go through these applications in Clearfield to make sure we find the 60 best journalists.

Carl asked for help from the membership on pushing out the application to journalists to get them to apply, and to really work on getting everyone you work with to apply.

Claire Aubel then asked what is the best way to send new media contacts, and it was agreed upon to send it to Heidi and she can delegate if necessary.



Shalyn Boulden asked in the chat if we were aware about Marketplace 2025 conflicting with MACo, and it could be an issue for Maryland DMOs to attend. Claire clarified that you can always send someone else from your organization in your place, and that we try our best to pick dates that don't conflict with other industry conferences but it's difficult because there are so many.

Marketing Committee Update by Darby Seymour

The group press release forms are officially up on our website, thanks to the website committee. You will be submitting the releases on your dashboard on MATPRA.org from now on. The committee has new members, Allyson Ennis from Visit Delaware and Andi Ryan from York PA.

She reminded everyone that February 15th is the first deadline for the press releases, and that we'll be sending out reminders for members to submit but that will be our first one with this new process in place.

Heidi reminded everyone that if you need someone's contact, you can email midatlantictourism@gmail.com or you could even find the destination contact info within the backend of the website from their profile if you need it.

Social Media Committee Update by Aaron Jumper

Claire mentioned that we are still looking for someone to be Chair, but thanked Aaron for all his hard work in the meantime. Aaron shared that they have 1 or 2 more spots open on the committee if anyone in membership is interested, but he would really like to find a Chair ASAP to take over.

Membership Committee Update by Lisa Haggerty

Lisa shared that they are down to just 2 members on the committee, so they could use more help with the committee. With Heidi's help, we got Page County, Virginia on board, and some new members from Bucks County, and she is currently trying to touch base with all the new members.

Website Committee Update by Ali Morris

The biggest update is the press release form is ready online, and a reminder to everyone to make sure you have the rights to any photos you submit for the release. She shared that from October through January, we've seen about 9,800 website views and most of that is coming from organic search and direct traffic which is great. The website is split between mobile and desktop, we're also working on new tasks for our committee so please let them know if there's anything on the website that needs to be updated or fixed.



250th Anniversary Planning Update by Heidi Schlag

MATPRA held a Coffee Chat in November about this, but basically, we want to develop a landing page on the website to list all the member DMOs who are involved in the anniversary and want to start listing all destinations in one place so we can work on multi-state/place itineraries and there is a document for members to go in and list some of the things that are going on with your destination. We are trying to streamline the process for journalists and make it all live in one place.

Old Business

Inviting Journalists to attend dinner before a quarterly meeting. We are trying to keep journalists within an hour of the destination but make it a casual dinner to get to know each other, not an official pitch.

RFPs for 2026/2027 and beyond. We have received an RFP for 2026, but please note we are still looking ahead so let us know if you have any questions about submitting for 2027.

Quarterly Meeting Attendance & Marketplace

Heidi noted you have to attend at least one Quarterly Meeting to be eligible for Marketplace, and any member of your team is welcome to attend.

New Business

Appointment-Based App for Marketplace, Whova. We are proposing a new app that will make Marketplace more efficient and help with appointments that are made through that app to keep journalists interested in getting to know everyone, and we are looking for a vote on this and if membership has any comments/questions about the software.

Carl Whitehill said this app will help fix the discrepancies about having content creators and it allows DMOs to meet with who they want to, whether or not they can work with content creators.

Betsy DeVore asked if there's a way within the appointments to list that we are or are not interested in meeting with influencers, and Claire responded that there's probably a way to make that known, but you will have the opportunity to write what you'd like in your bio information and can include it there if anything.

Heidi also said you can also request meetings with the journalists or reject meetings from content creators and add a note on whether or not you can work with them.



Ed Stoddard asked about the schedule for Marketplace and showed concern that he won't have time for the appointments and FAM tours and to also make note of how the app would work the day of.

Lisa Haggerty said there will be time to go to your hotel rooms before FAM tours and maybe have boxed lunches on the bus to make sure there will be time for everything, and everywhere that we will be going is not too far from the hotel.

Motion to approve the scheduling app, approved by Ali Morris and seconded by Joel Cliff

Student Memberships

Claire proposed the development of a student membership level of membership for college students to encourage and grow the next generation of tourism professionals. They would be allowed to attend Coffee Chats, quarterly meetings, and Marketplace, but would not have voting privileges or access to our media list.

Motion to approve a Student Membership Level, approved by Edward Stoddard and seconded by Ginny Colella.

Photo/Copyright Violations Discussion by Claire Aubel

We've had what we believe to be a spam company notice MATPRA that we owed them money for a copyrighted image, and it was not a legitimate company however it raised an important concern that everyone handles their photo/video assets differently, and it puts MATPRA in a position when we are sent your assets. MATPRA will be adding a note that they do not assume responsibility for any image copyright issues from destinations, it will be on you as a destination.

Betsy DeVore chimed in and talked about how it was their photo that brought up this issue, and that they purchased it from a stock website so many years ago and they weren't able to locate a receipt, so just make sure you are all keeping track of those things as it becomes more prevalent.

Motion to add that wording about assuming responsibility for assets into the joining membership agreement, approved by Morgan Christopher and seconded by Betsy DeVore

Marketplace Sponsorships Update by Morgan Christopher

There are multiple opportunities available for sponsorships for Marketplace, like bags, totes, etc. We are working to get that list out to you soon.

Managing Director Hours (Heidi) by Claire Aubel



Heidi went over her responsibilities as it pertained to Marketplace and many other things and she thanked the Board and Membership for support. Claire discussed how amazing she's been to our organization, is dedicated, and has helped get these new processes moving along and we wouldn't be able to do it without her. Claire then asked for input from members on increasing her hours by 20.

Carl Whitehill said they would not be able to do the Media Committee work without her, and there's a lot of turnover in this industry, so having her in this position is so important and he would love to increase her hours.

Morgan Christopher said she's contracted 40 hours a month, but she goes over every month and does it on her own time. As a consultant himself, he doesn't find that fair.

Lisa Haggerty chimed in and complimented how amazing Heidi is.

Eric Knopsnyder also said he has no clue how anyone was able to do these things before without Heidi because she has helped so much and kudos to everyone who built MATPRA into what it is now so that we can have a Heidi.

Judy (SRVVB) asked if the 20-hour jump was enough or should we be looking at more hours because she couldn't believe all that Heidi has accomplished in 40 hours, which she has worked more than that as Morgan stated, so she asked if it was possible to give her more than the 20 hours?

Morgan showed concern that Heidi could be scooped up by anyone else, so whatever we can do to keep her and grow this position is a win-win for the organization.

Motion to approve increasing Heidi's hours, approved by Ginny Colella and seconded by Edward Stoddard

Claire shared final thoughts, which was a reminder of the next Coffee Chat by Easton Colvin in February and the Content Creator Contract Coffee Chat in March by Jessica Horstmann

Motion to adjourn the meeting, approved by Eric Knopsnyder, seconded by Andi Ryan

Minutes respectively submitted by Catherine Jenkins, Secretary.