



Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

Call to Order

A quarterly meeting of MATPRA Board of Directors and DMO members commenced at 10:20am on June 13, 2025 during the organization's Quarterly Meeting, which was held in Shenandoah Valley, VA.

Brittany C welcomed everyone to Shenandoah County, talked about her new position and predecessor, Brenda Black, and then shared a 30 second promotional video of the county as well as some area offerings.

Attendees

- Board attendees included Chair Claire Aubel, Past Chair Morgan Christopher, Chair-Elect Eric Knopsnyder, Secretary Catherine Jenkins, and Treasurer Jake Wynn.
- [Full list of MATPRA attendees](#) is available on Google Drive.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the past meeting minutes was made by Nicole Warner and seconded by Janet Franklin. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Treasurer's Report – by Jake Wynn

- Jake explained that membership dues are coming in and sponsorships coming up from Marketplace will affect our totals.
- Our total revenue is \$86,823, expenses so far are \$104,451, with a net loss of \$17,628.

A motion to approve Treasurer's Report was made by Eric Knopsnyder and seconded by Nicole Warner. The motion passed unanimously.

Call for Board Nominations - by Claire Aubel

- Claire called for nominations to join the Board as Secretary beginning in July.
- Morgan Christopher nominated Kathryn Lucas due to her hard work on committees and last year's Marketplace in Roanoke.

A motion to vote Kathryn Lucas in as MATPRA's next Secretary, approved by Morgan Christopher and seconded by Julianna Thomas. The vote passed unanimously.

Marketplace 2025 Update- by Claire Aubel

- Claire explained that we are reformatting some of the FAM tours, and are just waiting on confirmation from the bus company.
- Claire and Managing Director Heidi Schlag went on a site visit recently and are excited to share all the gems in Reading, PA such as the Rodale Institute and the hotel we will be staying at. She urged members to register for Marketplace if they haven't already, and to take a look at the sponsorships still available.
- Eric Knopsnyder chimed in with his excitement for the featured speaker at Marketplace, Adam Stoker, who is the host of the Destination Marketing Podcast. He is a phenomenal speaker, has spoken at ESTO and other industry conferences, and will be a very valuable speaker for our professional development session, where he will discuss risks and ways to break out of the box and make your destination stand out.
- Claire also asked members in attendance if they have any professional speakers in mind that could be a good fit for our organization and to send them our way. She also shared that we are working on increasing diversity in the organization for Marketplace opportunities and future meetings, so if anyone has anything to share to please email us (the Board) with suggestions.
- Claire then spoke about some of the vendors we've hosted in the past for Marketplaces and shared that we have about 5 open spots left for more vendors.
- Discussion was then moved to the Whova app, which we will be utilizing this year in order to make appointments with journalists and streamline the process by giving members better control on meeting with who they want to meet with.

- Nicole Warner asked how many appointments we will have time for and Eric shared that it would be 8 appointments available. Nicole also asked what would happen if we didn't fill the appointments, and it was discussed that if a neighbor DMO is speaking with a journalist, and wants to bring in another DMO, that would be fine as long as it was their choice to do so. Morgan spoke about how one of the great things about MATPRA is the ability to cross-pollinate and share other destinations around the room if a journalist is looking for something specific.
- More discussion about the app details commenced regarding appointment times and also having open time to meet with journalists, some members also asked if any journalists in attendance will be international. Morgan chimed in and discussed how hard MATPRA has worked on getting a wide range of journalists and creators over the years and how far we have come with the amount of applications coming in and the variety. Joel Cliff asked if the Media Committee has fine-tuned the process in the applications where journalists select if they are paid media or not. Eric explained that most journalists do a mix of paid vs. non-paid work, and it's very hard to define with how the industry has been moving.
- An open discussion about traditional media and content creators commenced, where members shared their frustrations with marketing budgets and how they're being utilized for content creators rather than traditional media.

Media Committee Update – by Eric Knopsnyder on behalf of Ginny Colella

- Eric gave kudos to the entire Media Committee on their hard work for recruiting an outstanding group of journalists for Marketplace. They worked very hard to refine over 105 applications and scored and ranked them appropriately.
- He also gave kudos to Heidi for staying in touch with all our media and making sure they are ready to attend.

Marketing Committee Update – by Darby Seymour

- Darby shared that they are still working on the new process for press releases which are due on the 15th of every month, and the reason the topics are so far ahead is because journalists requested a wider lead time. They are also working with the Social Media committee on being able to share the information from releases on the social accounts.

Social Media Committee Update – by Catherine Jenkins on behalf of MaryGrace Kauffman

- Catherine shared that this committee could really use some more members, and right now they're just working through who's covering which DMOs to make sure each destination is represented on MATPRA's socials.

Membership Committee Update – by Claire Aubel on behalf of Lisa Haggerty

- Claire shared that there are only two members on the Membership Committee, and this is another good committee to sign up for to get started.

Website Committee Update – by Nicole Warner

- Nicole announced the biggest thing going on is that she reminded everyone to please update their destination profiles and email the committee if they have any issues with the website. She also talked about creating a landing page on the site for America's 250th celebration so be on the lookout for that.

Unfinished Business

Updates - by Claire Aubel

- Claire explained that we will not be telling everyone where the next Marketplace will be but to be on the lookout for 2026 dates very soon. She noted that we all work hard on trying not to conflict with industry events, but to keep in mind that we have to do what works best for the host destination. She also explained that Heidi is the backbone behind everything Marketplace and the monetary responsibility does not fall heavily on the host destination as previously thought.
- Claire shared that Delaware is the only state in MATPRA with 100% membership, then showed a map of Pennsylvania which displayed which counties aren't members, then Maryland, and then Virginia, who has the lowest percentage of members. She then asked members to brainstorm on how to get these maps better filled with members. Janet Thomas suggested maps with highways that show which along the road are members.
- An open discussion commenced between members on what the barriers could be for joining as a member, stating that \$300 a year as a membership cost is not difficult to maintain. The option of a possible association membership/conglomerate situation came up, and a state budget being able to give grants as an option, or having one person

come together and represent a few different counties if they're smaller. Possibly offices of 3 or fewer as an association concept.

- Morgan pushed people to join the Membership Committee to continue sharing these ideas.

New Business

Adding Members – by Claire Aubel

- Claire shared the potential idea of adding New Jersey as members to the organization, and what the proposed budget would look like if we did so. We didn't have time to discuss it today, but it at least had to be acknowledged at this meeting as something we're working through to grow this organization.

Claire Aubel asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:24PM, Nicole Warner motioned to adjourn and it was seconded by Morgan Christopher.

Professional Development

Nicole Warner gave a presentation on Visit Culpeper, VA's history-related campaign.

Catherine E. Jenkins

Secretary

Date of approval