

**Shenandoah County
Tourism Council Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Shenandoah County Government Center Board Room

Woodstock VA 22664

12:00 p.m.

Members: Brian McKee, Dan Harshman, Katie Mercer, Savannah Frazier (virtual) *no quorum

Guests: Janel Laravie, Sharon Baroncelli, Don Hindman, Brad Pollock

Staff: Brittany Clem-Hott, Kary Haun

Press: none

Call to Order: Meeting began at 12:05

Approval of Minutes:

Financial Report:

December 2025 Financial Report

- Only standard reoccurring expenses for December

Old Business:

Marketing:

- FuseIdeas ads – running lighter this time of year but still running
- Virginia Living- current ad = Cave Ridge Snow Globe ad we showed last month

From Fuse:

- See Fuse Marketing Report in the agenda packet

Public Relations:

(See additional information in the agenda packet)

- See 2025 vs 2024 report on page 2
- More media contacts, a few less press trips although some press trips included multiple media this year.
- 3 more stories than last year
- Far more people reached this year than last at over 1.2 million!
- 3 more Influencer Visits than last year (plus hosted rva hiker girl twice)

Outdoor Recreation Guide

Continuing interviews with experts:

- Megan Dellinger – Seven Bends State Park – Kayaking/Hiking/Trails/Rentals/Safety/etc.
- Jeremiah Bishop – Potential Campaign/Resource building
- Kevin Watson – Ideas & Experience
Feedback from traveling mountain biking/cycling enthusiasts
- Kyle Lawrence (SVBC) – Collecting biking safety tips
- Rhonda at Murray's Fly Shop
- River Adventures – Laura Bennett, Friends of the North Fork
- Outdoor Enthusiast Lodging Options – Campgrounds and unique Short Term Rentals

- Disc Golf – Lynn at Swover; Jered at Parks
- Town Parks, Amenities/Wellness – Jered Hoover
- US Forest Service – Mary Yonce
- OHV Trails – Accepting recommendations on who to contact?
- Less listings and more insider tips with links to the website and other resources

National Tourism Week -

- Had been planning an event but our team met and decided to go a different direction
- More social media focused to reach a broader audience outside of just industry partners
- Possibly include information in the Parks and Recreation Fall Guide along with the concierge map

250th Efforts

- Website is live
- Events Rack Card – to be printed
- New History Podcast by Hank Zimmerman
- Social Media Videos with Zach Hottle
- DNR/NVD/Winchester Star Advertisement NSV DMO collaboration
- Awarded VTC grant for 250 efforts

Bo Birdie

- Working on landing page for our website to include links for businesses featured on the BoBirdie video

New Business:

- **Arts Grant available** Virginia Commission for the Arts Applications due on February 20
- VTC Global Trends

Looking to 2026

A shift back to growth in international visitation takes center stage in 2026 with the World Cup potentially driving as much as one-third of the projected 3.7% boost states Oxford Economics. Read more here. While no games take place in Virginia, the state is perfectly placed to take advantage of travel between major game destinations like New Jersey and Miami.

Current trend spells possible boon for Virginia as European tourists embrace smaller US destinations

European tourism to the US is experiencing a notable shift, with travelers increasingly choosing lesser-known and more affordable destinations such as Tennessee, Montana, and Idaho over traditional hotspots like New York. This change is influenced by a desire for authentic Americana experiences and improved flight connections to smaller cities. While overall travel from Western Europe to the US has declined, these alternative destinations are seeing significant growth, with places like Tennessee reporting a 24% rise in European visitors. Read the full article from Reuter's.

- RFP will go out for new Tourism Website in the near future

Industry Updates

- **Nandini Patel** (Lodging) not present
- **Randy Phillips** (Agriculture/Vineyard) not present
- **Lynn St. Claire** (Agriculture/Craft Beverage) not present
- **Meredith Norris** (Restaurant/Retail) not present
- **Barbara Adamson** (Attractions) not present
- **Megan Dellinger** (Outdoor Recreation) not present
- **Eunice Terndrup** (Planning Commission) not present
- **Brian McKee** (Town of Strasburg) vintage cancelled, Spring event at box office, Front Porch Fridays now called “Front Porch Live” for more flexibility.
- **Greg Beam** (Town of Mount Jackson) not present
- **Katie Mercer** (Town of Woodstock) Events meeting tomorrow to solidify the dates, scratch “Woofstock” one kids event instead of two, not as many Woodstock ROCs. Budget request for placers AI to see visitor data.
- **Dan Harshman** (Town of Edinburg) December was not as good as last year with about a 20% drop in both visitation and sales. Starting to see more travelers. LOVE sign is being fabricated, hopefully up in the spring.
- **Savannah Frazier** (Town of New Market) present via Teams
- **Joe Proctor/Ashley Proctor/Kathy Kelly** (Shenandoah Caverns) not present
- **Sharon Baroncelli** (Shenandoah County Chamber) Sip and Savor event April 18 Tea, Coffee, Chocolate etc. The new Tea business building in Edinburg will not be ready until May. Yard Crawl planning is already underway.
- **Don Hindman** (Rails to Trails) Confident we will find a way to make the trail happen. Continued work on a plausible plan.
- **Kelli Weaver** (VTC) not present
- **Kirk Gibson** (Shrine Mont) not present
- **Brittany Clem-Hott** (Shenandoah County Tourism)
- **Janel Larravie/Amber** (Wolf Gap Vineyard) Venues problem- challenge is a place to stay (hotel) Winter has been busier than expected, Attributed to an increase at Bryce. Measuring success on a number of days with zero customers. Only one this season. Looking forward to live music again. Indoor space is at capacity every Saturday. Valentines day one seating event. Non Refundable pay up front almost sold out. Galentine's Friday 13th event. New Owners of North Mountain bringing Ravenswood Faire event to the North Mountain grounds.
- **Brad Pollock** (guest) The Knob: 53 acres to make a tremendous tourism destination- working with Battlefield Foundation for funding. Met someone from the Center for Strategic and Int'l Studies on the road picking up trash. How to clean up the county for tourism and/or Real Estate businesses, maybe an event in Spring?

The next meeting will be at the County Government Center. It will be held at **12:00pm** on February 17, 2026. With no further business, the Tourism Council adjourned at 130 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kary Haun
Marketing Assistant

Shenandoah County Tourism