

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Marketing & Reputation Management Committee

Public Session

Tuesday, July 22, 2014, 1:00 p.m.

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, RI

The following were in attendance:

Committee

Shannon Brawley
Maeve Donohue
Elizabeth Francis
Jason Kelly

Commerce RI Staff

Marcel Valois
JR Pagliarini
Mike Blazek
Melissa Czerwein
Jennifer Howard

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Mrs. Czerwein reminded the committee that the FY2015 budget was outlined six weeks ago and closed with \$527,000 for marketing. The task now is to look at how all of the marketing pieces fit together into a strategy.

Mr. Valois told the committee that the corporation could use \$750,000 for marketing to cover just the basic pieces of marketing economic development in the state. Tourism alone should have a budget of \$3-5 million since it is responsible for marketing the entire state, independent of the individual regions' marketing budgets. As is, the corporation allocates half of its marketing budget to tourism, which, unlike the regions, does not receive a piece of the hotel tax.

With that knowledge, the corporation will prioritize developing a tourism investment plan with an industry expert to show the general assembly the return on investment of an increase in tourism marketing dollars. A request for proposal will determine the cost of developing such a report, which will be presented on January 1.

Mr. Valois broke down the costs associated with the tourism budget, and the committee clearly saw that an increase in budget is necessary to successfully market the state on a local, national and international level.

Mrs. Czerwein informed the committee that the corporation is working with MYRANDA Group to brand Commerce RI and its programs as one brand with a marketing and communications strategy. The committee was in agreement on this action, and Mr. Kelly asked that they be involved in the process as it develops.

Mrs. Czerwein then highlighted the remaining FY2015 marketing priorities for the committee:

- Refresh the Commerce RI website
- Provide a Latino-focused web presence
- Continue the ongoing partnership with GreaterRI.com
- Update the fact book and conduct pitch book trainings
- Invest in tourism promotion
- Capture the captive audience
- Integrate with OSHEAN to market broadband asset

Before adjournment, Ms. Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 9th meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brawley, and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.