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**Explorers' Edge Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday March 26, 2025
Zoom**

Present: Gabriela Hairabedian, Tristan Berry, Dave Anderson, Didier Dolivet, Darren Smith, Jackie Leung

Resource: n/a

Regrets: Sarah North-Harris, Anubandu Lakhera

Staff: James Murphy

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 AM by Chair Hairabedian.

Approval of Agenda

MOVED BY: Smith

SECONDED BY: Leung

CARRIED

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Approval of Minutes – January 15, 2025

MOVED BY: Leung

SECONDED BY: Anderson

CARRIED

Business and Operations Plan Update – CEO Murphy

Murphy provided a high-level update ahead of a more in-depth meeting scheduled for April 9, 2025, with Kate in attendance. Highlights included:

Regional Outreach & Product Development

- **Product Development Sessions:** Held in Loring-Restoule, Katrine (Almaguin Highlands), and Burk's Falls with strong turnout.

- **Town Hall:** Gravenhurst session provided stakeholder updates and information exchange.
- **South Algonquin and Parry Sound:** Sessions postponed due to weather; rescheduling underway.
- **Virtual Workshops:** Topics included social media marketing and regenerative tourism with strong attendance.

Women in Tourism

- Participation in IWD events and Women in Tourism Social Clubs in Parry Sound and Huntsville.
- Discussions focused on challenges and opportunities in female entrepreneurship along with empowerment.

Big Applause Awards

- Held at Muskoka Bay Resort; first Pillar of Support Award presented to John Cooper.
- Events now partially ticketed via Eventbrite to offset costs.

Partnerships and Collaborations

- **CP24 Live Broadcast** at JW Marriott with support from Muskoka Tourism and DMO partners.
- **Bracebridge Fire & Ice Festival:** Attendance impacted by weather reporting.
- **SABA:** Continued collaboration on spring content marketing.

Organizational & Administrative Updates

- Hiring process is ongoing for Partnership Manager.
- Georgian Bay Township MAT: RTO12 will not pursue a submission related to their RFP.
- Continued engagement with the RTO Working Group advocating multi-year TPAs and increased provincial support.
- Membership with TIAO is currently being reviewed, waiting to see how the organization demonstrates their advocacy impact and inclusion of the RTO model.

Marketing & Product Initiatives

- Motorcycle touring campaign in Quebec and New York State – successful engagement.
- New AI-supported French translations for marketing content.
- Angling campaign with Ron James in development for launch.
- Participation in bike shows via Ontario by Bike.

Education & Workforce Development

- Partnership with Lakehead University and St. Dominic's High School to introduce students to tourism careers through site visits and workshops.

Financial Update – CEO Murphy

CEO Murphy presented the income statement and balance sheet. Key points included:

- **Revenues:** Contributions from Destination Ontario, MTMA, and Destination Northern Ontario.
- **Expenses:**
 - Increase in staff travel, auditing fees, and contracted services.
 - Website maintenance and marketing campaign expenses (Curation: \$80,000 invoiced).
 - Product development: National Geographic fam trip, sustainability initiatives, and research partnerships.
- **Accounts Receivable:** Includes HST receivable and 12 outstanding partnership payments.
- **Bridge Financing:** 2024 interest and terms reviewed. GIC investments generated \$8,000+ in interest.

Motion – To Enter into Bridge Financing with Muskoka Community Futures for \$100,000.00

MOVED BY: Smith

SECONDED BY: Leung

CARRIED

The resolution will be forwarded to Muskoka Community Futures.

Other Business

- Didier inquired about upcoming provincial grants. James will report back following the TIAO Opportunities Forum on April 7 in Toronto.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Next Meeting: April 9, 2025 – Strategic Planning Session
