

OWPA Board Meeting Notes January 30, 2024

Meeting called to order – 10:02 by Joe Juniper.

Board members: Anita Davis, Joe Glista, Joe Juniper, Eric Cotton, Dustin Heineman, Mark Zdobinski, Brad Indoe, Andrew Codispoti, Charles Edward, Lauren Fiala.

Staff: Donnie Winchell, Chrissy Jeppe

Review of minutes - Donnie read September meeting minutes. Motion to approve Anita Davis and 2nd by Joe Glista.

Financials – Review of end of year 2023

Attached with notes

Questions included cost of casual labor and the cooking school at Vintage Ohio and VINO. We cannot recruit enough volunteers, so we have a group of 1099 workers who are paid \$13 an hour. The goal for 2024 will be to reduce the casual labor costs. Lisa brings lots of people to the cooking school. She is paid for coordinating and each of the chefs gets \$200 a demo for their time and food sampling.

Board members would like to have better job descriptions of those working in the OWPA office. Joe Juniper mentioned that Chrissy's rate isn't recognized in the in the financials for the festivals. Debbie and Chrissy are the cash flows in the office. At the end of each year, the Executive Director is to assign an approximate labor cost to each of the events.

Scholarships

Donna and Dustin are the leads for the scholarship committee. We have 2 returning recipients who will receive a second stipend. Three more have applied for the scholarship this year. Donnie would like to give it to all five candidates this year. Walter Borda is giving us \$10,000.00 for the scholarship and he has some specific goals which need to be addressed. It can be saved. Joe J. asked if it could be put into a cd, Eric mentioned that savings account interests were at a good rate at some banks right now. Donnie suggested possibly a nine-month CD. Will be hosting a silent auction at Grape conference to raise more money for the scholarship. Motion to approve the five scholarships was motioned by Eric Cotton and second by Mark Zdobinski.

Mini Trails – Joe Glista wants a mini trail in SE Ohio. There will be spring events in April, May, June, and July and then 3 in the fall: September, October, and November. These trails are created to market build community among nearby wineries and to create additional foot traffic to clusters of wineries. to neighbors. There are free events for the wineries and the customers and some new wine sales.

Syracuse License to Steal – We have over 886 people coming to our sessions as of 2-5-24. That number is expected to grow.

Illinois LTS – Lisa’s dad passed. Donnie has Tim Hanni and Kathy Kelley confirmed. Lisa is working on her topics.

Discovery Dinner - The first one at Vineyards of Pine Lake was successful. Joe Glista said it was a lot of work getting ready for it, but they did see an increase in the sale of the items that were displayed in the dinner. The next one was scheduled for Buccia but was cancelled due to not enough ticket sales, especially from the 3 participating wineries. The board felt that having them outside the NE corner would possibly be more productive. They suggested we should look at ideas like a third-party location. A less concentrated area and not a busy winery. We need the wineries to help sell these tickets for it to work. Joe Juniper suggested maybe going back to the idea of Raven’s Glen where you had 5 or 6 wineries set up together at an A1a mini festival. Anita Davis mentioned that she does very well pouring her wines at restaurants and entertainment is a must. Lauren Fiala thinks maybe a setting like the outside area at the Botanical gardens, art museum, Columbus Zoo would be a good idea for 2025. The office will research.

Bookkeeper – Hiring a full-time person in the immediate future cannot be accommodated in the budget.

WineBuzz – The purchase is off the table. Joe Juniper thought that things were good per discussion at the board retreat in December and then Sue changed some of her requirements. Donnie and Eric visited the lawyer and he said that you would be buying a name and an outdated trademark. The board feels there are too many risks.

Hall of Fame – Winner has been selected and plaque has been ordered.

SM focus – We still need information from some of our board members. Laken will feature the board members, scholarship winners and other things each week. Please look at Tank winery website. He has a “Cares” page. Donnie is going to use this same idea Ohio Wines Cares Program. We need to know what you are doing. Send us information so we can share it on SM. Many of you are doing amazing things.

Chat GPT- Donnie said they created an entire company with this. She would like to investigate it to help us create our events.

Vintage Ohio – We are going to create a festival inside a festival idea. We will be hosting a VIP area where the craft beer used to be by the red barn. Ticket prices will be \$75.00 per person this will include admission to the general festival too.

The VIP area will include soft entertainment, higher quality wine glasses to taste the gold medal winning wines that will be featured in the area. We are working on having light snacks, cheese and crackers, olive oil and bread. Possibly a few vendors in this area too. Customers will be able to purchase these wines in the wine shop to take home. We will encourage wineries to pour from 2 till 6 each day. If not, we will find volunteers or paid staff to pour.

We are not going to sell beer this year. It is too difficult with the permits. We are working on bringing Cider because it falls under the same permit.

We would like to work out some package deals with the local hotels and shuttle services. We are trying to get Sunset Taxi and Elite Taxi on board.

Erie Bank didn't come through with sponsorship this year. We think it was killed higher up. We are going to offer the bank employees discounted tickets to come and enjoy the event so they can go back and hopefully encourage them to be a sponsor next year. Ideas for offering corporation internal codes are being looked at. The idea of maybe offering a 10-person package to the doctor's insurance offices and with the VIP package they can skip the main lines.

May 8 & 9 is the Wine America DC Meeting. Their fall meeting will be in Paso Robles in November. The issue of ingredient labeling is moving within TTB again. Wine America is monitoring.

We will be discussing WHO anti-alcohol stance at Grape Conference. We need to tie wine into agriculture in a more official way and that wine is part of a comfortable lifestyle, for family gatherings. Wine America is offering some free tools on their website.

Membership – It is important as the pressure from the neo-prohibition movement grows, we need to recruit more members. There will be an all-member Zoom meeting on February 12. It will be recorded and distributed to the membership after the meeting for those who cannot attend.

The state park team at Hocking Hills, Burr Oak and Salt Fork postponed the staff training session. It will be rescheduled with them in early spring.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 motioned by Eric Cotton and second by Dustin Heineman.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrissy Jeppe and Donnie Winchell