

VBA Board of Directors

Conference Call

2:00 - 3:00

March 27, 2017

Present: Sean Lawson, Paul Sayler, Steve Parkes, Garin Frost, Matt Nadeau, Avery Schwenk, James Branagan, and Melissa Corbin

- Jessica Oski, from the Necrason Group, presents on the franchise law reform process and factors within the current legislative session
 - In three weeks, the morning committees wrap up
 - By May 6th, all committee work wraps up
 - Alan from Lost Nation will be meeting with Senator Ashe, to gauge his support for franchise law reform
 - We hope to find a “champion” for our cause on the committee
 - Senator Baruth is the top pick out of all
 - Support from Ashe and Baruth are pivotal to a successful reform process, which they hope to secure by 3/31
 - Ms. Oski recommends that VBA members should call their respective state senators, in order to solicit support
 - The goal is to place a franchise law reform amendment on the current Title 7 rewrite bill, rather than begin an entirely new bill

- Board discusses its stance on the “Vermont IPA” style, in response to Jeff Baker’s article on the matter
 - Sean says there are two points to discuss:
 - What is the VBA’s position on this style of beer?
 - How should the VBA work with the state’s Attorney General in regards to this matter?
 - Melissa will be meeting with the AG soon
 - General discussion:
 - Should we be prohibiting other non-Vermont breweries from adding the descriptor “Vermont-style” to their labels?
 - The Vermont brand should be protected
 - What actions can and should the VBA take?
 - What is the scope of the issue?
 - Some brewers have requested that no mention of “Vermont” should be made on any out-of-state label
 - Describing a beer as “Vermont-style IPA” vs. “Vermont IPA” is a major distinction
 - Matt motions to authorize the Executive Director to meet with the state Attorney General with the goal of seeking guidance and recommendations for protecting the VT beer brand; Paul seconds

- Amended by James to make clear that our policy is to prevent breweries from claiming their beer style as "Vermont IPA" or "Vermont Farmhouse Ale" without the qualifier of "Vermont-style;" Steve seconds
 - Unanimous approval
 - Further discussion:
 - Board agrees that in order to protect the VT brand, we must more clearly understand the VT Origin rule and determine what actions the VT Attorney General will take to assist the VBA
- Garin presents the latest budgetary information
 - So far, the target number for the Allied Partner program may be out of reach
 - \$6,000 has been received
 - \$11,500 is currently expected
 - Ideally, board members should get involved and help to make connections between businesses and the Executive Director
 - Sean recommends that board members do so, making the call/email first, and then handing the conversation off to Melissa
 - At least one connection made per board member
 - The budget was approved at the last meeting, pending Finance committee approval
 - The committee did so, and now it's to be sent out to the membership
 - Other income items may be coming up short
 - "Miscellaneous Income" and "Unidentified Income," both for \$6,000, may not come through
 - There have been cost increases for brochure printing
 - The \$12,000 amount budgeted may be inadequate, due to a number of factors
 - There is \$15,000 in projected income that has not been identified in the first quarter.
 - We need to wait until tickets sale projections are solid to really know where we might end the year
 - The Finance committee is reviewing financials monthly
 - The Board will review mid-year financials and make adjustments as needed to balance the budget for 2017
 - FYI: The passport and brochure program is a combined \$38,000 cost to the VBA
 - Good signs of its success, however burdensome in cost
 - The VBA brochure is currently the third most popular brochure at Vermont rest stops