

Vermont Brewers Association
March Board Retreat 3.11.2025
In-Person
Meeting Minutes

- Call to Order & Formalities
 - Kara, as President, called the meeting to order at 9:45am
 - Roll Call was done noting all board members present, representing a quorum
 - 1/28 Meeting Minutes & 2/10 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved
- Legislative Overview
 - H.51
 - Overview of call on 2/10/25
 - Email received from a member noting that if we are concerned about out of state breweries taking advantage of the bill, could we link the legislation to the manufacturers permit/forth class license? Jessica agrees it's a good idea
 - Noted that alcohol related items are not moving in legislature this session, so take the summer to work with membership, Jessica, & DLL
 - Ask out to DLL about tiered manufacturing license and lowering cost for smaller distribution
 - H.376
 - Would increase tax on malt beverages, regardless of ABV, by 500%
 - Don't think its going anywhere this year, as the Governor has stated no tax increases across the board
 - Also a proposed an update to the warning labels on alcholic beverages, which Jessica thinks is illegal, so no energy is going towards that for now
 - Emma tabling at the State House on 3/28/25 and will have posters of economic stats and hand out non-alcoholic beer/hop water and talk to legislators.

Financial Overview

- Currently at \$23K in net income vs. \$950 budgeted
- About half of the allied partnership money has come in, need to find time to send out reminders to pay. Noted that allied partners are continuing their relationship with VBA, but dropping to a lower tier/lower fee income for VBA
- Festival sponsorship is above what was budgeted!

Break for Lunch

Vermont Brewers Festival

- Discussed breweries who have signed up and what out-of-state breweries we should reach out to based on suggestions from members
- Consider adding a survey when people buy tickets—are you coming for the event in total, or for a particular brewery/beer?

Collaboration Beer Updates + Tech & Ed Day

- Label Design
 - Board Members reviewed the sample label design

- o Potential for members to use different colorways to differentiate their collabs from others
- Ingredient Donations
 - o Hop rub with hop sensory with HopSteiner, with and ale blend and lager blend.
 - o Country Malt discounting base grain
- Participation
 - o Tap takovers of collab beers at local bars the week of the festival
 - o Farrell has agreed to help with distro
 - o Members who participate benefit from reduced ingredient cost and help from distro, donate some of the proceeds back to the VBA. Fundraising goal is \$10K
- Tech & Ed Day Overview
 - o Hop sensory, presentation by Country Malt
 - o Presentation by Mike Pieciak re: tariffs

New Business

- VBA Job Search
 - o Three candidates that stood out from over 70 applications. Emma conducted 15 interviews and Nina did second interviews with 5 applicants.
 - o The board discussed pros & cons of all and discussed what was most important to the board, the mission, and the strategic direction of the VBA
 - o Emma & the board agreed on a plan of action and an offer letter was sent following the meeting
 - o Noted that there should be an executive director success plan
- Discussed possibilities of moving out of current office space, as VT Fresh Network may end their lease
 - o BBCO has space if needed for rent
- Craft Coast Canning Contract
 - o VBA could lock in a contract with them and get a 2% kickback, locked in pricing until June, which could be beneficial if tariffs go into effect
 - o Emma to send out more info to the membership
 - o Pricing may not be beneficial for all members, based on size of current contracts
 - o Unclear of deadline needed to make the contract happen
- Vermont Police Association
 - o Chris Hoar of the Vermont Police Association reached out to Emma & Nina re: a possible collab with the VBA to support mindful drinking/designated drivers, etc.
 - o Concern from the board that there is currently a strong anti-alcohol trend and its challenging to support that right now
 - o Need to talk to Chris about what a meaningful partnership means

Break for Lunch, 1:20pm

12:30-4:00: Strategic Planning

- Review Membership Survey Data
- Updates on 2024-2027 Strategic Plan
- Membership Tier & Bylaw Discussion
- Employee Handbook Subcommittee

