

**PUTNAM COUNTY TOURISM
BOARD of DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES**

April 6, 2026, at 3:00 pm
Area 34, Hurricane, WV

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Alford Glance, Angela Harding, Kathie Hess Crouse, Maggie Parsons Blankenship, Alexandra Pfost Chaney, Amanda Ramey, Joe Stevens, Rob Sydenstricker, Justin Williams, Matt Young

STAFF PRESENT

Kelli Steele, Executive Director
Angie Barthelmess, Office Manager
Khloe Smith, Content Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

President Ashley Alford Glance called the meeting to order at 2:55 pm.

MEETING MINUTES

Angela Harding moved to accept the meeting minutes as presented for February 2, 2026. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Angela Harding gave the Treasurer's report for FY26 to date. General ledgers for FY26 were available for review. Maggie Parsons Blankenship moved to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Steele presented the Director's Report, specifically noting the following items:

Marketing Update

- Tastes & Talents concluded at the end of March. Fifteen participants redeemed prizes for visiting various locations throughout the county.
- Our Putnam Pathfinder campaign resumes April through May. Similar to Tastes & Talents, participants earn merchandise through their visits to Putnam County locations.
- Director Steele is meeting with potential travel writers and content creators she met at the Southern Travelers Explore conference last month.
- We are adding blog content once again on our website since this platform is becoming increasingly important in visitors' search results.
- We will work with the Miles Media Destination Optimization Program to update listings of 100 POIs across Google and Trip Advisor.

Organizational Updates

- Destination Metro Valley was well attended and we received good feedback from attendees.
- Director Steele represented Putnam Tourism at the Southern Travelers Explore conference, Hospitality University, and the WV Chamber Women's Summit in February and March.
- Regarding staffing, Angie Barthelmess' last day in office will be April 28, 2026. Director Steele plans to have our new hire in place prior to that date for in-office training. Also, Khloe Smith will work additional hours beginning mid-May.

Upcoming Events

- April 10 - Nitro Antique Car Cruise In
- April 11 - Birdies, Blooms, and Bites at Griitt's Farm
- May 28 - Night Market Kick Off: Derby Night
- June 5-6 - Winfield Watersports Weekend

Zartico and Social Media Data

- Director Steele provided current statistics regarding visitor spend and demographics.
- The Putnam Tourism Facebook page is approaching 10,000 followers.

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

Administrative and Outreach Coordinator

Director Steele gave an update on the 42 applicants for the new staff position. Based upon her interviews, she has one candidate in mind for an offer and a second candidate if the first does not accept. Salary was discussed. Joe Stevens moved to offer the job to the first candidate at the agreed-upon rate of \$19.50/hour. Motion carried.

Personnel Policy Updates

Kathie Hess Crouse moved to accept Personnel Policy updates as discussed at the 4/6/26 Board Retreat which immediately preceded this meeting. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee

There are no updates at this time. Elections will be held at the June 1 meeting. President Alford Glance will obtain nominations prior to the meeting and encouraged members to consider a leadership role in the upcoming year.

Research Software Authorization

Director Steele updated the board on recent Zartico changes, some of which do not permit our office to track previously relied upon Zartico data. She also discussed additional software alternatives which may be useful to our marketing decision making. Pricing for alternatives is comparable to Zartico. Angela Harding moved to allow Director Steele to proceed as she feels necessary as a result of her software research and negotiations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joe Stevens noted Cincinnati Reds' Joe Sabo will be in Nitro for opening day of Little League. Also, June 20 is "free day" at Ridenour Lake.

President Glance thanked Angie Barthelmess for her ten years of service to Putnam Tourism.

There being no further business or public comment, Maggie Parsons Blankenship moved the meeting to be adjourned. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:11pm. The next scheduled board event will be on June 1 at 3pm at Area 34.

Respectfully submitted by Angie Barthelmess