



# MINUTES

**Date/Time: March 20, 2025**  
**Location: Holiday Inn Downtown**

## **MISSION**

*Our mission is to provide Kent County hospitality related businesses an opportunity to meet professionally with a common interest to better serve our industry and community while furthering the overall tourism landscape of our region.*

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Welcome & Introductions: Lisa Calhoun, KCHA President

Approval of February 2025 minutes (Motion: Jane, Second: Todd, Approved)

Treasurer's Report & Membership Report – David Jibson, KCHA Treasurer

- Month starting bank balance: \$5,520
- Month ending bank balance: \$6,990

Featured Topic: Engaging the New Gen Workforce

- Jaylyn McCloy of Experience Grand Rapids led a panel of GVSU hospitality students to talk about employment issues important to them including:
  - General Workforce Expectations
    - Decent wage, opportunities for advancement, positive work environment, management support.
    - Leave work at work, setting boundaries for self.
  - Engagement & Retention
    - Incentives, fair pay, making a difference at work, passion for the job, positive feedback and constructive criticism (at the time of an incident vs during annual review, so behaviors can be corrected).
  - Mentorship & Collaboration
    - Step by step guidance, one-on-one time with mentors to talk about big picture things – not just the current job at hand.
    - Explain why things are done the way they are in a new way if message isn't connecting.
    - Don't stereotype based on age.
  - Communication & Leadership
    - Clear communication – with employer asking questions of staff and not just directing.
  - Emerging Trends
    - Aligned values
    - AI (does that impact the heart of hospitality which is people).
    - Utilize social media (reviews) and technology.
  - Insights for Employers
    - Leave a lasting impression, creating personal experiences, being part of someone's special day, growth support, being supported at work and at home.
    - Aligning job titles with pay (which carries more weight).
    - Incentives for jobs well done or exceeded (special activities or gifts, time off, bonuses).
    - Building network and meeting with others in the industry, college events, networking and personal connections in existing job or future jobs.
    - Utilizing LinkedIn to share job and industry info (vs email).
    - Strengthening the student network (HTM Club).

## Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids – Jaylyn McCloy
  - EGR's Accessibility campaign video just launched.
  - Toast the Town will be Thursday, May 15 with a focus on accessibility.
  - Culture Pass GR for 2025 are now available.
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion
  - Grants are available for \$5,000 for an initiative that promotes community belonging (closing March 31)
- West Michigan Sports Commission – Alyssa Bey
  - Just helped host the NCAA DII Women's Basketball Midwest Regional at Grand Valley. 7 teams came into town. GV won and is headed to the Elite 8 in Pittsburgh.
  - Alyssa & Katy are headed to Tampa, FL in April for the Sports ETA Women's Summit, in conjunction with the NCAA Women's Final 4.
  - A week after that Alyssa, Katy, Conner, & Mike are headed to Tulsa, OK for Sports ETA Symposium where we meet with event organizers that we want to come to Grand Rapids to host their events.
- West Michigan Tourist Association (WMTA) – Paula Shields & Kaylie Pomper
  - 2025 West Michigan Carefree Travel guide is available if anyone is interested in having a supply for their property, please reach out.
  - 2025 Lake Michigan Circle Tour map will be out later in the spring.
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids
  - The 2025 annual conference will be Tuesday, November 18 at the JW.
- Grand Valley State University – Kristy Jack
  - Networking Extravaganza will be March 25, with a few spots left if anyone is interested in participating.
  - Michigan Works Career Quest has a hospitality focus for the first time. MiCareerQuest offers West Michigan middle and high school students the opportunity to learn about careers in our region's high-demand industries through interactive experiences with local employers.
    - Lisa Calhoun is on the Michigan Works board and will work to get a speaker talk with members at a fall meeting.
- Ferris State University – Kaky Wolfer
  - Bachelor's degree is online for those with an existing associates degree for all hospitality students, along with core business.
  - Amy Dorey took students to the Winter X-Games in Aspen, along with the college's marketing team in order to help with collection of photos, videos, story and other content.
  - For more: <https://fsutorch.com/2025/01/29/students-experience-x-games/>
- Grand Rapids Community College
  - NA
- Pure Michigan (MEDC)
  - NA
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association – Jennifer Sparrow
  - Michigan Food & Hospitality Show is back – tied to the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Suburban Collection Expo Center in Novi. All conference attendees get free access to the show.
  - The annual Stars of the Industry Awards Dinner will also be held as part of the Conference, on Wednesday evening. Again, all conference attendees can attend at no additional charge.
- Michigan Cares for Tourism (MC4T)
  - There is a small clean up event at the Detroit Zoo on Tuesday, April 15 as part of the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism. A shuttle bus will transport participants from Novi to the Zoo.
  - The annual fall clean up event will be at the Tawas State Park on Lake Huron. The pre-event fairs and reception will be on Sunday, September 14 with the volunteer event on Monday, September 15. Registration is open now at [www.MichiganCaresForTourism.com](http://www.MichiganCaresForTourism.com).
  - An idea was presented to add a hospitality/event planning student to the MC4T Board to learn how to organize a non-profit volunteer event and lead to more student involvement. Dianna will share this information with the MC4T board.

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Tuesday, April 15 (AM) – MC4T Clean Up at Detroit Zoo (Prior to Pure Michigan Tourism Conference)
- Tuesday, April 15 to Thursday, April 17 – Pure Michigan Tourism Conference, Novi (No Monthly Meeting)
- Thursday, May 15 – Monthly Member Meeting @ The BlueJay (AI in the Hospitality Industry w/ Amy Dorey, FSU)

- Thursday, June 19 – Social Networking at BattleGR (a kick-off to summer...bring your staff. Note 4pm start time).

*Note: No membership meetings in July, August or September (the latter due to overlapping with MC4T which is 9/14-15).*

#### Round Table Discussion

- The KCHA board has a goal of updating the bylaws before the end of 2025. If anyone is interested in serving on a committee to review, please reach out to Lisa Calhoun.

Adjournment: 4:33pm

**Kent County Hospitality Association**  
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**[www.KentCountyHospitality.org](http://www.KentCountyHospitality.org)**  
[www.facebook.com/groups/KentCountyHospitality](https://www.facebook.com/groups/KentCountyHospitality)