

## 56<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Date:	19.04.2019
Place and time:	Gymnastics hall, 18h45
President:	M. David Théoduloz (DT)
Manager Veysonnaz Tourisme:	Mme Jasmine Ramondt-Fragnière (JRF)
Presences	64 people, of which 54 with the right to vote
Excused	8 people

### Order of the day :

1. Opening of the Assembly and President's greetings
2. Appointment of the scrutineers
3. Control of attendance
4. Approval of the minutes of the GA held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2018
5. Presentation of the activity report and accounts for 2018
6. Audit report and discharge
7. Approval of the activity report and accounts for 2018
8. Annual fee
9. Presentation and approval of the Budget for 2019
10. Presentation of the route de Pra project (municipal executive)
11. Miscellaneous

### 1. Opening of the Assembly and President's greetings

M. David Théoduloz opens the session at 18h50 and greets the Assembly. He thanks MM. Patrick Lathion (PL) President of the Municipality, François Fournier (FF) Managing Director of NVRM and Frédéric Fragnière who represents the Local Authorities of Nendaz, for their presence and their commitment. He excuses M. Baptiste Constantin, Director of Nendaz Tourisme, declared absent at the last minute.

He brings up two encouraging facts :

- The construction of the Magrappé buildings, finally built.
- The unanimous approval by the primary assembly for the renovation of the 'Route de Pra'

Aside from this, it has been noticed that the tourism trade in Veysonnaz has suffered a slight decline compared to the previous year. This drop is not alarming but remains a little worrying. The Municipality and the 'Société de développement' wish in priority to enhance :

- The 'Rue Central' (main street)
- The mountain biking infrastructures

**2. Appointment of scrutineers:** MM. Charlot Lathion and Gustave Grether are appointed as scrutineers.

**3. Control of attendance:** The attendance sheet rotates in the room. Finally, we count 64 participants of which 54 have the right to vote.

**4. Approval of the minutes for the GA held on the 30th of March 2018 :** The minutes do not bring up any particular remarks and are approved unanimously with thanks to their author.

### 5. Presentation of the activity report and accounts for 2018

Mme Jasmine Ramondt-Fragnière welcomes the Assembly and greets and thanks both her collaborators for their warm welcome since she took up office and for their commitment and the work they have carried out throughout the year. She presents the activity report with its new visual layout and content. The figures are approached in a different way, more adapted to the new laws.

Firstly, she explains the general context of the exercise:

- A better exchange rate for European guests
- Excellent snow conditions for the Winter 17-18 and weekends with little sunshine
- An increase in visits to the ski domain, despite the low-cost competition
- Despite all this, a slight drop in overnight stays

Concerning the tourism trade activity, various missions are attributed to the municipality and the 'société de développement'.

Regarding the Municipality, the main tasks dedicated to tourism are:

- The elaboration of guidelines regarding the local tourism policy, in collaboration with all the local tourism trade partners as well as then reinforcing their application
- Answering favorably to tourism facilities and the development of the tourism trade throughout the region
- Perception of an annual fee holiday tax and a tax for the promotion of the tourism trade

Regarding the 'société de développement' :

- Reception, information
- Entertainment and touristic products
- Collection of holiday taxes per overnight stay (hotels and group accommodation)
- Promotion of the destination.

The staff have fixed objectives with certain values in mind:

- To offer high quality products and services, within our means, by prioritizing. What is undertaken must meet high quality requirements.
- To focus on customers' needs.
- To develop our potential by building on our strengths.
- To potentialize our resources -> participatory method
- To keep a curious and alert eye on what is around us.
- To communicate with relevance and quality

### **Overnight stays statistics**

A drop at the beginning of the years 2000 followed by a constant progression until 2010 then a decrease in overnight stays. The high-point in 2016 is explained by the introduction of the holiday tax annual fee.

In 2018, a slight decrease in the apart-hotel sector was noted as well as a more serious drop for hotels, in fact, a total of - 2.23 % of commercial overnight stays.

Since the new tax collection policy, certain statistics are missing. Jasmine calls on professional hosts to remedy this situation.

Origin of our guests: mainly from the Swiss and European market. Switzerland (-4,5%) and Belgium (-5,5%) show a decrease, Germany (-0,2%) and Holland (-0,3%) have remained stable. France which has increased (+2,3%). The northern and eastern countries have also increased their number of overnight stays.

### **Mission reception & info**

More days open in 2018 for a stable number of visits. Participation in the entertainments' programme has increased by 13 %.

Objectives: enhance the tourist information office's infrastructure and offer quality information, both at the counter and by telephone, by email and via our website, which was completely overhauled in 2018. Information must be widely available, also from the resort's tourism trade partners.

### **Mission entertainment and touristic products**

Numerous activities and events take place every month in Veysonnaz. JRF thanks all the local partners for their commitment.

### **Product management:**

Product management offers experiences with the potential to draw visitors and make the destination even more attractive. The objective aims at motivating more guests to come in winter, at encouraging families and locals in summer, at promoting local know-how and products. Some key products are described below:

- New fine dining workshops: in partnership with local restaurants: 50 participants
- Dare to ski : in partnership with Nendaz Tourisme, the ski schools, the sports shops and the ski lift company (49%)
- New bisses discovery tour: in partnership with Nendaz Tourisme 18 participants
- The bisses shuttle bus : in partnership with Nendaz Tourisme (+15,25%, 485 pax)
- New tennis courts : renovation as well as commercialization with online sales. The 'Tennis club de Veysonnaz' will continue to exist thanks to this investment. (157 hours reserved)

- Sun&Fun and club des Oursons : demands a great effort in human and financial resources. These activity clubs provide summer jobs for young people of the village and encourages them to maybe turn to tourism trade jobs in the future. Objective : become a reason to reserve a holiday in our destination within the European countries.
- Disc Golf : in partnership with Thyon Tourisme (-29%)

For all these products, Veysonnaz Tourisme is strongly committed, in creating various partnerships, in communication and in the follow-up.

### **Infrastructures :**

The fixed objectives are as follows :

1. Know the current state of our infrastructures => prioritize renovation
2. Develop new original products => promotional leverage

Examples of what has already been realized :

- A former gondola transformed into a book swap box => a lot of shares and reactions on social media networks.
- Yoga path, upcoming installation. 2nd path of its kind in Switzerland => added value to an existing itinerary. It is sometimes difficult to carry out certain projects due to the approval and certification procedure. This one uses the same layout as the Veyson'Actif, without any denaturation. Yoga classes will be offered in summer (juin-juillet-août).
- Panoramic view from the Mt-Rouge, changed in autumn.

Every year, we invest as much as we can, to enhance our existing infrastructures, always with quality in mind.

### **Mission promotion: marketing report**

The fixed objectives are as follows:

- Work on the Swiss market and maintain our efforts on our main markets
- Produce attractive content and take care of image to promote experiences
- Strengthen our presence on social networks

Working in partnership is extremely important for a small holiday destination like Veysonnaz :

- Nendaz Tourisme : partnership throughout the year with common promotional campaigns
- Ski lift company : especially when launching the winter season, on a national level
- Valais/Wallis Promotion : packages on the European markets
- Suisse Tourisme : promotion of the destination abroad. Winter package with Nendaz Tourisme
- 4Vallées : Winter campaign
- Local trade partners

At the level of communication strategy, 360° communication on several types of media is used :

- Classic : newspaper, radio and poster campaign
- Key Account Management : representations in Switzerland and abroad (London, Brussels, Lyon)
- Media relations, press releases, reception of journalists (via VWP)
- Enhancement of our presence on social networks => economic, as well as demanding a certain amount of time. The number of views on our publications ghas increased considerably.
- Digital marketing : website, online advertising, newsletters.

In 2018, a lot of resources were put into the total redesign of our website. The entire 4Vallées, both the tourist information offices and the ski lift companies use the same tool, which makes it possible to broadcast information on each platform. The deadline for data entry were short, they met thanks in particular to the hiring of a trainee during the summer. The informative part of the site is finished, the work continues with the development of a market place with online sales that will soon be possible for all trade partners.

Various promotional videos produced by journalists and by Veysonnaz Tourisme in 2018 are to be broadcasted on screen.

## Accounts 2018

DT takes to the floor to present the accounts.

The financial years remain comparable from year to year. It is about finding solutions that will allow us to achieve our improvement objectives, either with more resources or with synergies. We are a small holiday destination; it is not easy to be present in large markets. But we do have assets to play.

**Income 2018** : CHF 7'629.-. Not surprisingly, compared to the Budget. Thanks again to the private property owners of Veysonnaz for the effort made regarding the holiday tax annual fee.

**Expenses 2018** : significant increase due to the new website, partially budgeted. Ultimate objective : to offer a market place to all of Veysonnaz's commercial partners.

**Amortization**: regularized situation regarding the financial aspect with an amortization of CHF 40'000.- Play areas and the sports arena will have to be quickly reduced to zero, as they have no real market value but are still worth CHF 15'000.- each from an accounting point of view.

A provision of CHF 20'000.- has been set up for potentially questionable debtors.

### Financing and investments :

The activities of the SD of Veysonnaz are funded 45% by the holiday tax annual fee, 28% par by the tourist tax, 16% by the TPT, 5% by advertisers, 4% by membership subscriptions, 1% by the municipality 1% by diverse sales.

Of the CHF 100.- budget invested, CHF 17.- is used for administrative costs, CHF 21,80 for tourist information, CHF 16,80 for tourism products, CHF 21,70 for entertainment and events, CHF 21,10 for marketing, CHF 1,60 for IT.

## 6. Auditors' report.

M. Pierre-Alain Lathion reads out the report. The accounts are well kept, He recommends the assembly to accept them and gives discharge.

## 7. Approval of the activity report and accounts for 2018

DT thanks the auditors and asks for a vote ; the activity report and accounts for 2018 are unanimously approved.

## 8. Annual fee

The committee proposes to keep the same amounts as last year, that is :

CHF 40.- for private property owners

CHF 60.- for businesses in Veysonnaz

CHF 200.- for business outside Veysonnaz (not subject to the TPT)

The proposition is accepted unanimously.

## 9. Presentation and approval of the Budget 2019

JRF reads the Budget presented and validated by the local authorities.

### Income :

An amount for the recovery of the holiday tax annual fee (introduction of the new regulation in the district of Nendaz on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2018) for objects located in the municipality of Nendaz, but within our touristic perimeter, has been budgeted. The agreement between our two municipalities, which has been in force since 1976 on the restitution of amounts in the tourist sector will have to be renewed. The agreement has yet to be approved. The amount was calculated lower probably than the reality.

### Expenses :

Salaries : up in anticipation of the hiring of a part-time Sales Manager (20 %) to operate the market place. Position shared with Nendaz Tourisme.

IT: increasing, higher maintenance costs with the new site, introduction of the flow box which allows us to publish the most beautiful Instagram photos taken by our guests, some legal fees to be expected at the launch of the new market place.

Entertainment - events : stable. Le Club Sun & Fun in maintained in summer.

Tourist facilities : paragliding product with departure from the top of the gondola and landing at the bottom of the run de l'Ours, study of a mountain bike track on the ski run de l'Ours in collaboration with the Town of Sion (municipal land), major budget item. VWP promotes the mountain bike product. The Town of Sion is in favour of the project and the project is progressing

well. However, we are expecting an extremely long accreditation procedure, budgeted over the next 2-3 years.

DT retakes the floor. The budget is approved unanimously.

#### 10. Presentation of the route de Pra project (municipal executive)

Timeline : 2017 = presentation of the project, 2018 = presentation of the funding, 2019 = request for authorization

M. Patrick Lathion (PL), President of the Municipality takes the floor and greets the Assembly.

Details of the project will be available at the municipality offices. The project is at the public inquiry stage. In summary, the street runs from the VIP building to the Greppon Blanc restaurant, measuring about 500m. The municipality, which owns the land, has not been forced to expropriate it, with two exceptions. Discussions have been held with the two EPPs concerned.

#### Objectives sought :

1. Upgrading of basic infrastructure, under the road, pipelines are in poor condition.
2. Rehabilitation of the road also in poor condition.
3. Render the street attractive:

- **Meeting** area; pedestrian friendly, maximum speed limit 20 km an hour
- **Get the cars** off the street. Parking solutions will exist for short to medium term : 34 places 3h00 max, at the beginning and end of the street + about ten short term spaces (30 min) between the buildings. The Grangettes car park with its 400 places will still be available for CHF 5.- / day.
- **Conviviality**, terrasses for the various establishments, entrance to apartment buildings without conflict with traffic, greenery, zone to the West of the kiosk for the installation of a central square, with ice rink in winter. Wooden urban furniture.

The municipality owns all the current parking spaces which have generously been made available up until now. There is no right-of-way inscribed on the land register. For those who do not have parking spaces at all, it will be possible to rent year-round or buy spaces at the Grangettes car park, thanks to an agreement made with NVRM.

**Funding** : this project is largely one of the biggest projects ever made by the local authorities with its investment of CHF 4'400'000.-. Note the support given by the local people of Veysonnaz who have approved a commitment credit of over CHF 2,8 mio for this tourism project at the primary assembly in December 2018.

**Planning** : the matter is finalized and awaiting the green light from the Canton normally due in the next 2 weeks. The request for authorization will take place at the beginning of May, followed by 30 days of appeal period. The case can be consulted in the municipality's offices. In the case where opposition occurs, it is difficult to predict the processing time, but the beginning of the work is hoped for in 2020.

#### Questions :

*What is the expected duration of the work and how will access to the apartments be managed during this time ?*

PL : the work will be spread over two years, avoiding high season periods. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2021.

The Chemin de Pra will be accessible throughout the work. The rehabilitation of the Chemin de Pra concerning its paving is already included in this year's Budget, but the slope will remain as it is now.

*Will the municipality of Nendaz participate also in the investment of 4 mio which will also serve chalets located on its territory ?*

PL : we are in discussion with the municipality of Nendaz, on the same model as with what has already been done on the route du Magrappé and its tunnel where both municipalities participated. A formal request has been sent to the municipality of Nendaz. For the moment, priority has been given to the request for building authorization.

PL takes this opportunity to thank DT for the good work done by him and the staff of Veysonnaz Tourisme.

## 11. Miscellaneous

M. François Fournier (FF), Managing Director of NRVM takes the floor to give some information regarding the evolution of the ski domain.

Since the merger and the construction of two brand new lifts in 2016, both the number of skiers per day and the revenue have increased. For the current season, the results are already better than last year. The 18-19 financial year has remained relatively calm in terms of investments with the replacement of the Dent ski lift. However, for this summer 2019, major initiatives are planned:

- New gondola from Prarion - Plan-du-Fou, direct line replacing the present Fontaines ski lift and the Plan-du-Fou cable car. The objective is to triple the number of passengers on the link between Haute-Nendaz and Siviez.
- Artificial snow making devices on the upper part of the Plan-du-Fou.
- Artificial snow making devices on the Greppon Blanc sector -> 15 km of network, over a 100 snow canons, 2 pumping stations pompage in Thyon at Combatseline. Snow conditions will be guaranteed for the liaison.
- Zipline at the Mont-Fort : from the top of the Col des Gentianes cable car in collaboration with Téléréverbier, for a maximum speed of 130 km/h. Not yet authorized, but construction is hoped for this autumn and operational by winter 19-20.

A table of investments made since 2005 is presented: 91 million francs have been injected, for an average of 7 million per year and a peak of more than 25 million francs in 2016-17 during the construction of the Ours and the Plan-du-Fou gondolas.

### Questions :

*What about the liaison valley floor - mountain? Are there any plans to change the Crêtes, de la Tsa lifts, etc... ?*

FF : for the valley floor-mountain link, the project is managed by TéléSion, which belongs to the municipality of Sion, the Bourgeoisie and the neighboring municipalities concerned with the 4 Vallées ski domain. The draft project has been submitted to the OFT, which will make its comments before it is sent to the Canton for authorization. The departure station is planned to be located at Sion railway station and the arrival station being located at the bottom of the piste de l'Ours, without any intermediate stops.

For the Thyon - Combatseline link, the equipment for mechanical snowmaking will already be completed this year, then in a second phase it will be necessary to consider the renewal of the ski lifts. However, some financial caution is required for a few years after the heavy investments made this summer.

FF stresses once again the excellent collaboration between the lift company and Veysonnaz Tourisme, both at the strategic and operational levels.

DT takes the floor once again and declares his impatience to try out the zipline.

**Union chorales du centre festival (choir festival) :** 3-4-5 May in Veysonnaz. around 1000 people per day are expected. Tents are being installed along the route de Pra, in front of the Greppon Blanc restaurant and the kiosque => The road will be closed from the 29 to the 30.04 as well as the festival days. Parking will be possible at the Grangettes car park. Sorry for any inconveniences this may cause and most importantly welcome to the festival !

Good news first, but within quotation marks : **Dr. Mariano Nani**, domiciled in Veysonnaz agrees to take over the Leen surgery, two days a week, in the same location, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May.

M. Frédéric Fragnière, representative of the **Commune de Nendaz** takes the floor : he notes the good dynamics of the société de développement and the excellent collaboration, also with the ski lift companies. We are all pursuing a common objective : quality, through all the companies that work in tourism on a daily basis. Tourism projects do not have to be complicated, but must serve residents and guests alike. There should never be any divisions between visitors and local inhabitants. Touristic cities have managed to take this step very well.

You can move from one municipality to another without seeing any significant difference. But when it comes to finance, politicians are very good at recognizing borders. A solution will be found for the rue de Pra, but it must be realized that only about 80 people live there year-round and about 100 objects in the area concern Nendaz. The investment/beneficiary ratio is therefore not very balanced. Frédéric Fragnière remains hopeful for this intermunicipal projects, which is of interest to both destinations.

## Questions

*What about the waste centre, is it to be relocated or not ?*

DT ensures that this project will be implemented opposite the colony (group accommodation), where the eco point is already placed.

PL informs that it is taking time because the procedure is quite complicated. For the time being, green waste must still be deposited at the current landfill. New this year : opposite the Greppon Blanc restaurant 5 moloks will be installed instead of the 3 currently in place at the end of the street, in an area benefiting from a beautiful view which could then be redeveloped and enhanced.

*Regarding mountain bikes, I would like to point out my concern about safety in the Fevoue area. Cyclists arrive very quickly on the footpath.*

*The Dare to Ski offer is very interesting, but I suggest highlighting the ski touring activity, which offers many health benefits and is environmentally friendly.*

*Other suggestions regarding NVRM's pricing policy:*

*Would it be possible to use the lift system to go up, per hour or per time slot?*

*Why not retain regular buyers of season or annual passes by offering discounts? There is too much difference between the normal prices and indigenous prices.*

*It is a great pity that the family rate has been abolished.*

Intervention applauded.

DT : NVRM takes note of the comments made. However, here is some additional information:

Every Tuesday evening, it is possible to use the ski runs for ski touring, the piste grooming service is delayed until later for this reason. During the day it is also possible to go ski touring on the ski touring tracks. Don't forget the marked snowshoe hiking tracks.

Season's pass price : the municipality of Veysonnaz is giving priority the rehabilitation of the route de Pra. The holiday tax annual fee will fund a part of this tourism infrastructure. When this investment is made, advantages could then be awarded to the owners, for example discounts on lift passes. We must however respect the time-line.

FF also informs that children and youth rates on seasonal/yearly passes have never been so low.

A property owner goes on to say that for a family, the rates have nevertheless increased.

As this debate does not directly concern the société de développement, we pass on to the following intervention.

*Last year I spoke on the issue of the edge of the bisse. Thank you and well done for the improvement on the bisse de Vex, on the stretch Ramuge - Magrappé. The path is now wider and flatter.*

DT thanks for this positive ending note and closes the assembly at 20h50 to applause. The aperitif is served.

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