

## SOCIETE DE DEVELOPPEMENT OF VEYSONNAZ

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

Date :	15.04.2022
Place and time:	Gymnastics hall, 18h45
Chaired by :	Mme Nicole Fragnière Meyer (NFM)
Manager Veysonnaz Tourisme :	Mme Jasmine Ramondt-Fragnière (JRF)
Presences :	57 people, of which 48 with the right to vote
Excused :	10 people

LINK TO THE ACTIVITY REPORT: [www.veysonnaz.ch/agsd](http://www.veysonnaz.ch/agsd)

### Order of the day

1. Opening of the Assembly
2. Appointment of the scrutineers
3. Control of attendance
4. Committee : result of written votes and presentation of the new Committee
5. Approval of the minutes from the GA held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2021
6. Presentation of the activity report and accounts for 2021
7. Audit report
8. Approval of the activity report, accounts for 2021 and discharge of the Committee
9. Annual fee
10. Presentation and approval of the Budget 2022
11. Appointment of the deputy auditor
12. Presentation of Veysonnaz Tourisme's new management
13. Information regarding local authorities
14. Miscellaneous

### Opening of the Assembly

Mme Nicole Fragnière Meyer opens the meeting at 19h00 and greets the assembly, the local councillors and M. Baptiste Constantin, Managing Director of Nendaz Tourism.

Welcome to all to this first general assembly led by the new all-female committee.

Reminder : the figures presented this evening concern the 2020-21 financial year, i.e. from 01.11.2020 to 31.10.2021. Activities were disrupted by the health crisis, but you will see many projects and a great deal of energy put into ensuring the existence of Veysonnaz as a tourist destination.

### Appointment of scrutineers

M. Michel Fragnière and Mme Anne Fournier are appointed as scrutineers.

### Control of attendance

Reminder, no quorum for this meeting. The attendance sheet circulates around the room. Eventually, there are 57 people, 48 of whom have the right to vote.

### Committee

Quick presentation:

Mme Marylène Volpi-Fournier, representing the municipality of Sion

Mme Ann-Kristin Huber, representing estate agents and accommodation providers

Mme Laurence Fournier, representing the municipality of Veysonnaz

Mme Mélanie Fragnière, representing craftsmen and local businesses, vice-President

Mme Nicole Fragnière Meyer, representing holiday property owners, President

Mme Jasmine Ramondt-Fragnière, Manager of Veysonnaz Tourisme, Secretary

Reminder: According to the statutes of the association, each municipality whose territory is wholly or partly included in our tourist area is entitled to a representative on the committee. Nendaz's position is vacant.

## **Approval of the minutes from the GA held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2021**

Very brief due to the holding of the meeting by proxy, following the Covid health measures. No comments are made; the minutes are approved.

## **Presentation of the activity report and accounts for 2021**

The floor is given to Mme Jasmine Ramondt-Fragnière (JRF).

**Presentation of the team** which represents a total of 2.7 employees, to carry out all the duties required of a Tourist Information Office.

Mme Bérengère Fournier, 100 % : reception and information, accounts manager, responsible for the Internet site (a huge project carried out in 2020-21) – social networks – entertainment and events

Mme Stéphanie Salzgeber (secretary of this GA), 50 % : reception and information, responsible for the Sun&Fun summer programme – brochure updating – entertainment and events

Mme Cindy Voide-Lüthi, 20 % : special offers and sales manager. Resource shared with Nendaz Tourisme (80 % - 20 %). Link with MRAG (Matterhorn Region AG) and tour -operators.

Ad hoc support throughout the year from trainees. Veysonnaz Tourisme is committed to training young people, especially young people from the region. They represent our future. Mme Laura Reynard, M. Loïc Le Deunff and Mme Lucie Guntern joined the team for a few months.

JRF thanks the entire staff and the new committee for their energy and dedication to Veysonnaz Tourism. She also salutes the outgoing committee, particularly Mr. David Théoduloz, who unfortunately is not present this evening, but who was President for 12 years and who deserves the applause of the assembly.

**General context 20-21** : Impacted by significant external factors:

- Winter: 2<sup>nd</sup> season impacted by Covid, with catering only available on a take-away basis. Fortunately, the ski activity remained available, thanks to the Swiss Ski Lifts, which successfully lobbied the Swiss Confederation.
- Spring-summer-autumn : resumed travel but with conditions, including vaccination, tests and Covid passports. Attendance rose slightly nevertheless.

For all partners, it was difficult to work in this difficult and uncertain climate. Some countries, such as the UK, remained difficult or impossible to access for distant markets.

**Commercial overnight stays** : presentation of graphs included in the activity report. The negative impacts caused by Covid are limited thanks to the loyalty of the Swiss clientele as well as the arrival of new Swiss clients. The French markets increased in 2021, especially in winter when the French resorts were closed. On the other hand, we have a decrease in Dutch and Belgian customers due to the restrictions.

**Holiday property owners**: a lot of movement in real estate transactions. Currently, we are seeing a growth in Swiss holiday property owners of over 75%. This local clientele offers the advantage of being present more often, for as long as our destination remains attractive.

**Reception and information** : more opening days than in 2020, but the comparison is biased by the Covid situation. With the return of the normal situation, the aim is to extend the weekend opening hours also in the off-peak seasons, i.e. in May and October. The number of visits has also increased.

**Information strategy** : 4 axes

- Reception : kindness, friendliness
- Quality service : entertainment and manner of informing
- Targeting expectations: observing the customer and guiding him/her towards the products he/she is looking for, also in our digital strategy, via our new Internet shop window and on the various digital media. The aim is to introduce and sell new experiences. => 18.06.2021 new website goes live. We note a decrease in views due to the EDPR (European Data Protection Regulation) with the obligation to inform users that cookies are present on our site. If visitors do not accept, they are not included in the statistics.

The duration of consultation and the number of pages consulted are increasing. These are good indicators of the attractiveness of our website.

These analyses are possible thanks to google analytics, google data studio and the usage reports provided by our partner MyCity.

- After-sales service: attentiveness and adaptation of our offers, concern for continuous improvement

**Entertainment – product management** : The results are published in the activity report. The summer was excellent and the winter was very poor. The health situation did not allow us to organize our flagship events, such as the torchlight descents.

**Kickboard (mountain scooter) product**: The purchase of 14 new scooters in order to remain competitive with regards to our neighbours and to increase the number of passengers on the Veysonnaz - Thyon gondola. Collaboration with the ESS of Veysonnaz for the guide service. Thanks to them. To be noted: The municipality now covers the operating deficit incurred by NVRM in summer.

Other summer products: the bad weather had an impact on certain activities such as yoga and meditation classes, e-bike and Nendaz Trekking.

The **bisses shuttle bus** recorded a strong increase in demand. The distribution of costs between Veysonnaz Tourism and Nendaz Tourism has changed and now represents a significant cost to Veysonnaz Tourism.

The **Sun&Fun and the Oursons clubs** are always a great success, slightly less than expected due to the impact of Covid on the staff front and some cancellations due to bad weather.

The hours of **tennis** sold decreased due to a technical problem, the opening of one of the courts was delayed by two months.

The **Disc-golf** activity has continued to grow.

Winter activities: the figures regarding the initiation to **ski touring** dropped by 11%, the special package **Dare to ski** whose aim is to attract new skiers worked well.

**Marketing** : since 2018, Veysonnaz Tourisme and Nendaz Tourisme have put in place a new way of operating :

- Redesign of the digital ecosystem to be more sales and customer focused
- Additional resource hired at 80% for Nendaz and 20% for Veysonnaz, in the person of Mrs Cindy Voide-Lüthi, again with an essentially "sales" objective
- MRAG => finally, the integration in this structure of promotion in foreign markets, which requires the creation of concrete offers to be marketed in these markets.

Partners for the **Swiss market**: NVRM, Nendaz Tourisme. Initial cost allocation 2/5 each for the latter and 1/5 for Veysonnaz Tourisme. This allocation has now passed to 1/3 each and will have an impact on the present financial exercise.

Partnership MRAG with Nendaz Tourisme, remain in the same situation. Until the year under review, the breakdown was 2/3 for Nendaz and 1/3 for Veysonnaz. From now on we will pay equally (50/50)

Marketing resources amount to approximately CHF 100'000.-. It is a great opportunity to benefit from the resources made available by MRAG. We work on 360 degree campaigns through all channels. Themes are prioritized and provide great sales tools.

### **Presentation of MRAG ; Matterhorn Region AG**

Description : a regional centre of competence for the sale and marketing of local tourist products, under the Valais brand. Veysonnaz is an entity among other players in the Canton. This gives us the opportunity to open to new markets, which would be impossible for a structure of our size to do alone. MRAG provides its partners with a fully functioning market place. This platform is still under development. At present, it already offers accommodation and skiing on a single platform.

Nendaz and Veysonnaz are represented within MRAG's marketing commission. This allows us to focus on our priority markets and themes and MRAG puts us in direct contact with the relevant authorities (media, tour-operators (TO), Fam Trip).

JRF gives the floor to Mme Cindy Voide-Lüthi who explained to the assembly the operational actions she is taking, in the framework of our collaboration with MRAG :

Multi-level work and collaboration with different teams:

- **Product development** : each market has specific needs, we need to adapt our offers to the target clientele and propose them to TOs.
- **Reservations** : the requests come to Cindy. She cites the example of Nendaz Trekking, which she manages as a regular booking, but adds the accompaniment of a guide. If the request is confirmed, Cindy sets up actions with local partners to ensure that the groups are welcomed in the best possible way.
- **Market Manager** : Each market has its own manager (Asia, EU, America). Cindy is the reference person for all questions specific to the destinations of Nendaz or Veysonnaz. She organizes FAM trips -> familiarization trips for TOs, welcomes them, accompanies them on their visit to the region and puts them in contact with the various local partners.

Jasmine takes over the floor and introduces the other MRAG partners in 2020-21 :

Aletsch Arena – Barryland - Brig-Simplon - Transport ferroviaire Zermatt - Les Celliers de Sion – Leukerbad - Région Dents du Midi - Saas Fee – TMR - Nendaz – Veysonnaz – Thyon Région – Crans Montana

Valais Wallis Promotion is also a partner and makes its teams available for the European markets.

Cindy is responsible for sales and Jasmine for marketing. JRF handles the press trips, and adapts the programs according to requests. The trips are often split between Nendaz and Veysonnaz with 1 night in each destination.

She then presents different videos made by journalists, representing different themes and markets

1st : NL, television : product ski Nendaz and Veysonnaz

2nd : GB, summer product for all destinations MRAG, each having put forward a different activity, hiking for Nendaz and Veysonnaz

3rd : GB, former top athlete who tests skiing in Veysonnaz

4th : GB, product summer yoga and bisse footpaths in Veysonnaz + other destinations MRAG

Cindy then takes the floor and develops the "product creation" axis :

- a product can be a simple activity, or
- a combined offer, based on the Highlights, the available infrastructures and possibly an activity :
  - Winter with the special Dare to ski package : 2h00 of ski instruction + equipment rental + ski-pass or the Ski Safari which allows skiers to explore the ski domains of Nendaz and Veysonnaz with an overnight stay in each resort with an organized luggage transfer or the special First Snow offer which combines lift pass and accommodation at very attractive prices.
  - Spring-summer-autumn with special deals like the « Yoga Break in the mountains » in the spring or Nendaz Trekking in summer. In autumn the mushroom workshop was proposed with accommodation and a game menu.

These products are interesting for certain markets and correspond to the criteria sought by MRAG. The ski safari or the Nendaz Trekking are adapted for European customers, over several days. However, Dare to ski, would be particularly suitable for distant markets unfamiliar with skiing.

On the platform [www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch) all these offers can be booked easily in a few clicks of the mouse and without necessarily having to go through the tourist office.

The results of this marketing activity in 20-21 were unfortunately heavily impacted by Covid. Figures to bear in mind:

The hosting of 27 foreign media and 19 TO visits

1 reservation via MRAG and 14 activity reservations via [www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch)

The purpose of this work, in summary: analysis of the strengths of the destination and the available infrastructure => creation of products for a target market => marketing and sales.

In conclusion, Jasmine adds Cindy's participation in various Trade events (between tourism professionals - B2B) to promote our destinations.

**Social networks** : the number of followers is increasing. Presentation on screen of some images taken by the subscribers. Highlights: the Haut de Cry and the sunsets, the mayens, the Mont-Rouge, the bisses. Invitation to all to share images and experiences and especially to use the #veysonnaz

**Accounts** : see p. 28 and following pages of the activity report.

The accounting year ends 31.10.2021. For information, the debtor and creditor situation has been regularized to date, except for the open invoice of CHF 75,000 for the retrocession of tourist taxes from the municipality of Nendaz for holiday property owners located in our tourist area. This amount has been retained in the 2021-22 Budget, in the expectation that the situation will be regularized between the two municipalities.

The tourist taxes collected by the municipality of Sion for the property owners located on our territory have been reassigned. The municipality of Veysonnaz has granted CHF 80,000 to guarantee the financial needs of the SD until the settlement of the municipality of Nendaz. This amount is also included in the 2021-22 Budget.

Expenses are slightly higher due to the hiring of trainees.

Operating expenses remain in line with the Budget.

Not all objectives could be achieved due to uncertain funding.

Funding: holiday taxes => 54% of the Budget and an increase in the municipal share from 10% to 13%

**Auditor's report** : M. Olivier Fournier, the newly appointed auditor is welcomed. Mr. Gustave Grether, auditor for many years, reads the report to the Assembly. He recommends that the submitted accounts be approved and that the committee be discharged.

NFM thanks Olivier and Gustave and opens the floor for questions from the Assembly :

*Why has a provision of CHF 45,000 been made despite the open invoice of CHF 75,000 and the contribution of CHF 80,000 from the municipality of Veysonnaz, which represent two cash inflows.*

JRF : Admittedly, we have registered 2 entries, but in March 2021, the rules of the game changed with the questioning of the agreements that bind the municipalities of Nendaz and Veysonnaz, following the pre-consultative vote of the municipality of Veysonnaz in favour of a merger process with the municipality of Sion. For the time being, no agreement has been reached.

However, the tourist services were provided by our office, without any distinction made between guests based in Nendaz or in Veysonnaz. The municipality of Veysonnaz supports the tourist industry and wants to continue to provide our services, merger or no merger.

*There are nevertheless 2 entries in the accounts, which is unusual.*

*If it is a political question, why is this new 50/50 distribution following the alliance with Sion not also supported by the municipality of Sion?*

JRF : First of all, the merger has not yet been completed. Secondly, the 50/50 split concerns marketing actions, which are not financed by the holiday tax, but by the TPT levied on traders. The tourist services offered to the resort's guests come from holiday taxes.

Following these exchanges, Mr. Baptiste Constantin, Managing Director of Nendaz Tourism, takes to the floor and congratulates JRF and her staff for the energy and passion they have shown.

*Tourism is an exciting but complex business. He assures the audience that Nendaz Tourism is always happy to collaborate with us, to the satisfaction of all guests regardless of their origin.*

*As a representative of the Nendaz development company, he is cautious and asks about the guarantees of payment of these open invoices, because on the Nendaz side, this amount is not included in the Budget.*

JRF : Thank you, we share these views on the collaboration between our two offices. For the accounts, the committee wishes to maintain this amount and we remain hopeful of a payment, as it is due.

Mr Patrick Lathion (PL), President of the municipality of Veysonnaz, intervenes. He first thanks Jasmine and her staff as well as the former President, Mr. David Théoduloz, who is absent this evening, and welcomes the presence of Mr. Baptiste Constantin. He then reminded the Assembly that the delegation agreements signed in 1977 were terminated by letter in March 2021 with effect from the 31st October 2021. The amount of CHF 75,000, allocated exclusively to tourism - entertainment, information - infrastructure, is therefore effectively due for the year under review.

For the year 2021-22, the municipality still hopes to settle this dispute during the year. For as long as the tourist services are provided by Veysonnaz Tourism and not by Nendaz Tourism, the holiday taxes must be retroceded. Legal experts are currently analysing this matter.

The municipality of Nendaz is not considered as a doubtful debtor in the financial year 2020-21 and this amount must be included in the accounts.

NFM calls for a show of hands to **vote** :

- Approval of the activity report : unanimously
- Approval of the accounts 2020-2021 : 1 no, 2 abstentions
- Discharge of the committee : unanimously

She also takes the opportunity to thank David Théoduloz, her predecessor for 12 years.

### **Annual Fee**

The committee proposes to maintain the amounts as in other years, namely:

CHF 40.- for private property owners

CHF 60.- for businesses in Veysonnaz

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

The proposal is accepted unanimously.

### **Budget 2021-22**

Presentation according to the activity report.

As mentioned before, the CHF 75'000.- The budget includes the refund of the holiday tax from the municipality of Nendaz. The service to those subject to the tax must be provided.

Increased amount of promotional material due to the Moutier fair in November 2022, where Veysonnaz is guest of honour.

Tourism revenue also up due to the reallocation of the costs of the Bisses shuttle service with Nendaz Tourism.

Marketing : a few one-off operations financed solely by Veysonnaz will be carried out on the Swiss market. We can no longer afford to run joint campaigns with Nendaz Tourisme and NVRM on this market.

Tourist infrastructure: mainly concerns the Magrappé leisure area, winter and summer.

For this exercise, caution is required because the situation is very uncertain.

Before voting, time is given for questions from the Assembly:

*Mr. Baptiste Constantin thanks Patrick Lathion for his intervention. As a representative of the Nendaz development company, he remains pragmatic: a negotiation process exists, but at present the 2022 financial year is already well underway and the amount of CHF 75,000 is far from assured.*

JRF : it is clear that alternatives have been considered, we are foregoing certain investments :

- National Day: reduced program , without fireworks
- Development of the Magrappé winter area: savings of CHF 40'000.-
- Development of the Magrappé summer area: savings of CHF 45'000.-

Unfortunately, these savings are made at the expense of taxpayers.

*What will change compared to what is already in place at the Magrappé? What will be missing?*

JRF : what is already developed will remain, but improvements will not be made, for example the snow project for the Magrappé sledging area or the beach volleyball or pump track.

*Okay, but we don't lose anything then?*

JRF : no, but improvement projects are at risk.

NFM takes the floor again and stresses the importance of this retrocession of holiday taxes, on which Veysonnaz is dependent. These taxes have been paid to Nendaz by the R2 owners, although this money has not been used in accordance with its purpose. For 2021, we will do what is necessary to ensure that this amount is returned. For 2022, there is uncertainty, the R2 owners will receive invoices without knowing if they will receive a refund in the end.

She then requests **approval for the Budget: 3 abstentions**

### **Appointment of the alternate auditor**

According to the statutes, an alternate auditor must be appointed. M. Michel Tobler proposes himself and NFM submits his candidacy to the Assembly. M. Tobler is elected unanimously and thanked.

### **Presentation of Veysonnaz Tourisme's new management**

JRF is enjoying her last days as head of Veysonnaz Tourism. She is thanked and warmly applauded. The other employees remain in place and Veysonnaz Tourism can still count on their experience. The terms of employment have been revised to fill the vacancy left by JRF and a position with a marketing and events profile has been put out to tender. This new position is planned to be filled this summer.

### **Information regarding the local authorities**

PL takes to the floor and begins by informing the Assembly of the **actions undertaken by the commune of Veysonnaz in the field of tourism** :

- Ski bus : since the winter of 21-22 NVRM no longer wishes to offer this facility to its customers. In view of the importance of this service, the municipality has agreed to fund it in full and has taken advantage of the opportunity to serve the village as well => CHF 80'000.-
- The Veysonnaz gondola during the summer : NVRM has asked the municipalities to cover the deficit => CHF 28'300.-. The operation of the gondola in the summer of 2022 is subject to the same conditions and has already been confirmed.
- Private swimming pool: closed in summer 2021 for technical reasons. The municipality has offered all residents and guests of Veysonnaz free entry to the surrounding swimming pools for the amount of CHF 7'000. In other years, the municipality was already financing half of the operating losses.
- Tennis : the technical problem, was luckily under guarantee. End of June 2022 new surfacing will be laid. As this land is not owned by the municipality, a fee of CHF 10,000 per year is due for the building right.
- Covid support for businesses -> vouchers offered, action still ongoing
- Support during events with the collaboration of the municipal works department, the police, loans of tents and various equipment, ...
- Maintenance and signposting => CHF 41'000.-
- Bisse de Vex, rehabilitation following a landslide in the area of the Chity => CHF 10'000.-

It should be noted that, apart from the budget allocated to the development company, approximately CHF 350,000 is financed by the residents and also by part of the holiday tax. This is an enormous effort, which is reaching its limits in relation to the municipality's investment margin.

**Route de Pra** : the implementation phase can finally begin, as of 19.04. This investment represents a budget of 4mio. Access is guaranteed, using the route de l'Arge. Foot traffic will be allowed at all times. The work will be carried out in two stages :

2022 : Pub -> baker's, zone 30 with pavement

2023 : Baker's -> Greppon

In July and August and from December to April, the construction site will be stopped. The aim is to complete the work by the end of December 2023.

**Parking** : The objective remains to get cars out of the resort, especially in high season. Solutions must be found, depending on the different needs :

- long term => the Grangettes car park, forêt de Magrappé
- mid term => route de Pra or forêt de Magrappé
- short term => route de Pra forty spaces, resort centre

the Grangettes car park : NVRM offers private parking spaces for sale or rent.

**Merger** : The municipality of Veysonnaz is too small to continue alone. We lack staff, we can't find people willing to get involved in politics, and we have little real autonomy.

As a result, participatory workshops for the population were organized in 2019 and 2020, with 3 options :

- status quo
- merger with Nendaz
- merger with Sion

The primary assembly was convened for a consultative vote, with a 90% turnout. The proposed merger with Sion was preferred. The vote on the merger will take place in June 2023. In case of acceptance, the new municipality should come into being on 01.01.2025. Following this intervention, some questions are raised :

*If there is a merger with Sion, will there be any consequences with regards to the LAT ?*

PL : no impact. The zone plans are treated separately. We have the example of Les Agettes, where Sion must treat the two plans separately. Furthermore, Veysonnaz does not suffer from oversizing, there is no risk of firm dezoning. To date, five hectares are in a deferred allocation zone, but not in the long term. *Will the Sion - Ours link project be facilitated with the merger?*

PL : not really, this file is piloted by the municipality of Sion and started before the merger project. Sion is showing interest in the mountain but this project is not linked to the merger. To date, the OFT is going to process the oppositions and is waiting for the funding plan.

### **Miscellaneous**

NFM adds that she hopes that solutions will be found at the level of political agreements with Nendaz but insists that the operational level should not know borders and that collaboration at this level is excellent.

Final intervention :

*Greetings to PL and congratulations for the huge support of the municipality. The new distribution of tourism promotion costs is unfavourable. Indeed, the accommodation taxes paid by the R2 owners located in Nendaz or the TPT by the businesses, are not retroceded in our region, despite this new distribution. This is absolutely not normal. I am putting this observation on the table for consideration and do not ask for any particular response.*

NFM : thanks him for his contribution and closes the meeting at 21h20. The aperitif is served.

LINK TO THE ACTIVITY REPORT: [www.veysonnaz.ch/agsd](http://www.veysonnaz.ch/agsd)