

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:04

Members Present: Jeff Geisler, Amy Bridges, Brandon Higgins, Jim Masek, Willard Whitson, Dave Long, Mary Jaeger-Gale, Kitty McCammon (Phone)

Members Absent: Chuck Martell, Richard Lundy

Ex-Officos Present: Paula Roach, Eddie Holland

Ex-Officos Absent: ----

Others Present: Don Cason, Taylor Hardin, Karen Tegen, Emily Ostertag, Destination by Design (1), The Agency (2), Media (1), Merri Oxley

Welcome New Board Member: Welcome Brandon Higgin – soil and water, farmers market, c-saw hill farm

Public Comments: -----

Agenda (changes if necessary): Move finance committee to the end of the committee list

Approval: 1st: Jeff Geisler
2nd: Jim Masek

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary): -----

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek
2nd: Jeff Gesiler

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

- January 12k over last year. If we collect what we did last year, will exceed 1.5 million
- Will wrap up Marketing under budget
- below budget in most-all categories
- Strategic plan over budget
- 200k increase over budget for cash fund balance

Approval: 1st: Mary Jaeger-Gale
2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:

- Cycle NC – all towns have worked together to put out an RFP for cycle NC in 2020 and 2021
- Met with senator hise and went through asset plan
- attended the NC Main st conference
- IPDC Board meeting – agritourism

Welcome Center Update:

- Attendance Up

- Carpets cleaned
- More local visitors

Marketing Update:

- Travel guide in in final stages of edits
- Goal for release is end of April
- Ad placements in March and April edition of Our State Magazine
- Upcoming ads in TIEC visitor guide and USA today

The Agency Presentation

- Social media increase
- Working on influencer engagement
- Presented overview of marketing plan
 - o Campaign idea of “Simple Times”
 - o The Agency to make changes and re-present to the Marketing committee

Destination by Design Presentation

- Provided an update on the RTP grant pre-application
- Provided overall updates for the Countywide connections, main street region, and mountain region.
- Capital campaign: Rutherford bound website coming end of April, print materials in the works

Committee Reports

Marketing:

2/21/19

Committee and The Agency participated in a brand workshop

2/21/19

- Travel Guide discussion
- Reviewed current program of work during interim
- Listened to presentation from The Agency on the 2019-2020 budget and the 2019-2020 marketing plan
- The committee approved recommendations for the 2019-2020 budget
- Committee Agreed for The Agency to present Marketing plan and “simple times” campaign at Board Meeting

Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Plan Status Update
- Reviewed Grant Program
- Discussed reporting and accountability
- Reviewed grant request from the Town of Rutherfordton
- Discussed Don’s meetings in Raleigh on March 8th
- Discussed 2019-2020 budget line items relating to committee

TAF:

- Discussed the possibilities of TDA and TAF partnering together to assist in the Tourism Master Plan funding Campaign.
- TAF to evaluate internal responsibilities of staffing for:

- Funding receipts, accountability, and reporting
- Assist in fundraising efforts
- Attend community festivals to promote Tourism Master Plan and funding opportunities

Grant:

- Reviewed Grant Application and Program
- Reviewed 2018-2019 recipients and allocated dollars
- Discussed 2019-2020 budget line item
- Committee approved recommendations for the budget

Information committee:

- The renovations to the WCLL have been delayed. The Town of Lake Lure is sending out bid requests in November or December of 2019.
- Review Visitor Quantities and Experience
 - Don announced that the overall attendance has been up from previous years
- Property Inspection: Committee completed a walkthrough of the building to determine upgrades and repairs that need implemented

- 2019-2020 Budget: Committee recommends that the FY 2019-2020 Budget for the Welcome Center remains the same as the previous years

Wayfinding:

- Wayfinding Program Status Report: given by Karen Tegen
 - Forest City: Most signs in ground, they are working with contracting company to complete remaining signs.
 - Rutherfordton & Spindale: Complete
 - Ellenboro, Bostic, Ruth: Locations chosen, awaiting Ruth logo to send package to ACSM

- Financial Status Update: presented by Don Cason
 - Review of Legal Status
 - Overall Financial Review
 - Discussed legal issues
 - Determine attorney's presence at next board meeting: the committee recommends the lawyer from Asheville be a guest at the next board meeting

- Jim Masek inquired about the verbiage on the sign on Washington Street; and expressed concern about foliage blocking the Wayfinding sign in front of the courthouse. Karen will research.

- Committee Approved Don's recommendations for the 2019-2020 Wayfinding budget.

Executive:

- Provided Wayfinding Update – Provided Installation Time-line and reviewed timeline for Ruth, Ellenboro and Bostic
- Reviewed Marketing– Reviewed Marketing Programs and Results. Discussed The Agency and Marketing Plan program of work
- Board Meeting Agenda – Approved

- Provided TDA Tourism Master Plan Update – Reviewed current progress and update. Towns continue to support the TDA program of work
- Keep Rutherford County Beautiful - Summary Review and Need TDA Committee – Agreed for TDA to increase activity
- Provided TDA Community Grant Update
- Finance Committee – Review March RFF and 2019-2020 Budget
- Board Member Seat – Barbara Meliski seat available

KRCB: (Admin)

- Discussed potential use of cameras on some of the more polluted streets
- Discussed the need for county-wide policy changes
- Trash outside restaurants and stores
- Driver's Ed education
- "pick-up around your business" campaign
- The litter and marketing committees are to present their budgets at the next full KRCB Comm. Mtg. on 4-18-19
- Don met with the TDA lawyer to learn about how to form a 501c3, and that she recommended to hire an accountant to assist
- Don and Karen met with regional DOT members to discuss details of Adopt and Sponsor-A-Highway programs.

Any Directives Given (To whom and what):

- Brad Teague to speak with school Principals and Leadership Team Meetings
- Admin committee is to work with the Marketing Committee to establish community communications and advertising
- Karen T. is to contact TAF to see how they formed their 501c3
- Karen P. and Doug to help figure out how the towns can form a unified, county-wide policy for litter clean up.
- Karen T. to contact Litter and Marketing Committee chairs to submit a draft of their funds requests (budget needs) for 2019-2020

Finance:

- Reviewed STR program and status
 - STR and Host Compliance Merger
 - Letter to be sent out to properties
- Reviewed 2018-2019 RFF
- Reviewed 2019-2020 Budget
- Reviewed budget process and timeline
 - April 4th – Board reviews budget draft
 - May 16th – Board votes to take budget to public hearing
 - June 20th - Public hearing of budget and vote to approve 2019-2020 budget
- All committees have met over their piece of dollars and recommended these numbers

Announcements:

Kid senses factory expansion

Chimney Rock Easter service

FC Extravaganza egg hunt Saturday before Easter

Closed Session: G.S 143-318.11 Attorney-Client Privilege

Motion to enter Closed Session G.S 143-318.11 Attorney Client privilege

**Approval: 1st: Mary Jaeger
2nd: Amy Bridges**

Motion Passed.

Willard mention that Taylor will be staying for note taking purposes

Motion to end Closed Session G.S 143-318.11 Attorney Client privilege

**Approval: 1st: Amy Bridges
2nd: Lynn Brown**

Motion Passed.

Motion to resume regular session

**Approval: 1st: Lynn Brown
2nd: Jeff Geisler**

Motion Passed.

Motion that TDA discontinue any legal action against J.M. Teague Engineering

**Approval: 1st: Jim Masek
2nd: Amy Bridges**

Motion Passed.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:36pm