

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:07

Members Present: Amy Bridges, Barbara Meliski, Dave Long, Diane Barrett, Lynn Brown, Richard Lundy, Tammy Martell, Willard Whitson

Members Absent: Ruthie Hanson

Ex-Officos Present: Paula Roach, Eddie Holland

Ex-Officos Absent: -

Others Present: Candace Hladick, Don Cason, Karen Tegen, Taylor Hardin, Media (1), Michelle Yelton

Public Comments: ---

Agenda(changes if necessary): December 29th Board Meeting discussion. Insert after Tourism Strategic Plan

Approval: 1st: Amy Bridges

2nd: Diane Barrett

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary): No changes

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Willard Whitson

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

- We have adjusted RFF for Fire - Dropped Decembers projections by 50%
- January and February reduced also to cover a slow pick up
- Good Spring projected
- All lines on budget

Approval: 1st: Diane Barrett

2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Don Cason – Tourism Strategic Plan

- Tourism Strategic Plan committee is just a group to make recommendations to the board
- Two meeting so far- very well attended - First was for ideas and processes and second interviews of five companies group voted and selected their favorite group
- Willard: Group has an almost unanimous recommendation of Destination by Design (DbD)
- Barbara: Many groups formed but this group has really impressed me. All for it 100%. We need this and its finally happening. DbD took us from start to finish.
- Richard: Their budget will be split into two budget cycles.
- Willard: Much open discussion and heartfelt thoughts.
- Lynn: Liked them a lot - more than just a vision it is an execution plan.
- Willard: they can complement what other organizations are doing
- Richard: Encouraged with grant opportunities. DbD can help us with that
- Tammy: Impressed. Designs belonging to us need to be clarified.
- Doug: 1) Thank you for TDAs vision to incorporate. We need to develop ourselves to be a tourism destination. Financial and revenue stream is positive. Encourage TDA to make financial investments.

- Scott: from a regional perspective, working on a four county plan. DbD does not just use the Hub and Stoke method. They bring a nice, fresh and exciting approach to this county.
- Diane: Eric was excited. Thoroughly impressed.

Motion to enter into a contract with Destination by Design not to exceed \$88,000.00 to be split over two budget years.

First: Willard Whitson

Second: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:

- Visited with various towns
- Meetings regarding Wayfinding
- WEG Update
- Fire Communications
- Current and future planning

Welcome Center Update:

- Visitor numbers continued to be up from last year despite the fire.

Marketing Update:

- October and November were big months for content
- Rutherfordton and Lake Lure got awards
- Fire Communication
- Created Fire FAQ
- Romantic Asheville Media Tour
- German Media
- Our State Magazine took pictures for October 2017
- Created TOYL
- Winter
- Holiday Content - Romantic Asheville named Forest City number 1 Christmas lights for the second year
- Promoting cozy mountain getaways
- Stay in contact with the TDA Facebook page

Committee Reports

Marketing:

- TOLY Toolkit
- Fall and Holiday campaign recaps and updates
- Media buy plan update and ROI FY 15-16 Report
- Vacation itineraries being developed
- Priorities of McConnell Group

TAF:

- Hidden Floor of Gold exhibit at the Mint Site installed
- Willard is working on the raffle display case to be installed Late January/Early February
- Gold trail - Submitted for Facebook grant and Blue Ridge Mountain Host grant.

Website:

- Sent revisions for site map. Content development will be sent next.

Finance:

- Reviewed the RFF report

- Worked with Paula to review Audit
- Getting ready for budget for 2017-2018

Information:

- Mobile unit discussion - board would need to declare as surplus
- Decided to give marketing committee to decide to use or now
- Visitor experience form
- Stakeholder books

Executive:

- Approved Board Agenda
- Reviewed RFF
- Discussed revenue streams and TDA programs
- Reviewed RCTDA year-end, June 30, 2016 Audit
- Overview of all committees
- Overview of Tourism Strategic Plan
- Party Rock Fire
- Rutherford County and the World equestrian Games

Wayfinding:

- ACSM tour: Don presented. Stated that the company seemed very professional, and that he felt the project was in good hands.
- County sign colors: To be sure the color selection is completely approved, Steve Garrison will be asked if he is okay with it, and the Wayfinding Committee will vote their approval.
- Municipality Master plans: Lake Lure/Chimney Rock are waiting on their next town council meeting to vote approval
- Forest City: will not be ready to move forward until January of 2017
- Spindale: Awaiting finalizing of their new branding which should be in November 2016
- Rutherfordton: Meeting held with Doug Barrick on 10-25-16, the town is completely ready Ruth/Bostic/Ellenboro: Still need agreements signed
- Air markings Update: Candace reported that the 99's are still waiting on enough paint from the DOT to complete the project.
- Historic Markers Project: Karen reported an overview of the project idea. Candace and Karen will soon be touring the county to observe the markers.

JM Teague Update

- Been to ACSM twice
- Seen first sign actually made
- Signs ready for Rutherfordton installed late January/early February
- County sign - encroachment agreement signed 12/15/16
- Forest City and Spindale - January
- Air markings suspended until next year when overlay complete
- Historic Markers Tour
- Rutherfordton, Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Staked.

Audit: Paula Roach

- pg 1. Auditors report
- pg 3. Management discussion and analysis - narrative explaining what happened
- pg 12. Shows Fund Balance at the end of June: 43% Fund balance of 1 million operating budget. (normally only 25%)
- pg 13 - end. Shows accounting principles, risk and liability.
- Audit is on county website

Motion to accept the Audit as presented
First: Lynn Brown; Second: Tammy Martell
Motion Passed.

Motion to cancel December 29th Board Meeting

First: Tammy Martell
Second: Lynn Brown
Motion Passed.

Announcements:

- Richard- Lake Lure fundraiser on January 21st at Rumbling Bald Resort for the firefighters
- Willard - Kid senses in planning an expansion
 - Every Saturday Kids events at the Woodrow Jones Building (Ages 8-14)

Meeting Adjourned: 1:56 pm

1st: Diane Barrett; 2nd: Lynn Brown
Motion Passed.

Next meeting February 9th 2017 at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones Building