

Date: .....2/20/20.....  
Approved as Minutes: .....4/2/20.....

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority  
Board Meeting**

**Call to Order:** 12:08 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mary Jaeger-Gale, Dave Long, Willard Whitson, Brandon Higgins, Rocky Guarriello, Kitty McCammon, Jim Masek, Janet Mason, Jeff Geisler, and Richard Lundy

**Members Absent:** David Hislop

**Ex-Officos Present:** Eddie Holland

**Ex-Officos Absent:** Paula Roach

**Others Present:** Don Cason, Taylor Hardin, Emily Ostertag, Destination by Design (2), PMA Consulting (2), The Agency (2), Media (1)

**Public Comments:** -----

**Additions / Deletions from Agenda:** -----

**Motion to approve Agenda:**

**Approval:** 1st: Dave Long  
2nd: Kitty McCammon

Motion Passed.

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

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

Motion Passed.

**Strategic Plan Update:**

**Committee Update:**

- Summarization of the Rutherford Bound Partnership and the kick-off meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Outlined each partners' program of work, and introduced each partner for their presentations.

**Rutherford Bound Partners Presentations:**

**Destination by Design**

- Summarized each partners' role in the Rutherford Bound partnership  
PMA Consulting – Strategy for larger sponsors and industry donations

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The Agency – Strategy for reaching the public (Rutherford County Citizens)

- Reviewed total Rutherford Bound budget

5 Capital Projects:

Chimney Rock Village Streetscape

Construction documents have been submitted to NCDOT. One the documents are approved; the project will be ready to go out to bid

- Rocky Broad Riverwalk

The village has signed a \$30,000 contract with a surveyor, who committed 40 business days to produce the survey.

The preliminary design will be completed once the survey is submitted

- Spindale Streetscape Council approve \$750,000 contract for Phase I
- Just received new survey data
- Reviewed layout of the street (ramps, landscaping, sidewalks, etc.)

- Thermal Belt Rail Trail / Purple Martin Connector
  - The connector will go up Oak St. and across Highway 74
  - The procedure for a safe crossing will be discussed with NCDOT March 5<sup>th</sup> 2020, and may result in changing the route
  - DbD will be given a tour of the entire trail corridor to scope out needed enhancements
- Paddle Trail
  - Work on the paddle trail is waiting on several grants
  - DbD is prepared to being work on both the 221 and 221-A access points

### The Agency

- Asset Development is the current stage of The Agency's program of work
- Working in the message that will reach the public
  - Video Production (testimonials, etc.)
  - Rutherford Bound Promo Items (tents, table top displays, stickers, t-shirts)
  - Project Barometer for specific donations
- Reviewed program of work timeline
- iHeart Media will be helping to promote events two-weeks out
- WNCW campaigns for donations will begin in April
- The 'Round-Up' partnership with Ingles will begin in April, as well
  - These campaigns will go through October, per the current budget
- Showed (3) videos produced by Destination by Design

### PMA Consulting

- Meet with key stakeholders within each community
- Create and initiate relationships for a 20/10/5 concept

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- Provide specific recommendations on the best course of action for future successful campaign activity
- Maximize corporate investments (start with top 10 industries and top 5 foundations)
- Focus on individuals and families with high net worth (20)
- Corporate Funders
  - Identify key corporate funders that best align with the campaign
  - Build RCTDA's progress to enhance existing prospect list
  - Promote three overall goals
    - Premier travel destination
    - Quality of life
    - Workforce attraction
- Create a specific sponsorship package for corporations
- Foundation Relations and Grants
  - Research local/state/national foundations for grant funding
  - Train and coach RCTDA board and staff on solicitation strategies
  - Refine/adjust campaign collateral for major gift fundraising
- **TAF / Aplos Update:**
  - Summarized relationship between the TDA and TAF, as Rutherford Bound funds continue to be collected
  - TAF has been hired to track all Capital Campaign funds through an accounting software called Aplos
  - Aplos' functions were summarized, and how these functions will meet our needs
  - The Rutherford Bound online donation form is very close to going live

**Finance Report:**

- Occupancy tax for December and January was almost \$29,000 over last year
- Total funds for December and January are also over budget
- There have been a lot of new lodging destinations opening in the county, which may be some of the reason why our occupancy tax receipts are growing, as well as STR Monitoring Program and Tourism Growth
  - RFF Summary
    - Revenues are up
    - Budgeted expenses are on par with estimates, or below
    - Roughly there will be a \$500,000 increase in our fund balance
    - There should be a \$1.2 million fund balance at the end of this year

**Motion to approve Financial Report:**

**Approval:** 1st: Jeff Geisler

2nd: Richard Lundy

Motion Passed.

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**Executive Director Report:**

Highlights:

- The TDA participated in the Third Annual Isothermal Legislative Breakfast. Our leaders discussed with legislation the expansion of highway 74 to be designated as a future interstate
- Lake Lure has officially hired three separate entities to help with the work needed on the dam, and other infrastructure
- The TDA produced videos that were submitted for the HGTV whole-town makeover. The videos for Rutherfordton, Spindale, and Chimney Rock/Lake Lure were submitted Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> for the competition.
- The TDA and Mary Jaeger-Gale attended the Southeastern Tourism Society Conference, which allowed us to network with Jack Johnson from Destination International. He presented on the involvement of TDA's within their communities as more than just a marketing resource, and TDA's need to become more of an added value to their communities. That is exactly what we are doing.

**Welcome Center Update:**

- Visitation is about as expected for the winter months
- Karen Tegen, Welcome Center Manager, is out for the next 6 weeks for knee surgery

**Marketing Report:**

- Two ads. were placed this month, one in Visit NC's Travel Guide and the other was in Our State Magazine's March edition
- The Agency presented their 2020 Marketing Plan to the committee, which was approved
- The committee also approved a new logo for external marketing of the TDA (Lake Lure and the Blue Ridge Foothills) and will be featured on the cover of the 2020 County-Wide travel guide
- The 2020 Travel Guide will be printed and ready for distribution mid to late March
- TDA staff and The Agency produced an instructional guide for stakeholders to submit events and informational changes to the website. This will be featured in the next stakeholder newsletter, and discussed at the next Coffee Talk, March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The Agency requested a budget increase of \$22,150 to cover television commercial, digital ad., and public radio ad. costs, as well as video editing expenses for the TBRT

**Budget Amendment:**

**Motion to move \$22,150 from Fund Balance to the Advertising and Marketing line item (70-6520-370-00-000)**

1<sup>st</sup>: Dave Long

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jim Masek

**Motion approved.**

**Committee Updates:**

**Agri-Tourism:**

- The committee met and discussed product development with local farms, and how they will become destination assets
- The major focus of the committee meeting was how to bring locally produced food to local restaurants
- TDA staff and board members attended the Agri-Tourism Conference in Asheville

**Retire NC:**

- The committee decided they would like to rethink the Retire NC effort to not just focus on retirees, but also millennials, families, workforce recruitment, etc. The program will change its name to Relocate Rutherford, unofficially, and Retire NC remain as part of the program.

**Information:**

- Overview of Welcome Center status presented by Karen. This included an update on renovations, (still undetermined date), the part-time information specialist is expecting, but wishes to remain employed until and shortly after the birth, and there will be an iPad set up as a digital guest book sign in.
- Discussion on the Welcome Center's new outside Deep-cleaning person: services seem to be going well and are beneficial
- Budget discussion: Approval by all members to allot the same amount as last year for the Building Maintenance and Janitorial line items

**Keep Rutherford County Beautiful:**

- The committee is allocating some money for paid litter pick-ups, which cost \$100 per mile and include both sides of the road
- The refunded money from the surveillance camera project which will be used to pay for the hired pick-ups

**Executive:**

- Wayfinding Update – Installation to be complete by March
- Marketing Update – 2020-2021 Plan and Budget in process
- Tourism Plan – Rutherford Bound Partners to present program of work at 2/20 Board Meeting
- TAF – TAF/TDA training with Aplos complete
- Agri-Tourism – Committee to present program of work
- Retire NC – Committee to change program of work to Relocate Rutherford

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- Board Agenda – Reviewed Board Agenda
- Feb. RFF – Reviewed Feb. RFF

**Announcements:**

- Willard Whitson gave an update of the Kid Senses Factory construction
- Mary Jaeger-Gale gave an update on the Chimney Rock State Park construction
- Don Cason summarized the updates on the potential school calendar law changes

**Motion to enter Closed Session:**

1<sup>st</sup>: Kitty McCammon

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Long

**Motion approved.**

**Motion to end Closed Session:**

1<sup>st</sup>: Mary Jaeger-Gale

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Long

**Motion approved.**

**Motion to resume Regular Session:**

1<sup>st</sup>: Richard Lundy

2<sup>nd</sup>: Janet Mason

**Motion approved.**

**Action discussed**

- Create new full-time position: Administrative Support, have Emily Ostertag fill the position
- Hire part-time or contractor (Program Assistant)
- 

**Motion to promote Emily Ostertag to full time position of Administrative Support**

1<sup>st</sup>: Kitty McCammon

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Long

**Motion approved.**

**Motion to hire a part time program assistant or contractor**

1<sup>st</sup>: Janet Mason

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jim Masek

**Motion approved.**

**Meeting Adjourned:** 2:35 p.m.

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