

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:04

Members Present: Amy Bridges, Barbara Meliski, Dave Long, Diane Barrett, Kitty McCammon, Lynn Brown, Richard Lundy, Ruthie Hanson, Chuck Martell

Members Absent: Willard Whitson

Ex-Officos Present: Eddie Holland

Ex-Officos Absent: Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Taylor Hardin, Amy Brevard, Leniece Lane, Merri Oxley, Media (1),

Public Comments: ----

Agenda (changes if necessary): ---

Approval: 1st: Diane Barrett
2nd: Chuck Martell

Motion Passed.

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

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski
2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

RFF shows summary

Expenses – all areas good and coming in on plan

November receipts/December payment is up from prior year \$16,314 or 35% (Last year was the Party Rock Fire)

November receipts/December payment year to date actual is over budget by \$4,000 or 0.6%

November receipts/December payment year to date is \$50,000 over last year or 8%

Approval: 1st: Diane Barrett
2nd: Ruthie Hanson

Motion Passed.

Don Cason – Tourism Strategic Plan

DbD and TDA staff coordination plan in process

Tourism Plan process to be completed by June 30th 2018

The Towns of Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, Rutherfordton, and Spindale have formed steering committees and initial meetings are complete. Chimney Rock and Lake Lure second round meetings complete. Rutherfordton and Spindale second round meetings on 2/8/18

DbD is evaluating and coordinating steering committee input and direction

TDA Board and TAC meeting to take place in late March

Community meetings April 5th and 12th

Implementation and funding campaign

Initial work has begun.

Executive Director Report:

- Attended several council meetings
- Attended Chimney Rock and Lake Lure WEG Meeting
- Attended Lake Lure Tourism Steering Committee Update – DbD provided status update
- Attended Blue Ridge area meeting – Overview of potential programs and grants
- Attended Thermal Belt Rail Trail meeting – Trail Branding and updates and timeline
- TDA Coffee Talks in Lake Lure and Forest City – Presented TDA Updates
- County Commissioner Quarterly TDA Review – Presented TDA Update
- Attended Travel and Tourism Coalition Board Meeting – Legislative and Marketing Update

Welcome Center Update:

- Continuing to monitor attendance as the season starts to pick back up.

Marketing Update:

Amy:

- Travel guide update
 - April release date
 - Aditorial program – \$11,000 to offset some printing cost
- Spring ad campaigns launched
- Featured in: BRMH, Southern Travel, TIEC guide, Google ads, Ourstate
- Coffee talks
 - 25+ Lake Lure
 - 35+ in Forest City
- SEO program – Lite Program
 - Started in January
 - Everything improving
- Wedding page
 - Resources included: Lodging, Events, Catering, Bakery, Etc.

Leniece:

- Christmas blog
 - Mini travel guide: “mid-season guide”
- Holiday Event landing page
- Working on a spring guide
- Simpleview SEO
 - Broken links
 - Mis-spellings
 - Organic Searches
 - Unique searching
 - Geographic break-down

Committee Reports

Marketing:

- Vacation guide update
- Website SEO
- WEG Marketing
- 2018-2019 marketing budget

TAF:

- TAF hired Deborah Millikan as the new Bechtler House Marketing Coordinator
- David Cameron is designing an acrylic covering for over the piano keys and a bigger, more visible donation box for the entry.
- Maintenance was completed on the Hidden Floor of Gold display at Mint Site

Finance:

No meeting

Grant:

No meeting

Information:

- Construction changes that are pending with LL
- Purchase of tent/canopy for events - Willard recommended we revisit this topic at the next meeting
- Hiring a part-time employee for WCLL- Approved by committee, Don to take action
- Upcoming 2018-2019 Budget

Weg committee:

A2D – online – unlimited users

BOARD AGREES TO PROVIDE THE PROGRAM FOR FREE

- Richard: "Looking for a way to support education." Asked Chuck to make a proposal.

- Chuck: "Last year, horses (16) were established in Polk County as a fund raiser. Need to get in the cue if we are going to do this. Dave Long has reached out to Janet Mason, Joe Maimone, Tom Keever, and Walter Dalton – email back and forth and phone calls. Schools expressed excitement."

Motion that we approve the purchase for 7 horses at \$11,800 pending school's ability to get done in time AND that we can auction the horses off at WEG.

1st: Diane Barrett

2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Motion to allocate the \$11800 from FB to purchase the horses if all participating parties approve.

1st: Diane Barrett

2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

Committee Reports Cont'd

Executive Committee:

Commissioner: - Keep Rutherford County Beautiful

.25 percent sales tax to schools – TDA is in support

Provided Wayfinding Update – Discussed potential time-line for completion

Reviewed Marketing Committee meeting and Website Optimization – Reviewed marketing progress and discussed success of coffee talks

Provided update on staff progress on projects

Provided WEG update – Discussed Hospitality Training. Trash and Community clean-up, WEG Marketing

Provided Welcome Center staff update and reviewed Welcome Center renovation project

Reviewed board meeting agenda

Provided TDA Tourism Master Plan Update – All towns are in planning process

Brainstormed potential projects for 2018-2019

TDA RFF Review

Announcements:

No announcements

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

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Chuck Martell

Motion Passed.

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

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Amy Bridges

Motion Passed.

No Action Taken.

Motion to enter Closed Session G.S 143-318.11(Personnel)

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliksi

2nd: Lynn Brown

Motion Passed.

Motion to end Closed Session G.S 143-318.11(Personnel)

Approval: 1st: Amy Bridges

2nd: Diane Barrett

Motion Passed.

No Action Taken.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:21

Next meeting Thursday March 22nd
at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones Building