

July 25th, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes
Approved September 5th, 2019

Call to Order: 12:06

Members Present: Mary Jaeger-Gale, Jim Masek, Richard Lundy, Willard Whitson, Dave Long, Jeff Geisler, Brandon Higgins

Members Absent: Kitty McCammon

Ex-Officos Present: Eddie Holland

Ex-Officos Absent: Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Taylor Hardin, Karen Tegen, Emily Ostertag, Caroline Edwards and Deborah Milliken (TAF), and Media (1)

Public Comments: -----

Agenda (changes if necessary): Move TAF report after prior minutes approval

Approval: 1st: Richard Lundy

2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary):

Approval: 1st: Dave Long

2nd: Brandon Higgins

Motion Passed.

TAF Committee:

- Plan to fundraise for the Tourism Master Plan
- Partnering with TAF

TAF Presentation:

- Caroline Edwards and Deborah Milliken
- Accept and track funds donated to TDA by:
 - o Deborah will use APLOS software to track and receive funds
 - o Funds can be designated by request
 - o Produces receipts as tax deductible donations
 - o One campaign that encompasses six separate campaigns
 - o 15-year program
- Responsibilities Description:
 - o Maintain fund accountability in real-time
 - o Each community is represented in the software

- Coordinate and assist in recruiting volunteers, host booth, etc.
- Re-evaluation after 3 months
- Designated office in Bechtler House
- Deborah will report directly to the TDA through TAF
- TDA will have oversight on daily operations
- Cost to implement APLOS was \$4,500 for the first year, plus a \$3,500 yearly subscription fee
- Should only take 6 weeks to setup software—target date to have it up-and-running is Sept. 1st

Motion to enter into negotiations regarding a contract with TAF:

Approval: 1st: Richard Lundy

2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

2019-2020 Board Updates:

Review of 2019-2020 Board Handbook

Sign conflict of interest statements

2019-2020 board dates

RCTDA Board Meetings:

All Board Meetings are held in the Woodrow Jones Building conference room at 12:00 noon unless otherwise noted.

July 25th, 2019 – Rutherfordton Town Hall	February 20th, 2020
September 5th, 2019	April 2nd, 2020
October 17th, 2019	May 14th, 2020
December 5th, 2019	June 18th, 2020 (Public Hearing)
January 9th, 2020	July 30th, 2020 (First meeting of FY 20-21)

RCTDA Executive Committee Meetings:

Meetings are held one week prior to board meeting at the Woodrow Jones Building offices at 3:00 pm unless otherwise noted.

July 18th, 2019	March 26th, 2020
August 29th, 2019	May 7th, 2020
October 10th, 2019	June 11th, 2020
November 28th, 2019	July 23rd, 2020 (First meeting of FY 20-21)
January 2nd, 2020	
February 13th, 2020	

Motion to accept the 2019-2020 board dates as presented

Approval: 1st: Jeff Geisler

2nd: Jim Masek

Motion Passed.

2019-2020 Committees

Executive-DON	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com
Richard Lundy	rlundy@tryon.com

Grant-EMILY	
Richard Lundy	rlundy@tryon.com
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com

Tourism Strategic Plan-DON	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com
Richard Lundy	rlundy@tryon.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com

Information-KAREN	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com

Marketing-TAYLOR	
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com
Richard Lundy	rlundy@tryon.com

Retire NC-KAREN	
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com

Agritourism-TAYLOR	
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Brandon Higgins	brandon.higgins@rutherfordcountync.gov

Keep RC Beautiful-KAREN	
Brandon Higgins	brandon.higgins@rutherfordcountync.gov

Finance-TAYLOR	
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com

TAF	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com

Motion to vote on the slate of committees as presented:

Approval: 1st: Richard Lundy
2nd: Brandon Higgins
Motion Passed.

2019-2020 board positions

- Mary Jaeger-Gale nominated Willard Whitson as Chair
- Mary Jaeger-Gale nominated Dave Long as 1st Vice Chair
- Mary Jaeger-Gale nominated Richard Lundy as 2nd Vice Chair
- Jim Masek nominated Jeff Geisler as Treasurer
- Brandon Higgins nominated Jim Masek as Secretary

** All nominated members accepted nominations*

Motion to accept nominations as presented

Approval: 1st: Richard Lundy
2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale
Motion Passed.

The TDA Board will make a recommendation by unanimous vote for Willard Whitson to be the 2019-2020 TDA Board Chair, to the county commissioners to be voted on at the August 5th meeting

**Taylor will send unanimous recommendation to Hazel Haynes, county clerk.*

Finance Report:

- Overall revenues continue to grow
- 15% increase for June Occupancy Tax collections over last year

- Air BnB is having a positive impact on our growth
- Collections in Rutherford County for Air BnB grew 85% in one year
- STR has helped to facilitate this increase by prompting accountability
The TDA is partnered with the county's Finance and Revenue Department to manage Occupancy Tax collection
 - Initially sent 298 letters to non-compliant, vacation rental property owners: 10 recognized their delinquency and agreed to be in compliance

2018-2019 Year End RFF

- \$200,000 revenue increase
- Under budget in marketing and advertising, office expenses, wages, etc.
- \$1,258,000 fund balance, which is \$300,000 over the projected fund balance

Motion to approve finance report:

Approval: 1st: Brandon Higgins

2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:

Highlights:

- Meetings with potential Tourism Plan partners
- Facilitating partnership with TAF
- TDA sponsored Owl's Baseball game

Welcome Center Update:

Increased traffic

- Very busy with visitors—500 visitors on one Saturday in July
- A lot of visitors have been coming from Raleigh, Charlotte, Greenville, Spartanburg and taking day trips from Asheville
- A lot of visitors have also come from abroad, such as Germany and England
- Top attractions are Chimney Rock State Park, Lake Lure Tours, the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge, etc.

Tourism Strategic Plan:

Destination by Design met with Tourism Advisory Committee

Tourism Strategic Plan:

- Lake Lure Board Walk will move forward in September, with construction starting in Dec. TDA is allocating \$100K to this project
- Chimney Rock Village River Walk entrance has been surveyed. Construction should start in first quarter of 2020—\$100k from TDA and \$100k from Chimney Rock Village
- \$400k project for Spindale Streetscape
- Paddle Trail entrance is up to \$250k from grants
- Rutherford Bound website is 99% complete, along with logo stationary, flag and booth tent
- DbD and the TDA are facilitating potential partnerships all over the county with industries, restaurants, retail, lodging, etc.
- Contributions can be made to the general fund, or specific projects

Marketing Update:

- July and August editions of Our State Magazine featured one paid advertisement, and an organic, full-spread of the Carrier House
- Video production for television advertisements have taken place all over the county
- 5 commercial-style videos have been produced, which were aired on CBC, ABC, WLOS and Good Morning America
- The TDA will be running a social media contest for a giveaway for the Dirty Dancing Festival
- Cheers to Adventure, Wynee's World, etc. will be making videos for the TDA, blogs post, and other additions for our social media and website

The Agency Report:

- Media and influencer engagement
- Paid social media posts are reaching upwards of 5,000 people
- Website analytics: 696 new users in June

Announcements:

WNC Magazine did an article on the Kidsenses Factory expansion
New movie Sgt. Will Gardner features Chimney Rock State Park

Meeting Adjourned: 2:03

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek

2nd: Willard Whitson

Motion Passed