

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:03 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Jaeger-Gale, Dave Long, Willard Whitson, Dana Bradley, Kitty McCammon, Jim Masek, Brandon Higgins, David Hislop, Janet Mason, and Jeff Geisler

Members Absent: Rocky Guarriello

Ex-Officis Present: Eddie Holland

Ex-Officis Absent: Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Emily Ostertag, Karen Tegen, Kersten Conklin and Jerry Stahl (The Agency), and Russell Wicker (Tourism Asset Foundation)

Announcements:

- Welcomed Dana Bradley to the board, as our new member.
- Announcement of Max E. Lehner's birthday, former mayor of Lake Lure. The board signed his birthday card.

Additions / Deletions from Agenda: ----

Motion to approve Agenda:

Approval: 1st: Jeff Geisler
2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale
Motion Passed.

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

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek
2nd: Dave Long
Motion Passed.

2020-2021 Board Updates:

- Reviewed all documents in 2020-2021 board handbooks, including the organizational background, conflict of interest, TDA legislation and county resolution, the TDA by-laws, board dates, committee information, contact info for each other and your TDA staff, fiscal year 19-20 review and fiscal year 20-21 goals, and all of the fiscal year 20-21 budget documents.
- Review of Conflict of Interest form. Each board member signed and returned their form.

2020-2021 Board/Executive Board dates:

- Reviewed the proposed board meeting dates for the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

2020-2021 Meeting Dates for TDA BoardRCTDA Board Meetings:

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

July 30th, 2020	April 1st, 2021
September 10th, 2020	May 13th, 2021
October 22nd, 2020	June 10th, 2021 (Public Hearing)
December 3rd, 2020	July 22nd, 2021 (First meeting of FY 20-21)
January 7th, 2021	
February 18th, 2021	

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 23rd, 2020	March 25th, 2021
September 3rd, 2020	May 6th, 2021
October 15th, 2020	June 3rd, 2021 (Public Hearing)
November 23rd, 2020	July 15th, 2021 (First meeting of FY 20-21)
December 31st, 2021	
February 11th, 2021	

Motion to accept the 2020-2021 board dates as presented

Approval: 1st: Jeff Geisler

2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale

Motion Passed.

TDA Committees:

- Reviewed the 2020-2021 Committee slate, giving the board time to review the committees they serve on and make any changes if necessary

Executive-DON	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com
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Tourism Strategic Plan-Emily	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
-	-

Marketing/Grant-TAYLOR	
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com
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Information-KAREN	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
Dave Long	dlong@cleghornplantation.com
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Agritourism-TAYLOR	
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Brandon Higgins	brandon.higgins@rutherfordcountync.gov
David Hislop	RutherfordFarmersMarketManager@gmail.com
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Retire NC-KAREN	
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
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Finance-TAYLOR	
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
Janet Mason	janetmason@townofforestcity.com
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-	-

Keep RC Beautiful-KAREN	
Brandon Higgins	brandon.higgins@rutherfordcountync.gov
Janet Mason	janetmason@townofforestcity.com
Rocky Guarriello	rocky@ultimatetextileinc.com
Dana Bradley	prtcoordinator@townoflakelure.com
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TAF	
Willard Whitson	willard@kidsenses.com
David Hislop	rutherfordfarmersmarketmanager@gmail.com

Motion to approve the slate of committees as presented

Approval: 1st: Kitty McCammon

2nd: Jim Masek

Motion Passed.

Board Positions / Nominations:

- Reviewed the board positions, and which board members currently fill those positions. The board was given the opportunity to decline these positions and/or make new nominations. Since the end of Richard Lundy's last term on the TDA Board as for 2nd Vice Chair, this position was vacant.

Chair – Willard Whitson (recommended by board)

1st Vice Chair – Dave Long (renewed for another year)

2nd Vice Chair – Mary Jaeger-Gale (nominated by Kitty McCammon and approved by board)

Treasurer – Jeff Geisler (renewed for another year)

Secretary – Jim Masek (renewed for another year)

Motion to accept nominations as presented

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek

2nd: Dana Bradley

Motion Passed.

- The board recommended and unanimously voted for Willard Whitson to serve as Chair of the TDA Board for the 2020-2021 fiscal year

Motion to recommend Willard Whitson as chair of TDA Board for the 2020-2021 fiscal year

Approval: 1st: Dana Bradley

2nd: Jim Masek

Motion Passed.

The TDA Board will make a recommendation, by unanimous vote, for Willard Whitson to be the 2020-2021 TDA Board Chair, to the county commissioners to be voted on at their August 3rd meeting. Emily will be sending this unanimous recommendation to Hazel Haynes, the county clerk.

Finance Report:

Finance Report Highlights:

- Business is coming back with more and more people staying in our County's lodgings. Our occupancy tax collections were up for June.
- Occupancy tax collections for the year came in at around \$1.4 million
- The current fund balance came in at around \$1.6 million
- Budget amendments will be presented at the next board meeting
- At least \$400,000 of deferred expenses from Strategic Plan line item
- The \$955k year-end fund balance will be going down due to budget amendments and upcoming spending
- Next year should wrap with a fund balance of \$500k or more
- Minimum fund balance requirement is \$300k

Motion to approve Financial Report:

Approval: 1st: Mary Jaeger-Gale

2nd: Jim Masek

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:**Highlights:**

- TDA staff continue to hold and attend meetings
- Host compliance contract is being monitored. We will be approaching finance committee for recommendations
- Create Bridges is a grant program that Rutherford County is partnering on with Polk & McDowell Counties. TDA staff will assist in the product development of the program.
- Blue Ridge Craft Trails Program will go through 25 North Carolina communities, and Rutherford County will be participating
- The TDA participated in the County Law Enforcement Appreciation Breakfast, where Don went and prepared pancakes
- WLOS Road Trippin' came to Rutherford County and filmed several segments throughout the County, which will be airing soon. The TDA coordinated the filming timeline and program.
- All Wayfinding signs throughout the county have been installed
- The TDA participated in several Cycle NC Meetings. As of recently, it has been decided to postpone the event until next year
- Review of CFHC Contract Agreement. Community Foundation of Henderson County will aid us in our Rutherford Bound fund raising efforts

Motion to approve the agreement between the Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority and the Community Foundation of Henderson County**Approval:** 1st: Dave Long2nd: Jeff Geisler

Motion Passed.

Welcome Center Update:

Welcome Center traffic has continued to increase

- The staff has worked very hard to maintain COVID-19 precautions and safety guidelines
- Every recommended precaution is being taken
- Welcome Center staff pressure washed the bathroom floors

Marketing Report:

- - o The Agency Presentation:
 - o The Agency
 - Followers, total likes, and engagements are up on all platforms
 - The 'Remember This' campaign ran in June
 - June started up with paid social media advertising
 - Everything is back in July
 - Western NC videos and Rail Trail videos were promoted in June
 - The Rutherford County Postcard campaign was launched in June and reached a good amount of people
 - Visit NC promoted our winning of the Communicator Award
 - 56% increase in website traffic
 - Organic traffic on the website almost doubled from last year's number
 - Top cities for website users in June were Charlotte, Nashville, Raleigh, Atlanta, Asheville, etc.
 - SEO traffic was up by 95% year over year in June
 - WLOS Road Trippin' photos were shown
 - WLOS Road Trippin' segments for Rutherford County will air in early August

Committee Updates:**Marketing Committee:**

- Gave update on Taylor Hardin, as she is still out on maternity leave. Taylor and her family are doing well!

Date:7/30/20.....

Approved as Minutes:9/10/20.....

Agri-Tourism Committee:

- Review of Visit NC Farm App progress. The app is now live and being added to.

Finance Committee:

- No meeting was held, but there will be one before the next board meeting.

Tourism Strategic Plan Committee:

- The TDA and Rutherford Bound Partners have developed several agendas to try to kick-start this campaign after delays due to COVID-19
- A TAC Meeting will be held on Aug. 5th where the Rutherford Bound program of work will be presented
- Reviewed the Rutherford Bound Project Timeline for small press release events
- The TDA hopes to host a Rutherford Bound tent at each town ribbon cutting and ground breaking throughout the next year

TAF Committee:

- TAF Presentation by Russell Wicker

- o Review of the creation of the foundation, its history, and achievements
- o The TAF Board has unanimously voted to cease operation and turn the ownership of the Bechtler House over to the Town of Rutherfordton in January of 2021
- o An advisory committee for the Bechtler House will be formed from members of the TAF board
- o TAF will continue to sell the Gold Mile Emblems and participate in maintaining the NC Gold Trail website

TAF asked the TDA to continue supporting the foundation through the end of the calendar year. This was opened up to the board for discussion.

Motion to approve the TDA's continued funding of TAF through Dec. of 2020:

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek

2nd: Jeff Geisler

Motion Passed.

Keep Rutherford County Beautiful Committee:

- There have been no meetings held. Another committee meeting will be held in August.

Information Committee:

- No meeting, but there will be one held in August.

Relocate to Rutherford Committee:

- In the process of reconvening. Another meeting will be held in the Fall.

Executive Committee:

see Executive Director Report

Meeting Adjourned: 1:19 p.m.