

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:06 pm

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

Members Absent: Diane Barrett

Ex-Officors Present: Paula Roach, Eddie Holland

Others Present: Don Cason, Karen Tegen, Taylor Hardin, Media (2), Michelle Yelton, Merri Oxley

Public Comments: ---

Agenda (changes if necessary): Move Closed Session to after the 2017-2018 Budget.

Approval: 1st: Willard Whitson
2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary): Remove "task staff to look into occupancy tax" under the Marketing committee notes.

Approval: 1st: Amy Bridges
2nd: Tammy Martell

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

- Good collections in February
- 3.5% growth since last February
- Year to date - up 12% from prior year
- 6% over projected budget
- RFF Summary – on budget in all categories
- Should wrap up around \$60,000 - \$70,000 favorable budget this current Fiscal Year
- Original projections stated dipping into fund balance by \$172,000. Now only looks like we will affect fund balance by \$120,000
- Project Fund Balance to be over \$400,000 at the end of the Fiscal Year which is around \$200,000 over the suggested requirement.

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski
2nd: Ruthie Hanson

Motion Passed.

Don Cason – Tourism Strategic Plan

- Great turnout and input at the workshop on March 9th for POC (TAG and TDA Board)
- DbD will be in the county on March 29th to begin one-on-one interviews

Executive Director Report:

- Very involved with oversight of 2017-2018 budget
- Met with each town mgr. and mayor a/b strategic plan
- Occupancy tax resolution – 1% question

Welcome Center Update:

- Attendance is up
- Karen created a survey. Based on the comments provided, we had a good response rate and gathered some useful information. We hope to develop these further.

Marketing Update:

- NC field and family did an article on Rutherfordton
- German media tour – coming up in May. Will be targeting Dirty Dancing and Bechtler.
- Concord media tour – taking place in August
- Visit NC 365 conference was this week – pitched to media one-on-one
- Working on 2017-2018 marketing plan
- Anniversary piece coming up due to make stakeholders having anniversary dates this year
- Our State magazine sweepstakes ended the beginning of March
- Dirty Dancing co-op get away sweepstakes
- Website landing pages are staying consistent
- Added newsletter stats to the board packet

Committee Reports

Marketing:

- Has met twice
- Second meeting went into detail of the first meeting
- Michelle to get estimate on translation software

TAF:

- WNC Magazine issuing Gold Trail in May/June issue
- Coin and Riffle display ready within the next month
- Planning fundraising events

Finance:

- Preliminary budget review
- Staff went over budget reports with finance committee
 - Update given for March RFF actual

Information:

- Committee toured welcome center
- Staff put together discussion points for budget for committee to review
- Discussion to list mobile unit on govdeals

Motion to declare the mobile unit as surplus and list on govdeals with a minimum bid of \$10,000: Lynn Brown

Second: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

Executive:

- Wayfinding update from Don
 - Discussion on website committee to disband
- Discussed marketing committee
- Discussion to form WEG committee - to begin July 2017
- Tourism strategic plan discussion
- Preliminary 2017-2018 budget review

Motion to disband the website committee and turn over any future needs to the marketing committee: Willard Whitson

Second: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

2017-2018 budget

2017 - 2018 goals – "wish list"

- Goals are included in budget lines
- Strategic plan – completion, funding and implementation
- Occupancy tax program – maximize receipts
- Build relationships with State representatives
- Maximize tourism marketing efforts and efficiencies
- Wayfinding program completed – maintenance and monitoring going forward
- Stakeholder communication – various communication efforts
- New vacation guide
- Group sales program
- Enhance RC trails program and itinerary promotion
- Develop community programs/events – working with each town to promote and market tourism related events
- WEG support – committee formation

2017 - 2018 budget review

- Revenues: 10% increase (5% occupancy growth, new properties)
Richard- 10% is conservative and comfortable
- Wages – waiting on county study to be complete
- Benefits – raised 3% from last year – may change after meeting with finance
- Marketing and Advertising – on track with current year with slight increases – biggest increase is under communications – new vacation guide and printing cost. We did not print a vacation guide in the current year budget
- Administration and Operations – slight increase for inflation
- Office Expenses – equipment updates, internal printing of new brochures/maps
- Repairs and Maintenance – increase due to information committee approvals for Welcome Center projects
- Travel – increase for staff training and travel for tourism plan
- Professional Fees: New program in place
- Projects and Programs – new line items to specifically promote tourism
- With current numbers, we are coming up with a favorable \$66,000 budget

GS 143.318

Motion to go into closed session for G.S 143-318.11 for Attorney-Client privilege: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Amy Bridges

Motion Passed

1:20pm – Entered Closed Session

Motion Passed.

Motion to end Closed Session for GS 143-318.11 Attorney-Client privilege: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Ruthie Hanson

2:00pm – Ended Closed Session

Motion Passed.

Motion to return to regular session: Amy Bridges

Second: Tammy Martell

Motion Passed.

Announcements:

- Amy: Rail trail meeting went great.
- Community meeting
April 4th 6-8pm forest city clubhouse

Meeting Adjourned: 2:02

Next meeting May 4th 2017 at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones Building