

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:04

Members Present: Amy Bridges, Barbara Meliski, Dave Long, Jim Masek Kitty McCammon, Richard Lundy, Willard Whitson

Members Absent: Lynn Brown, Chuck Martell, Diane Barrett, Ruthie Hanson

Ex-Officis Absent: Eddie Holland, Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Taylor Hardin, Amy Brevard, Leniece Lane

Public Comments: ----

Agenda (changes if necessary): ---

Approval: 1st: Willard Whitson

2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes - March 29th (changes if necessary): ---

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Amy Bridges

Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes – April 17th (changes if necessary): ---

Approval: 1st: Barbara Meliski

2nd: Amy Bridges

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

- March receipts are up over last year \$20,927 or 69%
- Year to date actual is over budget by \$32,000 or 4%
- Year to date actual is \$95,000 over last year or 13.0%
- Continue to be optimistic that the total year receipts will come in on budget or higher
 - Hampton Inn open in late December
 - New 1% occupancy increase will reflect in January through June receipts
 - STR Program in process
 - TIEC Impact
- RFF: Revenue up
 - Expenses at budget or below
 - Some adjustments
 - Plan and Wayfinding are additional items and reason that we are in excess of expenses

Approval: 1st: Kitty McCammon

2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Don Cason – Tourism Strategic Plan

- DbD and TDA staff coordination of plan continues
- Tourism Plan process to be completed by June 30th 2018
- The Towns of Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, Rutherfordton, and Spindale steering committees continue to meet in preparation for the community meetings and input.
- Town Council and Community Meetings: Lake Lure – 5/8; Chimney Rock – 5/15; Spindale – 5/21; Rutherfordton - TBD
- Implementation and funding campaign initial work has begun. Committees and partnerships to be developed
- Discussion about potential facilitator

Executive Director Report:

- Met with Regional ARC Director
- Attended Lake Lure Utility Board – Updates on LL Utilities
- Interviews with Daily Courier on Wayfinding – Status Update
- Interviews with Daily Courier on WEG –WEG Impact on Rutherford County
- Assisted with LL Welcome Center Interviews
- Worked on Wayfinding Contract with ACSM – Attorney and RCTDA
- TDA Staff Meetings – Staff Updates
- Met with Town Managers – Reviewed Tourism Plan
- Met with TAC – Funding Committee – Met one on one to Develop Committee
- Working on Wayfinding Contract with ACSM – Developed a plan to move forward
- Participated in Pick it up Roco – TDA Team Picked up trash
- Attended/Participated In Rutherfordton County Chamber Golf Tournament – Sponsor and network
- Attended County Department Head Quarterly Meeting – County Programs and Budget Update
- Attended County Pick It Up Roco Shindig – Public Event to thank volunteers
- Met with ACSM – Developed program of work for DOT approval
- Met with Towns to update on Wayfinding
- Worked on 2018-2019 Budget and Budget Message

Welcome Center Update:

- New part time staff member – seasonal work
Bids have gone out for construction – LLTC voting

Marketing Update:

Marketing committee decided to renew contract with McConnell group
SEO has increased since January – Total traffic for march has increased
1970 clicks to partner websites
Event calendar for mountain breeze
Media visits coming for May and June
Coffee talks went well – thanks to sponsors
New ads and promotions
Billboard installed this week
Second billboard coming in Spartanburg

Committee Reports

Marketing:

Heard/reviewed presentations from four agencies in the region.

- Little Red Bird Agency (Charlotte, NC)
- Blue Dozen Agency (Asheville, NC)
- Chatterbox Agency (Shelby, NC)

- McConnell Group (Rutherfordton, NC)

Around Lake Lure Agency and Distil Agency also declined to quote based on too many clients at this time.

Marketing committee decided to renew contract with McConnell group

TAF:

- Vivian Hopkins of Gold Hill and Carol Price of McDowell Tourism are working with TAF to put together group tours.
- Deborah is on the Gold Festival Committee and is handling media and booking. She has written a press release for Old Fort and will be doing one for Rutherford County area from our perspective.
- Deborah is scheduled to speak at the Blue Ridge Numismatic Association Conference in Dalton, GA in August about the Bechtler History and the NC Gold Trail.
- Submitted field trip info to the NC Homeschoolers.
- Have started receiving calls from groups and have added a local one so people can call directly. It is: 828-351-9575

Finance:

- No Meeting this Month
- Sent Budget Plan out to Committee via Email for review

Grant:

- 9 Applications
- Approved 8
- Requested more information for 1
- Allocated 20,000+ (See Breakout on Following Page)

Information:

- Construction changes that are pending with LL: It was determined that more clarification is needed from Lake Lure on what the new design for the WC will be.
- 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
- Way-finding Update-Don let the committee know status of the Way-finding program
- Upcoming 2018-2019 Budget-Will need to re-visit after it is made known to the TDA the plans that the Town of Lake Lure have with the Building the Welcome Center is in.
- Future meeting dates: Will determine at the next Info Committee Meeting.
- Karen will be drafting initial budget and presenting back to the committee for approval

Wayfinding

- ACSM Contract has been signed
- Karen and Don and ASCM has had a meeting to lay out program of work
- Meeting with DOT on may 4th
- Goal is to start seeing signs in the ground before WEG

WEG committee:

Training Update

- All information has been given to A2D
- Still on track for timeline given at last meeting see chart Amy provided at last meeting
- We are reviewing test link now internally

- Waiting on information from TIEC on if they still plan to use and any trade value they will be able to offer TDA

TDA Partnerships with other towns and municipalities Update

Review information Amy has collected on marketing info we discussed at last WEG meeting to include updates and new quotes.

WEG Marketing Plan and Budget-

Executive:

- Provided Wayfinding Update – Reviewed Program of Work and Timeline
- Reviewed Marketing– 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 – Discussed plan implementation and funding campaign
- Brainstormed potential projects for 2018-2019
- TDA RFF Review
- TDA 2018-2019 Budget Review

2018-2019 Budget:

Only change from this budget from last presented is Salaries reduced and Wayfinding increased
2018-2019 goals

Motion to take 2018-2019 budget as presented to a public hearing on June 14th 2018 at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones building

Approval: 1st: Willard Whitson
2nd: Amy Bridges

Motion Passed.

Announcements:

- Sherette – charlotte ave. and main street – forest city clubhouse public session in May 2, 2018
- Memorial Day ceremony – 11am on memorial day
- Chimney Rock fire forum on Saturday
- Next Saturday is Springo and symphony
- Rutherfordton – May fest Saturday

Meeting Adjourned:

- 1:07
- Next meeting at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones Building on June 14th