

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting**

Call to Order: 12:01pm

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

Members Absent: Jim Masek

Ex-Officos Present: Eddie Holland

Ex-Officos Absent: Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Emily Ostertag, Taylor Hardin, and Hope Bleeker

Additions / Deletions from Agenda: ----

Motion to approve Agenda:

Approval: 1st: Dana Bradley

2nd: Dave Long

Motion Passed.

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

Approval: 1st: Dave Long

2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale

Motion Passed.

Announcement: This is Commissioner Holland's last meeting with the TDA Board. He has served 12 years on the TDA Board.

Finance Report:

Finance Report Highlights:

- Rutherford County is experiencing record breaking occupancy tax collections
- The activity for the last two months have some of our busiest, and have exceeded those collected during WEG
- Our niche marketing provides a safe destination for visitors to travel to during COVID
- August collections was \$130,000 over the prior year
- In this quarter, we are about \$200,00 over the prior year
- We are projecting the RFF for the coming months to be close to what we did last year and in prior years, but these numbers may be conservative
- In the Winter months we are projecting this lessen slightly for the season, but then ramp back up in the Spring
- Referenced the Budget Amendments from last board meeting (reflected in the RFF for the month of Sept.)
- The Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan Implementation line items were adjusted according to these amendments as well
- Adjustments to the budget have been made to paint the exterior of the Lake Lure Welcome Center
- \$985,000 projected fund balance to wrap up the calendar year

Motion to approve Financial Report:

Approval: 1st: Mary Jaeger-Gale

2nd: Jeff Geisler

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:

Highlights:

- The TDA and Patton McDowell from PMA Consulting met with each of the towns and their Phase II projects moving forward
 - All town leaders are feeling good about moving forward
- Attended the Forest City Town Council meeting this month and provided an update on Rutherford Bound and the TDA's marketing efforts. The mayor thanked the TDA for all that we do for that county.
- We are working with Forest City to identify future Rutherford Bound Projects
- The TDA participated in the KRCB Fall Litter-Sweep
- The TDA organized a sub-TAC meeting along with IPDC, where DFI from the NC School of Government presented on some preliminary work that can be done to ensure the success of Rutherford Bound with a financial plan
- DFI is preparing for future presentations to TAC

Welcome Center Update:

- Attendance has been down a little bit from prior years, but this is expected due to occupancy restrictions and social distancing inside the building

Marketing Report:

- **Marketing Committee Update**

- Reminder of the Visit NC grant program
 - The TDA has been given an additional \$15,000 from this grant program
 - There has been a third grant introduced, which would make us eligible for an additional \$30,000
 - If we were given this additional grant, this would total \$140,000 to be used toward COVID related messaging and marketing credit through Visit NC
 - o Internal Marketing updates given by Taylor
 - Full page ad ran in the October issue of OurState magazine
 - There was an organic mention of the Esmeralda Inn in the October issue of Life in Our Foothills magazine
 - The production of the 2021 travel guide has been delayed until early Spring
- The Agency Slides presented by Taylor:
 - Review of increase in views from all social media platforms
 - The TDA to have the Marketing Committee review our use of social media platforms
 - One of our Top Posts featured 4 Paws Kingdom Campground
 - The Agency created a survey, : What Type of Traveler are You?" that has been pushed on all platforms, and provided those who take it with appropriate itineraries
 - 1,649 people have opened the survey
 - Our 18-24 age group for website visitation has spiked over last year's numbers
 - Our top cities continue to be Charlotte, Raleigh and Nashville
 - 68,000 complete viewings of commercials run on streaming services
 - The SEO report shows that our organic traffic is up 81% year over year

Committee Updates:

Marketing Committee:

See Marketing Report

Agri-Tourism Committee:

- Met on Oct. 6th on GoToMeeting
- The TDA is funding and promoting the Visit NC Farm App
- The committee has postponed the extended committee meeting due to COVID

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Approved as Minutes:12/3/2020.....

- The committee agreed to produce an Agri-Tourism Survey, which is ready to go and will be distributed on all TDA platforms. The survey is intended to gauge what type of Agri-Tourism experiences people are looking for
- The TDA purchased six outdoor heaters, as well as the propane tanks, for the Winter Farmers Market, so that it can remain outside due to COVID concerns

Finance Committee:

- Met on Oct. 14th of GoToMeeting
- Reviewed the RFF
- Heard presentations from Host Compliance, which is our current STR monitoring software, and KeyData Dashboard
- The Host Compliance contract is up on December 31st
- A workshop between Host Compliance and the Finance Department is being coordinated for next week
- We hope to come to our December meeting with a decision made

Tourism Strategic Plan Committee:

- The partners are all working on their specific programs of work to present at the next meeting November 18th
- The first press event is coming up in November, and the partners are all preparing for that groundbreaking in Spindale
- The Board River Paddle Trail has been completely funded through RHI Legacy and Duke Energy
- TV commercials and social media videos are also being finalized
- Last week, DbD and The Agency coordinated the filming of outdoor footage in Rutherford County

CFHC Committee:

- CFHC has been working closely to finalize several Rutherford Bound funding projects, such as kiosks at all the projects and promo-items

Keep Rutherford County Beautiful Committee:

- The Fall Litter Sweep was held from October 1st through October 18th
- Independent volunteers signed-up online and do their own individual pick-ups
- The paid litter pick-up collected 172 bags of trash over 63.5 miles of roadway
- TDA staff pick-up results to come
- In the process of solidifying the management of the donated funds

Information Committee:

See Welcome Center Update

Relocate to Rutherford Committee:

- Committee has been put on hold due to COVID
- Will hopefully meet again in late Fall / early Winter

Executive Committee:

See Executive Director Report

Announcements:

- The TDA held its Fall Coffee Talk last week, so it couldn't attend please contact us and we will send you the audio recording
- The 'Moments That Matter' campaign won a second award from the Davey Awards

Meeting Adjourned: 12:55pm