

Date: .....9/10/20.....

Approved as Minutes: .....10/22/20.....

**Call to Order:** 12:05

**Members Present:** Dave Long, Willard Whitson, Dana Bradley, Kitty McCammon, Jim Masek, Brandon Higgins, David Hislop, and Jeff Geisler

**Members Absent:** Rocky Guarriello, Mary Jaeger-Gale, and Janet Mason

**Ex-Officicos Present:** Paula Roach and Eddie Holland

**Ex-Officicos Absent:**

**Others Present:** Don Cason, Emily Ostertag, and Taylor Hardin

**Announcements:**

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**Additions / Deletions from Agenda:** ----

**Motion to approve Agenda:**

**Approval:** 1st: Dana

2nd: Dave

Motion Passed.

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

**Approval:** 1st: Jeff

2nd: Dana

Motion Passed.

**Finance Report Highlights:**

- Really good news from the Finance category
- We are in the middle of our 3<sup>rd</sup> month
- June collections and July payments are the largest collections in history, with the exception of WEG in 2018
- Rutherford County and other rural communities are definitely benefiting in terms of tourism with visitor coming to take part in outdoor activities, etc.
- June collections \$62,000 over prior year and \$178,000 over plan
- We are predicting September, October and November will also be strong months
- The budget reflects strong numbers for this Fall, and then tappers down for the winter months
- These numbers will bring us up to \$1.5 million
- The Finance Committee and Executive board have reviewed the budget and all Strategic Plan Contracts
- Summary: Revenue is up \$700k
  - o Increase in wages budget for part-time help at the Welcome Center
  - o Marketing and Advertising stays relatively flat
  - o Admin. / Office Expenses have been adjusted
  - o Travel budget has been cut because of COVID
  - o Projects and Programs are increased for Strategic Plan and Plan Implementation
  - o Fund Balance of \$811,000
  - o Projected Fund Balance to come in well above this
- Review of Strategic Plan line items

**Strategic Plan Report / Committee Update**

- Review of Rutherford Bound Partners' programs of work, budgets and contracts
- Highlights:
  - o We met with the TAC and had each Rutherford Bound partner present their programs of work
  - o Every town is interested in participating in the plan
  - o The Strategic Plan and Finance Committees have both reviewed these programs of work, budgets, and contracts

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- o Reviewed summaries of all partner contracts and budgets
- o Each contract has a 30 day exit clause
- o Rutherford Bound is an ambitious plan, but with the success of tourism in our area it has proven to be a needed step forward
- o Review of Rutherford Bound Donation Kiosk idea
  - Will use the 3" poles we have already purchase from ACSM

- Review of Rutherford Bound Partners' programs of work, budgets and contracts during Finance Report

**Motion to approve the Rutherford Bound Partners' Programs of Work and Contract Summaries as presented:**

Approval: 1<sup>st</sup>: Dave

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jim

Motion Passed.

- Review of CFHC's Rutherford Bound Project Board's guidelines and responsibilities
- The Strategic Plan Committee members are recommended to serve on this board
- The Board approves this recommendation

**Budget**

**Amendments:**

70-6520-191-00	Professional Services - Strategic Plan	\$ 218,102.00	
70-3991-991-00	Fund Balance Appropriated		\$ 218,102.00

\*carryforward remaining balance and town contributions received as of June 30th

70-6520-191-01	Prof Svcs - Strategic Plan Implementation	\$ 100,000.00	
70-3991-991-00	Fund Balance Appropriated		\$ 100,000.00

\*carryforward paddle trail grant project

70-6520-191-01	Prof Svcs - Strategic Plan Implementation	\$ 339,057.00	
70-3240-000-00	Occupancy Tax Revenues		\$ 339,057.00

\*adjust revenues and restore implementation funds previously removed from the recommended budget due to the COVID19 impact

**Motion to approve the budget amendments as listed:**

Approval: 1<sup>st</sup>: Dana

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jeff

**Motion to approve Financial Report:**

Approval: 1st: Kitty

2nd: Jeff

Motion Passed.

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### **Executive Director Report:**

#### Highlights:

- Lake Lure had their public meeting on their infrastructure plan several weeks back, and the TDA is impressed with their plan and team of professionals
- Update on Host Compliance and KeyData Dashboard. After working with the Finance Committee, we will be making recommendations on how to move forward in November
- Met with Tim Chandler from Friends of the Smokies to brainstorm about donation boxes / kiosks
- Met one-on-one with each Town Manager and County representatives about Rutherford Bound
- Potential Visit NC grant to be reviewed in Marketing Report
- Met with Scott Dadson from IPDC. They will be giving a presentation/update on TIDs, TIFs, and legislation as we move forward with Rutherford Bound funding

### **Welcome Center Update:**

- Visitor traffic continues to stay strong
- The Welcome Center is still limiting its indoor occupancy to 50% per COVID restrictions
- Staff is enforcing mask wearing and limiting bathroom use
- The Welcome Center staff is working very hard to maintain safety during COVID
- The Information Committee meeting was in the Lake Lure Welcome Center

### **Marketing Report:**

#### - **Marketing Committee Update**

- o Internal Marketing updates given by Taylor
  - o Blueridge Country Magazine recognized for best waterfall
  - o OurState magazine ran full page ads in August and September
  - o Everyday Rutherford ran a full page ad
  - o The TDA sponsors the Appalachian Mural Trail and will be featured in PBS special on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9pm
  - o The Lake Lure Inn and Spa was featured in a UNC TV program that is still airing
  - o The 2020 Travel Guide numbers are being monitored. The 2021 guides may be released a little late if we still have a large number of 2020 guides left
  - o Visit NC is offering a \$100,000 grant to agencies that were impacted by COVID, which we received. This grant is a credit, which we have to use through Visit NC programs, including billboards in Charlotte, Raleigh and Atlanta, and several ads in magazines and on social media. The timeframe has to be from Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>
- o The Agency Slides presented by Taylor:
  - o Review of our social media numbers – up through July and August
  - o Working on a relationship with Jellystone Park for a Fall photoshoot
  - o They are working on a quiz and itinerary to tell people what kind of traveler they are
  - o The Agency will organically promote the Visit NC Farm App
  - o Reviewed paid content for July and August
  - o Website users are up with a 70% increase over last year for July and August
  - o Mobile devices are our top platform
  - o The top page is Places to Stay, which is up 160% over last year
  - o Top cities continue to be Charlotte, Atlanta, Asheville and Nashville
  - o OTT commercials were reviewed
  - o PPC stats were reviewed
  - o Review of tradition media ads that were placed, including magazine ads, and radio spots

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Marketing Committee:**

\*See Marketing Report\*

#### **Agri-Tourism Committee:**

- The TDA has partnered as a sponsor of the Visit NC Farm App, which is now up and running
- The committee met in late August, and the extended committee is set to meet in late September
- The committee agreed to do a survey, which is being compiled by David Hislop

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- Ideas for promoting the Winter Farmers Market are being discussed

**Finance Committee:**

- Reviewed the September RFF and looking at the proposed budget amendments, occupancy tax revenue, the Rutherford Bound budget, and the STR monitoring program

**Tourism Strategic Plan Committee:**

\*See Tourism Strategic Plan Update\*

**CFHC Committee:**

- We are now live with CFHC, and the online donation portal is active

**Keep Rutherford County Beautiful Committee:**

- The Fall Litter Sweep will be held from October 1<sup>st</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup>
- Independent volunteers are being encouraged to sign-up online and do their own individual pick-ups
- Volunteers can sign-up until Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> and supplies will be left on the loading dock of the Woodrow Jones Building for these volunteers on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>
- \$7,500 have been allocated to 75 miles of paid litter pick-ups for Fall and Spring

**Information Committee:**

\*See Welcome Center Update\*

**Relocate to Rutherford Committee:**

- Committee has been put on hold due to COVID
- Will reconvene in the Fall or late Winter

**Executive Committee:**

\*See Executive Director Report\*

**Announcements:**

- The Factory at KidSenses is continuing the expand
- In October construction will begin on additions for an atrium, balcony, and elevator/stairwell
- The name of Walter Dalton Road has been given to a stretch of highway between 64 and Polk County
- It is being proposed that Civil War monuments be removed from Rutherford County

**Meeting Adjourned:** 1:09pm