



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

August 15, 2018 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.

Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143, WCU

Cullowhee, NC 28723

Call to order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Chairman Vick Patel; Vice Chairman Kathy Korb, Secretary Laura Bowers; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Dale Collins, Tom Garcia, Andrew Harlfinger, Ann Self, Ron Mau, Julie Spiro, Stephanie Edwards; Finance Officer Darlene Fox
- **Members absent:** None
- **Others in attendance:** Haley Barton, Deborah Stone, and Melissa Webb of Pineapple PR; Berkeley Young of Young Strategies, Inc.; Robert Jumper, Cherokee One Feather; Heather Baker, County Attorney; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Bob Williams moved to approve the agenda; Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Recognize Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Chairman Patel recognized Vice-Chairman Katy Korb and Secretary Laura Bowers, who had no comments at this time.

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report:

Due to another commitment, Ms. Spiro provided highlights from her written report which was provided prior to the meeting. She shared a one-minute video the Chamber produced to be used as a promotional piece at the Sylva Visitors Center. A new video will be produced each month. Ms. Spiro said Concerts on the Creek is seeing record numbers of attendance, and new retail items have been ordered for fall. The big trout project will be unveiled soon.

Review and Approval of April Minutes

Minutes of the June 20, 2018, TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the June 20, 2018, minutes. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of June and July Financial Reports

The June and July financial reports were presented by Darlene Fox. Highlights for June include Occupancy Tax collections of \$83,601.73, penalties of \$110.00, and YTD collection totals of \$956,502.54, which is 88.57% of the budget. Collections were up 8.81% from the same period in 2017, and up 4.28% for the fiscal year. Airbnb collections totaled \$7,870.59. 148 Accounts reported rentals for May.

The June cash balance was \$8,135.40 with investments totaling \$400,000. June expenses were \$118,637.45 with YTD expenses totaling \$1,137,138.67. Encumbrances of \$8,155.34 make a combined total of \$1,145,294.01, equaling 98.09% of the budget.

July highlights include Occupancy Tax collections of \$135,828.99, penalties of \$52.69, and YTD collections of \$135,828.99, which is 12.21% of the budget. Airbnb collections were \$10,428.29. Collections were up 14.38% from July 2017, and up 14.48% for the fiscal year with 181 accounts reporting for June.

The July cash balance was \$23,527.32 with investments totaling \$400,000. July expenses were \$112,283.45 with YTD expenses being the same amount. Encumbrances of \$5,642.48 make a combined total of \$117,925.93 equaling 10.12% of the budget.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to approve the financial report as presented. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

Presentation from Young Strategies, Inc.

Mr. Breedlove stated nine responses were received for the request for proposals to do visitor profile research to create a strategic plan for Jackson County. The Executive Committee conducted interviews and unanimously recommend Charlotte-based Young Strategies, Inc. (YSI) for the project. Berkeley Young began work with the Lake Lure Chamber in 1993 and founded Young Strategies in 2004. Clients served by YSI include Tupelo, MS, Syracuse, NY, and Panama City Beach, FL. Mr. Young is considered on the top experts in strategic planning and research for destination marketing organizations.

Mr. Young presented to the board on the work he will perform for Jackson County which is estimated to take eight months to complete.

Approval of YSI Contract

A copy of the YSI Contract was provided prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Andrew Harlfinger moved to approve the YSI contract. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Amendment

A copy of the budget amendment was provided prior to the meeting. Mr. Breedlove gave a brief overview of the amendment, stating that \$30,000.00 had been allocated for the Tourism Master Plan. The amendment to increase Contract Services for Planning and Fund Balance by \$28,240 will cover the remaining actual cost of the contract with YSI.

Motion: Ann Self moved to approve the budget amendment. Tom Garcia seconded. Motion carried.

Presentation to Pineapple PR

Mr. Breedlove noted that Pineapple PR began working with the TDA in 2014. From that point, the relationship has grown to include coverage from major national media outlets providing over one billion impressions and an earned media value of over 30 million dollars. In honor of the milestone, Mr. Breedlove presented an award to Pineapple staff.

Directors' Reports

Cashiers Area Chamber: Stephanie Edwards provided the board with a written report prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

- The July 4th events had to be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances. Ms. Edwards was very appreciative of everyone who assisted in making the change as seamless as possible.
- Pots on the Green is becoming a national destination for potters. It, along with Groovin' on the Green, have seen record attendance this year.
- A Cashiers area pedestrian mobility and safety campaign, "We're Walking Here" is being implemented to increase awareness and slow traffic as congestion increases.
- A plan is being developed for an Olympic-style hospitality training campus program to advance workforce development opportunities.
- The Cashiers Area Map has been a very popular with visitors.

- The Tour de Cashiers will be September 15 and include a 5K run.

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove provided the board with a written report prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

- Airbnb collections hit an all-time-high in July. This trend will be monitored closely.
- The first Partner E-News has been published and should continue as a quarterly production.
- Notices were mailed with annual tax bills as a reminder that occupancy tax must be collected and reported on short term rental units.
- A new video shoot for social media has been completed.
- Mr. Breedlove attended the STS Congressional Summit in DC to advocate for tourism needs in WNC.
- Several new promotional items are now available for media missions, including flash drives, notebooks, cellular device accessories and other items.

Announcements/Adjournment

High Hampton Resort has developed plans for maintaining an open status during next year's construction and will present plans at the owners meeting next week. A historic building was moved for preservation last week. Care is being taken to make sure environmental concerns are addressed. High Hampton has also purchased property to develop workforce housing.

Dale Collins moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:31p.m.

Next Meeting

The September 19, 2018, TDA Full Board Meeting will be at 1:00 pm in the WCU Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143, WCU, Cullowhee, NC.

Laura Bowers, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: September 19, 2018