



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

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

March 13, 2019 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.

Holt Library Conference Room 112, SCC

447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779

Call to Order/Roll Call

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

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Vice Chair Laura Bowers; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Dale Collins, Andrew Harlfinger, Julie Spiro, Stephanie Edwards, Ron Mau (arriving after roll call)
- **Members absent:** Secretary Kathy Korb, Tom Garcia, Jay Grissom, and Darlene Fox
- **Others in attendance:** Haley Barton, Deborah Stone, and Melissa Web of Pineapple PR, John Kautz of Rawle Murdy, and Berkeley Young of Young Strategies; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

Director Breedlove requested the agenda be amended to include a second capital project at the Jackson Chamber and Visitor Center.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda as amended; Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Vice-Chair Laura Bowers had no comments at this time.

Review and Approval of February Minutes

Minutes of the February 20, 2019 TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the February 20, 2019 minutes. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of February Financial Report

Director Breedlove presented the February Financial Report which was emailed prior to the meeting. February highlights include Occupancy Tax collections of \$43,104.52, penalties of \$424.10, and YTD collection totals of \$793,026.01, which is 66.01% of the budget. Collections were up 16.98% from the same period in 2017, and up 7.30% for the fiscal year. Airbnb collections totaled \$10,112.79. 102 accounts reported rentals for January. The February 28th cash balance was \$128,452.52 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. February expenses were \$76,621.28 with YTD expenses totaling \$802,788.29. Encumbrances of \$50,206.09 make a combined total of \$852,994.38, equaling 71.01% of the budget.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report: Julie Spiro presented the following highlights from her directors' report:

- The new Our Town Relocation Guides, Jackson County Eating Out Brochure, and the JCTDA Visitor's Guides are now in stock and available to be picked up at the Chamber Office.

- The Chamber will host an Open House tomorrow from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to welcome members in to pick up the new brochures. Door prizes and light refreshments will be available.
- Current fiscal year merchandise sales are in excess of \$6,500 with several new items available.

Cashiers Area Chamber: Stephanie Edwards presented the following highlights from her directors' report:

- The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in Cashiers last Thursday to hear public input on the Small Area Plan. The Commissioners restated their commitment to maintain future sidewalks for pedestrian safety.
- A Glenville sign will be installed southbound on the north side of the community.
- The Cashiers Area Shopping and Dining Guides are being redesigned and will be ready for publication soon.
- Nosh Mob is an event designed to encourage restaurateurs who are open year-round and will resume on March 26th at the Library Kitchen and Bar.
- The Cashiers CREW (Cashiers Recreation and Endurance Weekend) Series is in development to extend the Tour de Cashiers weekend to include a swim/run event to increase the appeal of the event to a broader audience.

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove presented the following highlights from his directors' report:

- High Hampton Resort is no longer contracting with Benchmark for its management, and in as much, their current GM Tom Garcia will no longer be on the JCTDA board. We thank Mr. Garcia for his service.
- The 2019 Visitor Guides are available for distribution, two months ahead of prior years' schedule, and includes the most comprehensive events listing for the area.
- Director Breedlove has been selected to serve on the Western North Carolina Outdoor Branding Commission, which is a task force put together to help brand all the WNC area as an outdoor recreation destination.
- Mr. Breedlove will meet with county officials to set guidelines and a schedule to hire the new TDA employee.
- The Crisis Management Plan is almost in the final draft stage for presentation to the entire board
- Director Breedlove will be attending the 2019 STS Connections Tourism conference next week.
- The Land and Water Conservation Act has been reauthorized and funding for National Parks Deferred Maintenance Projects is moving forward.
- Several upgrades to the website are underway, including a chat-bot feature and a focus on pet friendly restaurants.

Capital Project Discussion – Cashiers Area Chamber Parking Lot/Jackson Chamber Steps

The parking lot of the Cashiers Area Chamber is a gravel surface which creates multiple maintenance and safety issues. Vehicles accelerating on the gravel surface causes gravel to be thrown into other vehicles, creates ruts that lead to muddy conditions, and makes acceleration into oncoming traffic unsafe. One estimate of \$19,537 has been received. Additional estimates will be solicited. This project would be placed in the budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

The Jackson Chamber building needs repairs to the steps coming into the building. The concrete has deteriorated due to age and environmental conditions, creating a hazard to people entering up the sidewalk on Main Street. The projects would be integrated with landscaping and is estimated to cost approximately \$8,000. This could be done during this fiscal year's budget.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to present the capital projects to the County Commissioners. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of FY 19-20 Grants – Grant Committee

The Grant Committee met on March 6, 2019, to review eight grant applications. Two applications (Pots on the Green and Front Street Arts and Crafts Festival) are being recommended for funding during this current fiscal year for \$1,750 each. Recommendations for the first grant cycle for the up-coming fiscal year at \$1,750 each are: Mountain Heritage Day, Joy Garden Tour, WNC Pottery Festival, Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival, Dillsboro Lights and Luminaires, and ColorFest.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve Grant Committee recommendations; Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.*

Presentation from Berkeley Young/Young Strategies on Visitor Profile Research

Mr. Young gave a presentation of the research received from the Visitor Profile Research Surveys. A total of 3,783 surveys were complete, which is far above the national average. Several highlights from the information include:

- Nature and outdoor recreation are the number one reasons for visiting, followed by wellness and health, festivals and events travel.
- More people travel to our county for recreation than for business.
- About 80% of the people completing the survey were repeat visitors to the county.
- The average party size is 2 people, and over-night visitors spend four to five times more than day-trip visitors.
- Tourism in Jackson County nets an average of \$462.46 in tax relief per household and provides 1,850 jobs in the county.
- Travel is very seasonal in nature, with July being the busiest month.

Announcements/Adjournment

The April meeting will run from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. for strategic planning. Please adjust your schedule for the extended meeting time.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to adjourn. Andrew Harlfinger seconded, motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Next Meeting

The Wednesday, April 17, 2019, TDA Full Board Meeting will be at 1:00 pm in the Holt Library Conference Room 112, Southwestern Community College, 447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779.

Kathy Korb, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: April 17, 2019