



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

## MINUTES

### Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

#### Board of Directors Meeting

May 22, 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; Ann Self, Chair, Laura Bowers, Vice-Chair; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Dale Collins (arriving after roll call), Brad Herman, Andrew Harlfinger, Jay Grissom, Ron Mau, Darlene Fox (arriving after roll call), Julie Spiro and Stephanie Edwards.
- **Members absent:** Secretary Kathy Korb
- **Others in attendance:** John Kautz and Lindsey Lubanski with Rawle Murdy; Berkeley Young with Young Strategies; Deborah Stone, Melissa Webb and Haley Barton with Pineapple PR; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

#### Approval of Agenda

A copy of the amended agenda was provided prior to the meeting.

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

#### Public Comment

None.

#### Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Ms. Bowers had no comments at this time.

#### Strategic Planning – Berkeley Young

Mr. Young presented a draft of the Strategic Plan. The plan is a compilation of a study conducted from November 2018 through March 2019, with research presented to the TDA Board in March and plan development in May. The goal is to adopt the plan in June to be used as a living document that should be reviewed and updated one to two times each year. Mr. Young presented seven strategies to expand and promote the "Play On" brand and enhance the active outdoors lifestyle of Jackson County as a mountain destination unlike any other.

The plan will be distributed to the community and outlines the TDA organization and board structure. The document will identify the TDA as an economic development organization within the county as well as define the Vision and Mission of the TDA.

#### Review and Approval of April Minutes

Minutes of the April 17, 2019 TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the April 17 minutes. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

#### Directors' Reports

**Jackson County Chamber Director's Report:** Highlights of the Jackson County Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- 1,309 visitors were served in the Sylva and Dillsboro Visitor Centers.
- Brochures mailed: 1,313 Visitor Guides were mailed to interested guests, 1,624 to Welcome Centers, and 200 fly fishing maps have been distributed.
- \$7,000 in merchandise has been sold this fiscal year, with new Hook Line & Drinker, WNC Fly Fishing Trail, and NC Trout Capital shirts in stock or on the way.

- Event interactions: 161 people visited the Dillsboro Visitor Center during the Easter Hat Parade and 306 visitors stopped by the Chamber Tent during Greening Up the Mountains.
- Concerts On the Creek will kick off this Friday night and go through Labor Day.
- The sidewalk and landscape improvements will be completed soon, with the addition of NC Trout Capital® and WNC Fly Fishing Trail® Headquarters signs to refresh the look of the outside of the Chamber Visitor Center.
- A month-long WNC Fly Fishing Trail® Facebook campaign was kicked off at the end of April and will be repeated in the fall and in December.

**Cashiers Area Chamber:** Highlights of the Cashiers Area Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- 25,000 printed copies of the 2019 Cashiers Area Visitor Guide and Membership Directory has been distributed in addition to digital versions being online.
- The Cashiers Area Chamber teamed up with the Highlands Chamber for the #Trashtag challenge annual deep clean to remove 2,200 pounds of trash coinciding with Earth Day 2019.
- Custom welcome mats and flags will be delivered prior to Memorial Day as part of the Retailer and Restaurant Roundtable meetings.
- The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation has approved two grant cycles for 2019 with additional information being available after the May 13 Finance Committee meeting.
- Bear Valley Farm, a working Christmas tree farm that will offer year-round activities promoting tourism, is now open for operations.
- The Annual Easter Egg Hunt on the Village Green was successful even with cooler temperatures and rain.
- Groovin' on the Green will kick off this Saturday.

**Executive Director:** Highlights from the Director's Report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- The request for the full-time sales and marketing employee position was favorably received by the County Commissioners at their meeting today.
- Mr. Breedlove requested the Commissioners approve extending the part-time employment agreement into June and the next fiscal year during their May 14 work session.
- The Crisis Communication Plan has received a first in-person review. Feedback from that meeting will be incorporated into a second draft by staff prior to the next plan review meeting.
- Mr. Breedlove will attend the Southeast Tourism Society Congressional Summit in Washington, DC from June 11 – 13.

#### **Letter of support – Glenville Signage**

A letter of support has been drafted to request the County Commissioners' support in funding the replacement of the 107 North "Welcome" sign in Glenville. This is the last sign to be replaced bringing continuity to the existing wayfinding signage.

**MOTION:** Dale Collins moved to approve the letter of support. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Marketing Committee Appointment**

The Executive Committee would like to recommend Brad Herman to fill the vacancy on the Marketing Committee.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee moved to appoint Brad Herman to the Marketing Committee. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

#### **PR Plan for FY 19-20 – Pineapple PR**

April highlights from Pineapple PR include publicity that reached 44,559,223 readers/viewers with an earned media value of \$104,134.59. Haley Barton, Melissa Webb, and Deborah Stone presented the 2019-2020 PR Plan.

**MOTION:** The Marketing Committee moved to approve the PR Plan for FY 2019-2020. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Marketing Plan for FY 19-20 – Rawle Murdy**

John Kautz presented highlights of the 2019-2020 Marketing Plan. The plan will be research-focused to drive room occupancy during the needs periods identified by Young Strategies. Unique and creative promotions are planned to reach the target market

**MOTION:** The Marketing Committee moved to approve the marketing Plan for FY 2019-2020. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Review and Approval of April Financial Report**

Darlene Fox presented the April Financial Report which was emailed prior to the meeting. April highlights include Occupancy Tax collections of \$62,692.11, penalties of \$1,806.23, and YTD collection totals of \$894,336.14, which is 80.40% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$14,780.34. Collections were up 46.20% from the same period in 2018, and up 9.93% for the fiscal year. 115 accounts reported rentals for March. The April 30 cash balance was \$113,278.82 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. April expenses were \$105,282.64 with YTD expenses totaling \$1,028,139.10. Encumbrances of \$2,083.20 make a combined total of \$1,030,222.30, equaling 85.76% of the budget.

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Request – Part-time Staff Hours**

A letter of request was drafted to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners to fund additional part-time hours for Caleb Sullivan in addition to the internship he has completed. The Executive Board agrees to allow Mr. Sullivan to work part-time until the additional staff member is hired. Funds are available to support this request.

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the request. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Draft Budget Presentation – Set budget hearing – June 19 at 12:55 p.m.**

A draft budget was provided to all board members. The total projected budget for 2019-2020 is \$1,203,573. Fund balance is being used to offset the loss of tax revenue created by the High Hampton closure. Several line items seeing an increase such as training and storage are based on expenses related to the new employee. Printing has also seen an increase due to production of maps for Cashiers, Dillsboro, and Sylva. An increase in capital outlays will fund the improvements to the Visitor Centers. A Public Hearing will be set for June 19, 2019, at 12:55 p.m. prior to the Board of Directors meeting.

#### **Contract approvals FY 19-20**

The following contracts were presented for approval for the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

- Rawle Murdy

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Rawle Murdy contract for FY 2019-2020. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

- Pineapple PR

**MOTION:** Dale Collins moved to approve the Pineapple PR contract for FY 2019-2020. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

- Jackson County Chamber and Visitor Center

**MOTION:** Bob Williams moved to approve the Jackson County Chamber and Visitor Center contract for FY 2019-2020. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

- Cashiers Area Chamber and Visitor Center

**MOTION:** Bob Williams moved to approve the Cashiers Area Chamber and Visitor Center contract for FY 2019-2020. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

- JCTDA Storage Unit

**MOTION:** Jay Grissom moved to approve the JCTDA storage contract for FY 2019-2020. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

- Smoky Mountain News Visitor Guide Production

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Smoky Mountain News contract for FY 2019-2020. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

- Crowdriff Social Media contract

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Crowdriff contract for FY 2019-2020. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Kevin Adams

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Kevin Adams Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Brad Herman seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Robert Stephens

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Robert Stephens Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Brad Herman seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Madison Long

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Madison Long Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Jay Grissom seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Scott Hotaling

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Scott Hotaling Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Brad Herman seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Stacy Redmon

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Stacy Redmon Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

- Photography Contract – Ryan Karcher

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the Ryan Karcher Photography contract for FY 2019-2020. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

### **Announcements/Adjournment**

Mr. Breedlove reminded members to arrive early next month due to the Public Hearing for the budget proposal scheduled for 12:55 p.m.

**MOTION:** Dale Collins moved to adjourn. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

### **Next Meeting**

Wednesday, June 19, 2019, TDA Full Board Meeting at 1:00 pm in the Holt Library Conference Room 112, Southwestern Community College, 447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779.

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Kathy Korb, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: June 19, 2019