



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

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

August 21, 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; Chair Ann Self; Vice Chair Laura Bowers; Secretary Kathy Korb; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Dale Collins, Brad Herman, Ron Mau, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Stephanie Edwards
- **Members absent:** Andrew Harlfinger, Jay Grissom
- **Others in attendance:** Caleb Sullivan, Intern; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda; Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Vice-Chair Bowers and Secretary Korb had no comments at this time.

Review and Approval of June Minutes

Minutes of the June 19, 2019 TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Kathy Korb moved to approve the June 19, 2019 minutes. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of June and July Financial Report

Darlene Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for June include Occupancy Tax collections of \$89,177.75, penalties of \$97.76, and YTD collection totals of \$1,051,686.92, which is 94.54% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$15,546.64. Collections were up 6.65% from the same period in 2018, and up 10.54% for the fiscal year. 167 accounts reported rentals for May. The June 30th cash balance was \$19,014 with investments totaling \$400,000. June expenses were \$75,462.97 with YTD expenses totaling \$1,182,831.19. Zero encumbrances make a combined total of \$1,182,831.19, equaling 97.86% of the budget.

Highlights for July include Occupancy Tax collections of \$122,326.67, penalties of \$95.01, and YTD collection totals of \$122,326.67, which is 12.24% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$17,020.83. Collections were down 9.91% from the same period last year, and down 9.91% for the fiscal year. 206 accounts reported rentals for June. The July 31st cash balance was \$49,323.24 with investments totaling \$400,000. July expenses were \$97,548.62 with YTD expenses totaling \$97,548.62. Encumbrances of \$3,081.06 make a combined total of \$100,629.68, equaling 8.36% of the budget.

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

Contract Approval – AirDNA Contract

Mr. Breedlove provided an overview of the contract. The TDA has been utilizing this data for two years and will formalize the agreement with AirDNA. Information collected through AirDNA includes HomeAway and Airbnb but does not reflect data from VRBO.

MOTION: Bob Williams moved to approve the AirDNA Contract. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Revised Contract – Rawle Murdy

These revisions to the Rawle Murdy contract are to move funds back into fund balance to ensure positive cash flow in the coming fiscal year. Director Breedlove identified two Spring marketing ad campaigns that would be in overlapping markets. A savings of \$6,000 will be realized by eliminating the smaller market buys. Another \$24,000 will be saved by eliminating the contingency for opportunistic media buys. \$10,000 will be eliminated in additional line items. Total savings with the revised Rawle Murdy contract will be \$40,000 to help with budget shortfalls created by the projected loss of tax revenue from High Hampton being off-line for the fiscal year.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the revised contract with Rawle Murdy. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of HR Handbook

The Executive Committee has worked with CraftHR to develop the employee handbook. The handbook will serve as living document which will be amended and revised as needed and has been reviewed by the Jackson County Human Resources, Finance, and Legal departments as well as the TDA Executive Committee. Specific items noted during discussion of the handbook include:

- Paid time off (PTO) (page 22): Sick time and vacation time were combined into Paid Time Off and not accrued as a separate benefit. Time will be accrued based on the fiscal year and must be used by the end of the fiscal year. It was the consensus of the board following discussion to leave the PTO as 14, 21, and 28 days based on years of service.
- Bereavement leave will be four days.
- Twelve paid holidays are identical to that of Jackson County employees.
- Confidentiality and non-disclosure policies along with information requests by media are outlined within the handbook.
- The workweek is based on a 40-hour week; employees are allowed a thirty-minute health and wellness break each day that is not accruable but may be divided into two fifteen minutes breaks.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to approve the HR Handbook with an amendment to include maternity/paternity leave. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

Create new TDA Employee Positions

The transition of HR to TDA oversight will take place on September 1st. The creation of these employee positions includes that of the Executive Director and the Sales and Marketing positions, which was previously approved.

MOTION: Laura Bowers moved that the JCTDA create two employee positions to be full-time employees of the JCTDA with benefits as specified in the HR Employee Handbook. The first position is the Executive Director, based on the job description provided and the second position is the Sales and Marketing Coordinator based on the job description provided. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.

Appoint new TDA Employee Positions

Ms. Self, with appreciation for the outstanding service provided to the Jackson County TDA in the past, appointed Nick Breedlove as Executive Director of the Jackson County TDA. Ms. Self appointed Caleb Sullivan as Marketing and Sales Coordinator of the JCTDA, following his exemplary service during his internship and work over the year.

MOTION: Ann Self moved that the TDA Board enter closed session under NC GS 143-318.11(a)(6) for discussion of personnel matters. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to reenter open session. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

No action was reported taken in closed session. Following closed session, the board set compensation for TDA employee positions.

Set Compensation for TDA Employee Positions

MOTION: Laura Bowers moved to hire Nick Breedlove as the Executive Director of the JCTDA at an annual salary of \$70,000 and with a \$2,500 signing bonus to be paid upon the signing of a contract and a \$2,500 retention bonus to be paid at the end of the first year of hire with benefits to include the benefits in the HR Employee Handbook and to also include acceptance of any sick and vacation leave, not used or paid out, to be carried over from Jackson County employment and added to his JCTDA PTO time, and to credit his service time with the County as equal time with the JCTDA and waive the probationary period for hire and benefit purposes due to the credit from Jackson County employment and that a three year Employee Contract be implemented and signed by the JCTDA and Mr. Breedlove summarizing the terms of employment at the next meeting. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

MOTION: Laura Bowers moved to hire Caleb Sullivan as the Sales and Marketing Coordinator of the JCTDA at an annual salary of \$35,656.23 with benefits to include the benefits in the HR Employee Handbook. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Approve Benefits for TDA Employee Positions

A summary of the JCTDA Employee Benefits Packet was provided prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Bob Williams moved to approve the employee benefits package. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of Budget Amendments

MOTION: Chair Ann Self moved to amend the budget decreasing certain line items in the amount of \$19,914 and increasing toward salaries, benefits, and outsourcing HR in the amount of \$19,914. This results in a net zero dollars in expenditures to the budget. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report: A written report was provided prior to the meeting, which included the following highlights:

- 1,541 guests were served in Sylva and 469 in Dillsboro for a total of 2,010 visitors served.
- The July 4th fireworks event saw in excess of 6,000 people visiting downtown and 2,500 parked along the 107 Corridor to enjoy the show.
- Retail sales for FY 18/19 were \$8,687.15, for a profit of \$3,936.52. Several new colors of fly-fishing shirts are on order along with new "Sylva" tees.
- New leadership welcomed to Sylva include Chancellor Brown of WCU and Sylva PD Chief Haddon. New businesses being welcomed include the Lazy Hiker Brewery and Nantahala Brewing. Balsam Falls Eatery has plans to be open in August.
- Sales for the Our Town and Dining Guides have started.
- The sidewalk repairs are complete with landscaping to happen later this month.
- Tour de Cashiers is slated for September 2nd.

Cashiers Area Chamber: A written report was provided prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

- The TDA was invited to attend a meeting with CAC and Town of Highlands, Highlands Cashiers Land Trust, and Leadership Cashiers to discuss the establishment of a walking trail across the Plateau. A similar trail between Lake Toxaway and Cashiers is being investigated.
- A Red Robin New Member Celebration was hosted at the Bear Valley Farm Red Caboose Office. The Christmas tree farm will host choose-and-cut activities, hayride events, and have plans for a weddings and event venue.
- Chamber representatives met with NCDOT and LEO officials to address area traffic safety concerns. The Chamber will submit a formal request to NCDOT for a traffic study.
- July 4th saw an increase in visitors with the traditional concert and fireworks being a crowd favorite.

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

- FY 18/19 finished ahead of budget which will have a positive effect on the fund balance needed to supplement the shortfall from the closure of High Hampton for renovations. The approximate \$13,000 decrease in revenue for July 2019 over July 2018 is also likely attributed to High Hampton.
- Director Breedlove and Berkeley Young presented an update on the Visitor Research and Strategic Plan to county leadership on August 13th.
- Sessions to present the Visitor Research and Strategic Plan to the public are scheduled for the Jackson County Public Library Community Room on September 3rd and the Albert Carlton Public Library Community Room on September 4th, both to begin at 5:30.
- Print projects in the works include reprints of the Jackson County Chamber's Dining guide and the Dillsboro Map (in black and white) for the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad. The new Jackson County Ale Trail Map is nearing completion.
- The Crisis Plan is approximately 75% complete at this time and will become a priority item as time allows for staff and board members.

Announcements/Adjournment

Bob Williams shared with the board that several shops in Dillsboro has participated in an effort extending shopping hours on Saturday evenings by staying open later, and several have reported successful sales during this time. Mr. Williams thanked Chamber Director Julie Spiro for her assistance in the efforts.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to adjourn. Bob Williams seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The Wednesday, September 18, 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: September 18, 2019