



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

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

January 15, 2020 (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; Kathy Korb, Secretary; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Dale Collins, Brad Herman, Andrew Harlfinger, Jay Grissom, Robert Jumper, Ron Mau, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Eli Ramirez (representing Cashiers Area Chamber for Stephanie Edwards)
- **Members absent:** None
- **Others in attendance:** Sales and Marketing Manager Caleb Sullivan; Debbie Coffey and Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerks

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment

None.

Recognize Chair and Secretary

No comments.

Review and Approval of December Minutes

Minutes of the December 18, 2019. Minutes of December Meeting sent via email prior to meeting. There were no comments and/or corrections.

MOTION: Robert Jumper moved to approve the December 18, 2019, minutes. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval December Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for December include Occupancy Tax collections of 73,824.34, penalties of \$5.00, and YTD collection totals of \$650,329.64, which is 65.05% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$11,250.00. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$7,338.37. 133 accounts reported rentals for November. Collections were down 11.50% from the same period in 2018, with a decrease of 5.78% for the fiscal year. The December 31, 2019 cash balance was \$216,695.34 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. December expenses were \$79,482.83 with YTD expenses totaling \$587,745.64. Encumbrances of \$6,330.00 make a combined total of \$594,075.64, equaling 49.36% of the budget.

Mr. Collins asked whether the Jackson County TDA request an audit of Airbnb/VRBO's collections. Ms. Fox said that the request can be made about an audit.

Mr. Breedlove pointed that the cash balance for this fiscal year to date and the cash balance for last year are close and that collections are continuing to grow during a period of decreased revenue per the December financial report and during that month, accommodations saw an increase of roughly 355 room nights booked.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the financial report as presented. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

Vote to Approve Robert Jumper as Vice Chair

During December meeting when Ms. Self nominated Mr. Jumper as Vice Chair, however a vote was not taken.

MOTION: Ms. Self, Chair, motioned to nominate Robert Jumper as Vice Chair. Anna Thomas seconded. Motion carried.

Strategic Plan Committee Assignments

Applications for Strategic Plan Committees were submitted prior to January 6 as stated during December meeting. The Executive Committee appointed committee members based on background and insight. The Committee Rosters for 2020-2021 were presented at the meeting. There are two TBD committee members who have not responded to the invitation to join.

Chairing the committees are as follows:

- Community and Visitor Engagement Committee - Mary Lanning
- Product and Experience Development Committee - Robert Jumper
- Sustainability and Stewardship Committee - Dale Collins
- Grant Program Restructure Committee - Megan Orr

Mr. Breedlove will email all committee members an official meeting invitation. Ms. Self explained that Committee meetings will follow the same attendance rules as Board meetings—only two unexcused absences are allowed.

Ms. Self and Mr. Breedlove pointed out that the Committee members and Chair are responsible for the work produced by the committee. Staff will be on-hand to direct and guide in adherence to the Strategic Plan.

No questions are comments regarding Committees. No vote is needed for the Committee structures.

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber: Highlights of the Jackson County Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

Overview of 2019:

- 19,221 Visitors Served
- 2,401 Phone Inquires
- 20,248 Visitor Guides Mailed to Welcome Centers
- 5,726 Fly Fishing Maps sent to Targeted Locations
- 14,130 Direct visitor Inquiries Fulfilled

Upcoming Events:

- Chili Cook-off at Mad Batter January 21, 2020
- On Martin Luther King Day the Chamber will be cleaning up litter in parts of Jackson County in partnership with other Chamber groups on this National Day of Service. Two cleanup events per year are planned.

A Facebook Ad showcasing the WNC Fly Fishing Trail is generating a good number of leads.

The Chamber has received an STS Top 20 award for the Hook, Line, and Drinker Festival. Plans are being made for the 2020 Hook, Line, and Drinker Festival.

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

- Sapphire Valley Ski Resort Outhouses Races are scheduled for February 15.
- N.C. Highway 107 Traffic Study- The Chamber will host meeting with DOT officials on January 16 to discuss results.
- 2020 Leadership Cashiers Class will hold a 1-1/2 day retreat in early February.
- The Chamber Board Hosted Strategic Planning Session to discuss priorities and programming for 2020.
- TWSA is moving forward on Horsepasture River Wastewater Treatment Plant construction.
- Vision Cashiers will be installing Skyrunner, the free community wifi network within the next 90 days
- Continued planning efforts to create a Cashiers-Highlands hiking trail and exploring Cashiers-Lake Toxaway segment across Panthertown Valley.

Mr. Breedlove updated the board that Vision Cashiers will be offering Wifi to businesses for tiered payment plans which offer greater speed and reliability than is currently available.

JCTDA Staff Report

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

- The targeted ads for a **winter** promotion are doing well.
- **WCU Chancellor Kelli R. Brown's Installation** will take place on March 27, 2020. The theme is "Honoring Out Promise." A committee has been planning for some time. The event will impact hotel nights in county. Approximately 600 dignitaries will be traveling to WCU, which is a massive influx of visitors at a traditional slow time. Western Carolina University is holding 20 rooms at each hotel. JCTDA Staff is working to get additional hotel block room rates.
- **Mr. Breedlove serves on the Harris Regional Hospital Roundtable** and presented updates from their latest meeting: Harris Regional Hospital in Sylva has added 12 new providers in disciplines including Pulmonary and Family Medicine. Their first heart catherization was done in August 2017, in October of 2019 the first heart intervention was performed. They expect to do their first peripheral vascular procedure in the next 45 days. Harris has added a breast surgeon and plastic surgeon for breast reconstruction. They are working on cancer center addition to be complete in August 2020 which will be able to treat about 30% more conditions which means that many who drive to Asheville two hours roundtrip for a 5-minute procedure can soon be done locally.
- **A Super Bowl segment filmed on Medal of Honor recipient Kyle Carpenter was filmed at the Historic Courthouse.**
- Julie Spiro updated the board that a new urgent care provider, **Jackson Medical Associates**, which is not affiliated with Harris Regional, is located on Skyland Drive. The public grand opening will be next month.
- A new event venue, **The Parker Mill**, located just outside Sylva, is primarily a wedding venue but has facilities for conferences and smaller party-type events. The main room can hold 400 people for a large wedding.

Announcements/Adjournment

- January 25 Tuckaseegee Fly Shop will clean up a portion of Scotts Creek.
- Staff and Executive Committee are working on details for the Board to experience a "FAM (Familiarization) Trip" of Jackson County. The tentative date is August 2020 instead of a Board Meeting and details are being worked out.
- Ms. Self announced that she would not be physically present at February meeting, but will participate via conference call.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to adjourn. Jay Grissom seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Next Meeting

The Wednesday, February 19, 2020 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: March 18, 2020