



MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors Meeting March 17, 2020 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m. Zoom Teleconference

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Mr. Jumper. Mr. Jumper reminded attendees of Zoom meeting etiquette.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Robert Jumper, Chair; Ann Self, Vice Chair; Megan Orr, Secretary; Board Members Dale Collins, Daniel Fletcher, Darlene Fox, Craig Smith, Scott Greene, Stephanie Edwards, Mark Jones, and Jay Grissom.
- **Members absent:** Julie Spiro
- **Others in attendance:** Sales and Marketing Manager Caleb Sullivan; Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; and Rachel Croyle, Rawle Murdy.

Approval of Amended Agenda

Agenda was sent prior to meeting via email; however, Mr. Jumper wanted to add to the agenda the following items:

1. Participation with the Nature and Forest Therapy Trail Program at a cost of \$2,000.
2. Funding request for Keep Our Mountains Clean and Green initiative at a cost of \$1,000 to buy grabbers for litter pick-up.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.*

Public Comment: None

Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Ms. Self, Vice Chair, commented that Southern Jackson County is very busy as evidenced by the increase in traffic and diners and people in the local park. Megan Orr, Secretary, had no comment. Mark Jones, County Commissioner, commented that the Rural Digital Opportunities Fund press release that was presented to the Commissioners states that Spectrum has been awarded a \$16M contract to supply broadband to Jackson County. Further information is forth coming.

Review and Approval of December Minutes

Minutes of the December 16, 2020. Minutes of the December meeting sent via email prior to meeting. No comments were made.

MOTION: *Scott Greene moved to approve the December 16, 2020 minutes. Daniel Fletcher seconded. The motion carried.*

Review and Approval of December 31, 2020 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for December 2020 include Occupancy Tax collections of \$145,639.54 penalties of \$18.24, and YTD collection totals of \$1,012,195.83, which is 96.43% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$21,467.41. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$37,439.55. 106 accounts reported rentals for November rentals (decrease of 27 accounts from last year). Collections were up 655.24% (\$51,827.94) from the same period in 2019. The December 31, 2020 cash balance is \$874,404.51 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. December expenses were \$64,297.96 with YTD expenses totaling \$469,499.65 with encumbrances of \$3,491 for a combined total of \$472,990.65, equaling 43.62% of the budget.

Review and Approval of January 31, 2021 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for January 2021 include Occupancy Tax collections of \$134,198.93 penalties of \$152.33, and YTD collection totals of \$1,146.39, which is 109.22% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$20,867.10. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$36,009.14. 98 accounts reported rentals for December rentals (decrease of 24 accounts from last year). Collections were up 68.67% (\$54,699.13) from the same period in 2020. The January 31, 2020 cash balance is \$911,014.31 with investments totaling \$400,000. January expenses were \$99,596.94 with YTD expenses totaling \$569,096.15 with encumbrances of \$2,639.00 for a combined total of \$571,735.15, equaling 52.72% of the budget.

Review and Approval of February 28, 2021 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for February 2021 include Occupancy Tax collections of \$89,089.11 penalties of \$5.00, and YTD collection totals of \$1,235.48, which is 117.71% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$33,554.90. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$11,923.55 and the VACASA, NC was \$5,140.50. 82 accounts reported rentals for January (decrease of 14 accounts from last year). Collections were up 59.44% (\$32,215.36) from the same period in 2020. The February 28, 2020 cash balance is \$937,952.53 with investments totaling \$400,000. February expenses were \$86,594.01 with YTD expenses totaling \$655,690.16 with encumbrances of \$6,313.00 for a combined total of \$662,003.16, equaling 61.05% of the budget.

MOTION: *Dale Collins moved to approve the December, January, and February financial reports as presented. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.*

Motion to Approve Audit Contract

Mr. Jumper called for a motion to approve the Audit Contract. Ms. Fox commented that the contract was the same as last year.

MOTION: *Ann Self motioned. Scott Greene seconded. Motion carried.*

Approve the NC LGERS Death Benefits Resolution

Mr. Jumper called for a motion to approve the NC LGERS Death Benefits Resolution. Mr. Breedlove commented that the NC LGERS is the local government retirement system who announced that they will provide a one-time death benefit in the amount of \$25,000 to \$50,000 to employees. This benefit would be paid by the employer. The resolution must be approved by the Board so that the rate would be established. Mr. Jumper emailed the resolution to the Board prior to this meeting.

MOTION: *Megan Orr motioned. Daniel Fletcher seconded. Motion carried.*

Participation in the Nature and Forest Therapy Trail Program

Mr. Jumper called for an explanation of the motion. Mr. Breedlove explained that there are few forest therapy trail programs in the U.S. Jackson County has a certified forest trail expert, Dr. Mark Ellison. The TDA has marketed the involvement of Dr. Ellison in all the information on therapy trail hikes. Pinnacle Park in Sylva would be certified as a therapy trail. The \$2,000 fee goes to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy (\$1,000) and to do the paperwork for Dr. Ellison to certify the Pinnacle Park Trail (\$1,000). The TDA staff recommends the participation.

Mr. Jumper called for a motion to approve the participation in the Nature and Forest Therapy Trail program.

MOTION: *Megan Orr motioned. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.*

Keep Our Mountains Clean and Green Funding Request

Mr. Breedlove explained that the TDA has promoted sustainability in Jackson County and to keep our mountains clean and green. The TDA was approached by Norma Medford Clayton, who is one of the people who started the annual trash pick-up in Jackson County. The volunteers are often elderly and cannot bend over to pick up objects and it is often not safe for the volunteers to pick up objects on the roadside. This funding would be for purchasing "grabbers" to pick up the trash.

During the discussion of the motion, Ms. Edwards pointed out that the Cashiers Chamber has been paying for professional clean up of NC 64 to the Macon County line because of the safety issues.

Mr. Jumper called for a motion to approve the Keeping Our Mountains Clean and Green Funding Request.

MOTION: *Craig Smith motioned. Scott Greene seconded. Motion carried.*

JCTDA Staff Report/Marketing Report/PR Report

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove provided the board with a written report listing all the activities of the month prior to the meeting via email and presented the following updates that were not included in the report:

- Staff has been busy with committee work. The Sustainability Committee has made great strides recently by coordinating with other towns, the NC DOT, Parks and Recreation and others to address issues raised by the towns. The Product and Experience Development Committee has been focusing on capital projects and a method for prioritizing both short-and-long-term projects. The Grant Committee is working on restructuring committee meetings.
- The Visitor Guide has been sent to the publisher and is awaiting final revisions before being sent to the printer in approximately two weeks.
- Work on the budget is underway currently with a projected budget total of \$1,375,000.
- The \$40,000 Wedding Contest launched on March 15, 2021 for community heroes who had to postpone their wedding due to COVID-19. Vendors are donating all items. Couples will send a video telling us how they served the community during the pandemic.
- Mr. Breedlove expects a busy summer due to a pent-up demand for travel due to the pandemic since more people are receiving the vaccine.
- Social media viewership was strong in January due to two giveaways—Valentine’s Day giveaway and a stay at Bear Lake.

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber: Highlights of the Jackson County Chamber report was emailed prior to the meetings. Ms. Spiro was absent, so Mr. Breedlove presented the highlights of the report.

- The Chamber is focused on the Shop Small campaign. Boutique week was featured and generated traffic to downtown Sylva.
- The Brunch campaign has drawn traffic to downtown.
- The Chamber is working with the TDA staff to publish the Sylva dining guide.
- Hook, Line and Drinker is confirmed for August 21 along with the July 4th fireworks and the holiday fireworks on December 17.

Cashiers Area Chamber: The Cashiers Area Chamber report was given by Ms. Edwards, who commented that the Chamber is excited about High Hampton’s coming reopening. Restaurants in Cashiers are reopening for the season earlier than they have in the past.

The Cashiers area Visitors Guide and the Shopping Guide are in production. Kiosks in town are being filled and maintained. The Cashiers area is in need to workers and is working with Mark Jones to get Jackson County transit authority to run a scheduled route to Southern Jackson.

Updates from Individual Board Members

Scott Greene reports that High Hampton reopening is scheduled for April 22 and they are currently hiring staff. They will have approximately 165 staff members when fully staffed. They have arranged a shuttle bus to bring students from WCU to work.

The High Hampton Club will open May 21 with a preview weekend for members when golf course, restaurants and club house will open.

Announcements

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday April 21, 2021 TDA Full Board Meeting will be at 1:00 pm via Zoom Conferencing.

Megan Orr, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: April 21, 2021