



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

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Budget Public Hearing
Board of Directors Meeting
August 19, 2021 (Thursday) @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, Julie Spiro, Daniel Fletcher, Craig Smith, Mark Jones, and Jay Grissom
- **Members absent:** None
- **Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; John Kautz, Rachel Croyle, Rawle Murdy; Ann Bernard, Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group

Approve Amended Agenda

The proposed Agenda amendment was sent by email prior to meeting.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the amended agenda. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Robert Jumper, Chair, commented on the recent flooding in Haywood County.

Ann Self commented that the Cahiers area was also flooded due to the heavy rain.

Megan Orr had no comments.

Mark Jones, County Commissioner, reported that "things in the County are going well."

Review and Approval of June 16, 2021 Minutes

Minutes of the June 16, 2021. Minutes of the June meeting were sent via email prior to meeting. No comments were made.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the June 16, 2021 minutes. Scott Greene seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of June 30, 2021 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for June include Occupancy Tax collections of \$200,102 penalties of \$652, and YTD collection totals of \$1,803,303, which is 92.97% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$46,206.53. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$28,132.73 and the VACASA, NC total was \$6,976.37. 101 accounts reported rentals for May rentals (increase of 27 accounts from last year). Collections were up 164% (\$124,709.60) from the same period in 2020. The June 30, 2021 cash balance is \$1,147,660.43 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. June expenses were \$67,030.92 with YTD expenses totaling \$1,029,949.84 with encumbrances of \$1,397.00 for a combined total of \$1,031,346.84, equaling 51.39% of the budget.

Review and Approval of July 31, 2021 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for July include Occupancy Tax collections of \$306,383.43 penalties of \$487.74, and YTD collection totals of \$306,383.43, which is 22.28% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$38,540.71. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$68,092.65 and the VACASA, NC total was \$9,632.01. 107 accounts reported rentals for June rentals (increase of 6 accounts from last year). Collections were up 63.38% (\$119,038.99) from the same period in 2020. The July 31, 2021 cash balance is \$1,263,445.10 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. July expenses were \$174,353.08 with FYTD expenses totaling \$174,353.08 with encumbrances of \$80,759.68 for a combined total of \$255,112.76, equaling 14.54% of the budget.

Mr. Breedlove requested that Ms. Fox calculate and report the available fund balance less the state-mandated requirement of 8-percent and less the JCTDA’s Fund Balance Reserve Policy of 3 to 6 months of operating expenditures. Ms. Fox agreed to do this calculation.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the June and July financial reports as presented. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approve Contract with Magellan Strategy Group for Capital Project Program Review

There is a proposal to have the draft application and guidelines for the TDA Capital Projects Program reviewed by Chris Cavanaugh of Magellan Strategy Group. The Capital Projects committee has spent several months researching best practices and obtaining feedback for the capital projects program draft. The proposal is to review the draft and make recommendations to limit the JCTDA liability and to create a thriving destination and to use investments to ensure a maximum return on investments. The review process will take approximately four weeks and result in a draft to be sent to County Legal, County Finance, and lastly and County Commissioners.

Mr. Jumper stated that it is always a good idea to get a third-party analysis for capital investments and the proposal has his recommendation.

MOTION: Scott Greene moved to approve the Magellan Strategy Group review of capital project program. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approve Budget Amendment

Mr. Breedlove explained that the budget was increased \$3,000 from the fund balance to cover the Magellan Strategy Group expense. The expense will be added to the Board Member expense line item.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the budget amendment. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approve Grant Request for WCU/Mountain Heritage Day

A request was presented for a \$2,000 grant from WCU for the September 28 Mountain Heritage Day festival for general festival support. Mr Breedlove said the Executive Committee has reviewed this application as a grant review committee had not yet been established.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the grant request for WCU/Mountain Heritage Day. Scott Greene seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval to the Addendum to the JCTDA HR Policy

This addendum deals with the return-to-work policies by the JCTDA staff during the COVID 19 pandemic. The policies include the following:

- A. COVID 19 policies:
 - 1. Staff must be vaccinated or have a valid exemption for vaccination.
 - 2. Remote work policy.
 - 3. Guidelines for those exposed to COVID will follow Jackson County Health Dept. protocols or CDC guidelines, whichever are stricter at the time of the event.
- B. Volunteer Days will allow the staff to volunteer two (2) days per year with a community organization with pay.
- C. Travel Days allows employees who take a work-related trip of three days or longer to have a paid day off to recuperate from the travel.

MOTION: Ann Self moved to approve the Addendum to the HR Policy. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

JCTDA Staff Report/Marketing Report/PR Report

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove provided the board with a report listing all the activities of the month as follows:

- Mr. Breedlove sent a partner e-news report last week. There is much static information in the report and Mr. Breedlove encourages all board members to read the report. The statistics show that visitors spent 44% more money in Jackson County than residents at restaurants, excluding fast food. Total spending in restaurants is up 27%, and retail shopping is up 15%.
- Mr. Breedlove shared the Visa dashboard with the board. The numbers in the dashboard are proprietary and cannot be shared with the public.
- Mr. Breedlove has begun a monthly Director's Brief which is a snapshot of Jackson County visitor information and information about the TDA's activities. There is much information included in this report. He encouraged board members who had not opened the email yet to read through the updates.
- Community updates include flooding in Haywood and Transylvania Counties. COVID cases are on the rise, with two deaths in Jackson County this week. Both Cherokee Hospital and Harris ICU's are full with COVID Delta cases. Ninety percent of COVID hospital admissions were unvaccinated, according to a report from an ER Doctor in The Sylva Herald. Mr. Breedlove has asked the County Manager if a mask mandate is being considered in Jackson County.
- Occupancy taxes during the month of July were at a record for an individual month of \$306,000. Vacation rentals are the primary driver of the increase.
- The staff is working on a Jackson County video campaign featuring our wide-open spaces. Several ad campaigns will be launched in the coming months targeting specific interest groups. A "brew pass" campaign is being planned for Sylva and Cashiers, which will use the technology platform Bandwango and gain valuable analytics about redemptions.

Social Media Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on Social Media activities. August organic hits on website is looking strong, despite dips in hits the previous month. Mr. Sullivan is representing JCTDA at various trade shows and conferences in the coming months.

Marketing Report

The marketing report was emailed with the meeting agenda. Mr. Kautz of Rawle Murdy introduced Rachel Croyle who reported that Rawle Murdy is focusing on market segmentation this coming year. They plan to treat each market segment with different types of advertising based on interest.

PR Report

Ms. Long of LHG, reported that interest is increasing with the print media in travel and destinations. LHG has traded trips to Jackson County with spreads in travel magazines. There will be a story about Jackson County in the Atlanta Journal Constitution in the coming weeks.

Jackson County Chamber Directors Report

The report was emailed with the meeting agenda. Ms. Spiro presented highlights as follows:

- The Hook, Line and Drinker Festival will be held this weekend. COVID 19 vaccines will be available and hygiene protocols will be in place.
- Greening Up the Mountains is coming up August 28.
- The Fall Fling Festival will be held in Dillsboro September 4.
- The Chamber annual golf tournament will be held September 16.

Cashiers Area Chamber

Ms. Edwards presented some highlights below:

- Because of the national coverage of the local flooding, the Chamber has been responding to many inquiries about conditions in Cashiers.
- The Chamber has implemented COVID protocols again and is installing hand sanitizers in more businesses.

New Business

None.

Updates from Individual Board Members

None

Announcements

None

Adjourn

MOTION: Dale Collins motioned to adjourn. Scott Greene seconded. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on September 14, 2021 via Zoom Conferencing.

Megan Orr, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: September 14, 2021