



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

## MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 15, 2021 (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; Board Members Dale Collins, Daniel Fletcher, Craig Smith, Scott Greene, Craig Smith, and Jay Grissom, Megan Orr, Secretary; Mark Jones, Julie Spiro
- **Members absent:** Stephanie Edwards and Darlene Fox
- **Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Caleb Sullivan, Sale and Marketing Manager JCTDA; New Board Member Ashlie Mitchell

### Approve Agenda

The proposed Agenda was sent by email prior to meeting.

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda. Scott Greene seconded. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

### Nominations/Elect Vice Chair, Secretary

Vice Chair: Craig Smith nominated Daniel Fletcher as Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. Megan Orr motioned to close nominations. Voting was unanimous for Daniel Fletcher to be the new Vice Chair.

Secretary: Scott Greene nominated Megan Orr to continue as Secretary. There were no other nominations. Dale Collins motioned to close nominations. Voting was unanimous for Megan Orr as Secretary. Megan Orr will continue as Secretary.

### Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Robert Jumper, Chair, commented that economic development in Cherokee is moving on various projects such Community Center and Casino improvements. Tourism is booming.

Daniel Fletcher, Vice Chair, had issues with audio on his computer.

Megan Orr, Secretary, stated that the Clarion signage is installed and renovations on the former Quality Inn and the Clarion is fully opened for business.

Mark Jones, County Commissioner, congratulated Mr. Breedlove, and Mr. Sullivan on their positive JCTDA year-end review presentation to the County Commissioners work session.

#### **Review and Approval of November 17, 2021 Minutes**

Minutes of the November 17, 2021 meeting were sent via email prior to meeting. No comments were made.

**MOTION:** *Megan Orr moved to approve the November 17, 2021 minutes. Scott Greene seconded. The motion carried.*

#### **Review and Approval of November 30, 2021 Financial Report**

Ms. Fox was absent. Mr. Breedlove presented the financial reports. Highlights for November include Occupancy Tax collections of \$284,960.83 penalties of \$133.74, and YTD collection totals of \$1,219,506.40, which is 88.69% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$38,206.33. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$47,155.63 and the VACASA, NC total was \$12,303.81. 93 accounts reported rentals for October rentals (increase of 4 accounts from last year). Collections were up 33.57% (\$71,648.78) from the same period in 2020. The November 30, 2021 cash balance is \$1,797,012.3 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. November expenses were \$118,637.83 with FYTD expenses totaling \$858,841.72 with encumbrances of \$60,057.06 for a combined total of \$918,898.78, equaling 59.30% of the budget.

**MOTION:** *Dale Collins moved to approve the November financial report as presented. Scott Greene seconded. The motion carried.*

#### **Recognize Outgoing Board Member Ann Self**

Ms. Self thanked the Board for the honor of serving on the Board. Mr. Breedlove presented Ms. Self with a plaque for her service from 2015 to 2021.

#### **Annual Report/Social Media Report/Marketing Report/PR Report**

**Executive Director:** Mr. Breedlove provided the board with the annual/year-end report via email with the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Breedlove presented highlights of the annual report and yearend review as follows:

- Jackson County was second in visitor spending in WNC behind Buncombe County.
- People visiting Jackson County put 2,141 citizens to work in Jackson County and generated \$84.5 million in paychecks.
- People visiting Jackson County pent \$292 million at local businesses, which averages \$802/day and generated \$23.9 million in state and local taxes/year.
- Airbnb rentals have increased significantly to approximately 60% of the total share of the lodging market in the last three years.

- Accommodation sales for fiscal YTD for 21-22 is \$38 million with 8 months of collections remaining.
- Mr. Breedlove and Mr. Sullivan have attended several travel sales events in the past year, and both have attained Professional Credentials. Mr. Sullivan was named one of Destinations International 30 Under 30 for 2021 and co-chairs the Southeast Tourism Society Group Sales monthly meetings.
- The Capital Projects subcommittee has finalized its draft application. The draft Capital Projects application and guidelines were reviewed by Magellan Strategy Associates and the application is being reviewed by the County legal and finance departments.
- Grants have been given to the Urban Land Institute for \$35,000 to study growth planning in the Cashiers area and to the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to produce videos of artisans in Dillsboro to generate awareness of Appalachian crafts in the amount of \$3,800.
- The new subcommittee, the JCTDA Sustainability and Stewardship Committee has produced outcomes in 2021 to (1) fund litter pickup tools for 'Keep our Mountains Clean and Green' (2) increased annual donations to the Pinnacle Park Foundation and Friends of Panthertown Valley for trail maintenance (3) participated in the Leave No Trace® Nationwide Hotspot for Panthertown Valley.
- Mr. Sullivan presented the review of group sales. He represented Jackson County's lodging industry at two virtual and five in-person group sales shows.

### **Social Media Report**

Mr. Sullivan presented the year end highlights compared to 2021 as follows:

- There was a 171% increase in the number of times that someone viewed posts to over 67 million.
- There was a 119% increase in engagements (likes, shares and comments) to nearly 3.4 million.
- Our social media audience is over 255 thousand fans, an increase of 11% over 2020.
- We reached over 25K followers on Instagram.
- We reached over 228K page likes on Facebook.

### **Advertising Report**

Mr. Breedlove stated that advertising has resulted in an average of 70K visitors to the JCTDA and 17,100 visitors to the website have requested a Visitor Guide or signed up for e-news.

### **Public Relations**

The recently hired public relations firm, Lou Hammond Group, has done aggressive work to connect to markets that the JCTDA has not explored before and since October have hosted seven media destinations.

### **Other Updates**

Three billboards were put up along US 441 from Franklin, Hwy 74 from Asheville, and 23/74 from Cherokee advertising Jackson County's culinary, brewery and shopping destinations.

The TDA partnered with Castle Ladyhawke and Bear Lake Reserve on a national giveaway of a dream wedding valued at \$40,000, which was held November 4.

JCTDA recently moved to a larger office space to allow for staff expansion and a place for meetings.

JCTDA currently has the Ale Trail Pass promotion going on to reward those individuals who visit four of our breweries within one year. Those who check-in at the Chamber after visiting the breweries will receive a free pint glass.

The TDA has acquired services for traveler research, which gives a comprehensive overview of where people are going and how much they are spending in Jackson County.

### **Jackson County Chamber Directors Report**

The report was emailed as an attachment to the agenda. Ms. Spiro updated the report as follows:

- The Ale Trail Pass has brought many visitors and residents in the Visitor Center.
- The Visitor Center saw 1954 visitors in November.
- There will be Holiday fireworks and a concert on Friday December 17 at 6:30 in downtown Sylva.
- The Luminaries in Dillsboro brought business into Dillsboro and several business owners reported that November was their “best month in history.”
- Concerts on the Creek bands have been booked.
- Hook, Line and Drinker planning is complete.
- The Chamber is working on the planning for July 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Cashiers Area Chamber Director Report**

Ms. Edwards was absent. Mr. Breedlove presented he report updates and highlights as follows:

- The Christmas parade in Cashiers/Highlands combined on the same day so that the floats can be used in both parades, was a success.
- The Chamber has been working on community awards.
- The Chamber is preparing for the Urban Land Institute panel to be held January 23-28 in Cashiers.

### **New Business**

The draft of the proposed Executive Committee and full Board meetings schedule for 2022. Mr. Jumper asked members to review the dates. Mr. Breedlove pointed out that normally in July and October are not held. Meetings are scheduled for each month since an application for a capital project will necessitate a need for a full Board meeting. If there are no applications, the July and October meetings will be cancelled.

### **Updates from Individual Board Members**

Mr. Jumper welcomed Ashlie Lanning-Mitchell to the Board and expressed that he is looking forward to working with her in the coming year.

Craig Smith stated that his organization is putting their work into Secret Season to get guests in January and February and creating partnerships with local businesses to bring Bear Lake visitors to town.

Dale Collins commented that he had a fan trip with Nick Hearn for fly fishing. Mr. Hearn put content about Jackson County on Instagram for his 36,000 followers.

Scott Greene commented that High Hampton is decorated for the holidays, and they are looking forward to Secret Season since High Hampton has seen bookings for January. They are bringing in artists, chefs and authors who will be presenting classes on Saturday to guest with a meet and greet on Friday nights in January to March.

**Announcements**

None

**Adjourn**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held January 19, 2021 via Zoom Conferencing.

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Megan Orr, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: January 19, 2021