



MINUTES

**Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
March 23, 2022 (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; Daniel Fletcher, Vice Chair; Megan Orr, Secretary; Board Members Craig Smith, Ashlie Mitchell-Lanning, Julie Spiro, Darlene Fox, Stephanie Edwards, Mark Jones, and Dale Collins
- **Members absent:** Jay Grissom and Scott Greene
- **Others in attendance:** Caleb Sullivan, Sales and Marketing Manager JCTDA; Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk, Ann Bernard, Lou Hammond Group; John Kautz, Rawle Murdy

Approve Agenda

The proposed Agenda was sent by email prior to meeting.

MOTION: Daniel Fletcher moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Robert Jumper, Chair, did not have any comments.

Daniel Fletcher, Vice Chair, did not have any comments.

Megan Orr, Secretary, did not have any comments.

Mark Jones, County Commissioner, did not have any comments.

Review and Approval of January 19, 2022 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting sent via email prior to meeting. No comments were made.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the January 19, 2021 minutes. Daniel Fletcher seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of January 31, 2022 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for January include Occupancy Tax collections of \$150,880.78 penalties of \$48.36, and YTD collection totals of \$1,582,760.33, which is 71.94% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$26,931.79. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$32,901.26 and the VACASA, NC total was \$7,466.89. 71 accounts reported rentals for December rentals (decrease of 25 accounts from last year). Collections were up 12.34% from the same period in 2021. The January 31, 2022 cash balance is \$327,491.96 with investments totaling \$2,000,000.00. January expenses were \$129,312.91 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,092,905.79 with encumbrances of \$58,394.73 for a combined total of \$1,151,000.52, equaling 43.79% of the budget.

Review and Approval of February 28, 2022 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for February include Occupancy Tax collections of \$101,973.85 penalties of \$33.19, and YTD collection totals of \$1,684,734.18, which is 76.58% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$42,534.22. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$0.00 and the VACASA, NC total was \$5,247.62. 71 accounts reported rentals for January rentals (decrease of 11 accounts from last year). Collections were up 14.49% from the same period in 2021. The February 28, 2022 cash balance is \$305,420.40 with investments totaling \$2,000,000.00. February expenses were \$124,776.16 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,217,194.21 with encumbrances of \$104,368.25 for a combined total of \$1,321,562.46, equaling 50.27% of the budget.

MOTION: *Dale Collins moved to approve the January and February financial reports as presented. Megan Orr seconded. The motion carried.*

Approve Audit Contract

Ms. Fox explained the details of the audit contract with Martin Starnes and Associates, CPA, PA for the fiscal year ending 6/30/2022. This contract is with the same firm that has performed the audit for the last two years. The amount of the contract is \$7,200.00. The audit is performed once a year at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Breedlove informed new board members that they may receive an email from the auditors with questions about fraud and internal control.

MOTION: *Craig Smith moved to approve the Audit Contract. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.*

Review Grant Request

Public Art in Downtown Sylva submitted a grant request to paint a mural on the building at Innovation Brewing/Pie Times Pizza facing Jackson General Store for \$3,000. The mural will incorporate a bear and mountains. The Jackson Arts Council will provide \$500 funding, the N.C. Arts Council will provide \$500 for the total of \$4,000 for the project. The Executive Committee reviewed the request and since the Innovation/Pie Times name and logo will be on the mural, the JCTDA should fund \$500. The Executive Committee realized that other businesses may want art on their privately owned buildings, so they did not want to set a precedence for funding other public art.

Craig Smith asked if there was a discussion to put the JCTDA logo on the mural. Mr. Breedlove responded that the matter was not discussed; however, in the future, he will find out if the JCTDA can get some sort of recognition for funding. He further suggested that funding could be through the Jackson Arts Council.

Dale Collins commented that he wondered what Jackson General Store thinks of the mural since there is some confusion about parking between the Store and Innovation. Megan Orr reiterated that she does not think that funding should not be more than \$500; however, she would like to see some sort of logo for Play On/JCTDA.

The project has already begun. Mr. Breedlove stated that the grant request should possibly be put on hold until there are discussions between the Arts Council and the Innovation owners. Mr. Jumper agreed that a follow-up will be done next month.

JCTDA Director's Report/Staff Report

The director's report was emailed with the agenda. Mr. Breedlove gave highlights and updates. The Visitor's Guide is being printed at this time and the cost has increased by approximately \$20,000 over last year for the same number of copies. Funds were included in the budget for cost increases. Mr. Breedlove mentioned that a budget amendment may be required later this year for unforeseen cost increases. Mr. Breedlove and Mr. Sullivan attended the VisitNC conference in Durham for the first time in two years. The conference was very productive, and many contacts were generated. Broadband funding in underserved rural areas (Jackson County) was discussed with N.C. elected officials and Jackson County is scheduled to receive \$600,000 to fund the broadband coverage effort, which would increase the attractiveness of Jackson County as a tourist destination.

A new hire has come aboard at JCTDA, Jon Moore as Social Media and Digital Content Specialist. Due to a death in the family, Mr. Moore could not attend this meeting.

JCTDA is collecting a list of farms and other agricultural businesses in Jackson County for the Farm Tour App.

The state's first therapy trail at Pinnacle Park was dedicated. Work is progressing on making a map of Pinnacle Park trails and is approximately 95% complete.

TDA staff has been working on the new budget; however, with inflation and uncertain world events, it has been difficult to pin down exact amounts since any number of factors will affect tourism in the next 12-18 months.

It seems that soon in-person JCTDA board meetings will soon be safe and feasible since COVID cases are decreasing and restrictions are being lifted. The goal is to return to in-person meetings as soon as possible.

Mr. Sullivan updated the board on his attendance at a tour operators trade conference in February where he had meetings with tour operators and made contacts for future business. He has been busy on-boarding Mr. Moore.

In the month of January, social media metrics were the highest ever. February social media metrics were strong, and it appears that March will also be strong. The metrics show that the content that is being presented to the public is relevant.

Mr. Breedlove praised the work of the Lou Hammond Group in getting Jackson County in the public eye through media tours and print. Ann Bernard of the Lou Hammond Group gave an update on their activities in getting coverage for Jackson County. John Kautz of Rawle Murdy updated the RM activities and gave favorable statistics on the performance of the website as opposed to last year for Secret Season. Mr. Kautz explained plans for the year 2023 and the efforts that are being made for the Year of the Trail in North Carolina.

Jackson County Chamber Directors Report

The reports for February and March were emailed as an attachment to the agenda. Ms. Spiro updated the report as follows:

- There was a trash pickup on March 3 which resulted in cleaning up trash on River Road. The next trash pickup will be in April, once again along the river since the Tuckaseegee is heavily promoted by the Chamber. The Chamber has purchased stickers “Don’t trash when you splash” to promote awareness of littering.
- Friends Night Out event will be held March 31 in downtown Sylva. Twenty-three businesses are participating.
- The Chamber is working on new promotional products that will promote Pinnacle Park.
- The Chamber has gotten many requests for information and has been very busy fulfilling the request.
- The Chamber is working on various videos which explain the Chambers resources for members, residents and visitors.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director Report

The report for March was emailed as an attachment to the agenda. Ms. Edwards updated the report as follows:

- The Chamber has been working on the rescheduled Urban Land Institute’s visits to the area. The ULI representatives and experts met in Cashiers for a week in February. They toured the area and had focus group interviews with 130 people.
- The ULI identified five priorities. The priorities are (1) a long-range conservation plan (2) a robust pedestrian mobility plan (3) pursue state and Federal funding for transportation infrastructure needs (4) workforce affordable housing and diversity (5) coordinating major tract development on undeveloped acres surrounding the crossroads. The final report will be published mid-April.
- The Chamber is updating the Visitors Guide and Dining Guide. The ad sales are very robust and popular with local businesses. The release date is mid-May.
- Ms. Mitchell-Lanning announced that the event coordinator for The Village Green is leaving in April and the search for a replacement is underway. The Farmers Market at The Village Green

will begin April 20 and will be held every Wednesday through the summer. Activities for Easter Weekend are Stations of the Cross on Friday, visit with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, and sunrise service on Sunday. Weekly concerts will be begin in May.

Updates from Individual Board Members

None

Announcements

Craig Smith announced that Bear Lake would be pleased to host the in-person Board meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m. by Mr. Jumper.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held April 20, 2022 via Zoom Conferencing unless otherwise posted.

Megan Orr, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: May 25, 2022