



MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors Meeting

April 17, 2024 (Wednesday) @1:00 p.m.

98 Cope Creek Rd., Suite D

Sylva, NC 28779

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Mr. Fletcher.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Daniel Fletcher, Chair; Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary; Board Members Craig Smith, Darlene Fox, Mandy Cantrell, Julie Spiro, Trevor Brown, Robert Jumper, and Mandi Cantrell
- **Members absent:** Megan Orr, Vice Chair; Mark Jones and Susan Gregory
Others in attendance: Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Kara Addy, TDA Social Media Manager; Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group; Mark Hartzell, BGRM; Jane Maurer, Guest from Smokies Life (formerly Great Smokies Association)

Approve Amended Agenda

A revision to the Human Resource policy was added to the agenda.

MOTION: Robert Jumper moved to approve the agenda. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Ms. Maurer announced that Mingus Mill in the GSMNP will be closed for two years for restoration.

Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Daniel Fletcher, Chair – No comments

Megan Orr, Vice Chair - Absent

Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary – None

Mark Jones, County Commissioner - Absent

Review and Approval of March 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meeting is available on the JCTDA website. They were also attached to the agenda for this meeting. No comments were made.

MOTION: Trevor Brown moved to approve meeting minutes. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of March 24, 2024 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows: Highlights for March include Occupancy Tax collections \$153,085.78 with penalties of \$56.42 and YTD collection totals of \$1,761,079.21 which is 70.44% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$50,117.18. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$6,430.18 and the VACASA, NC total was \$2,896.18. 68 accounts reported rentals for February rentals (same number of accounts from last year). Collections were up 49.93% from the same period in 2023. The March 31, 2024 cash balance is \$182,631.52 with investments totaling \$3,750,000.00. March expenses were \$435,677.57 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,608,261.87 with encumbrances of \$6,778.36 for a combined total of \$1,615,040.23, equaling 49.39% of the budget.

MOTION: *Ashlie Mitchell moved to approve the March financial report as presented. Trevor Brown seconded. The motion carried.*

Grant Request – The Village Green

The Village Green requested \$25,000 to supplement the \$70,000 cost of development of a Master Plan for the Grounds Restoration and Maintenance Project for The Village Green. Ms. Mitchell explained that the Master Plan is needed to make sure that the grounds and buildings at The Village Green are suitable for use for the next 25 years. The Village Green also provides the only public restrooms in Cashiers in addition to hosting community events and activities.

Equinox Environmental has been retained to make the Master Plan, which will be presented to the VG Board on August 29, 2023. The Master Plan will provide the VG with (1) a strategic vision for the next 5-10 years, (2) a prioritization of projects based on importance and feasibility, (3) community engagement to reflect the needs of the community, (4) long term sustainability for environmental conservation, maintenance needs and financial viability.

MOTION: *Craig Smith moved to approve the grant request from The Village Green. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.*

HR Policy Revision

Currently paid time off (PTO) runs on a fiscal year basis, June 1-May 31. This revision would have PTO eligibility based on the calendar year. The new policy would not create any issues with the Executive Committee or the Finance Department.

MOTION: *Robert Jumper moved to approve the HR policy revision. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.*

JCTDA Director's Brief

The Director's Report was sent by email attached to this agenda. Mr. Breedlove presented the report highlights as follows:

- Mr. Breedlove and Ms. Addy traveled to Destinations International CEO Summit and eTourism Summit for professional development.
- Budget preparation is underway for the May board meeting. Board members are encouraged to attend this two-hour meeting in person.
- Short-term rentals in March were up, showing 73% of revenue. This trend reflects a shift in visitor preferences from hotels.
- Mr. Breedlove is working on updating and reprinting maps since the map supply has run out.
- Mr. Breedlove and other board members have been working on a study of the impact of outdoor recreation. The impact of outdoor recreation is over \$4 billion. Mr. Breedlove attached the study to the agenda for this meeting.
- This is Cleaning Up the Mountains week. The TDA will give free trash bags and trash grabbers to volunteers.
- Ms. Addy reported on the social media activity and metrics.

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director Report

Ms. Spiro presented the latest report, which was emailed with the agenda for this meeting. Highlights are as follows:

- Greening UP the Mountains is being held April 28. The Chamber will host a booth to promote local tourism.
- The Chamber has Concerts on the Creek T-shirts.
- The Town of Webster has a new recreation pavilion which will have an open house May 1.
- There are new owners of Innovation Station and Angry Elk Brewing.
- A new store has opened in Sylva on Mill Street, Carly and Cash.

Cashiers Chamber Directors Report

Ms. Gregory was absent. Mr. Breedlove presented the report. Highlights are as follows:

- The Chamber is working on the Membership Guide & Visitor Directory which will be distributed in May.
- On April 24, the Chamber will hold a Meet & Greet at Hotel Cashiers for board members and to introduce the newest staff member, Caleb Gilbert, who will be the Visitors Center Manager.

Partner Update – BGRM/LHG

Mark Hartzel presented the update on BGRM activities.

Carter Long told the board about the activities on LHG for the past month.

New Business

None

Updates from Individual Board Members

Robert Jumper announced that the EBCI cannabis operation is starting this coming Saturday for medical marijuana. The Cherokee One Feather will have a booth at Greening Up the Mountains.

Trevor Brown reminded all the trash pickup on the Tuckaseegee and the Greenway this Saturday.

Craig Smith announced that a Cheerwine marketing deal has been finalized and Cheerwine will be filming promotional videos in Jackson County.

Announcements

The May meeting will be a two-hour meeting. Everyone is encouraged to attend in person.

Adjourn

MOTION: Trevor Brown motioned to adjourn. Robert Jumper seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 PM by Mr. Fletcher.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held May 15, 2024 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: May 15, 2024