

**Boone Tourism Development Authority Meeting Minutes**  
**October 4, 2023, at 9:00 am**  
**Appalachian Theatre of the High Country Community Room – Boone, NC**

**Present:** Sheri Moretz, Jerry Lamonds, Lenny Cottom, Lynne Mason, Elisha Brown, Tara Brossa, and Brian Crutchfield (Virtual Via Zoom)

**Absent:** Tim Futrelle

**TDA Staff:** Hope Thingelstad and Emily Neeley

**Guests:** Kayla Trivette

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m.

**Approval of the October 4, 2023 meeting agenda:**

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to approve the October 4, 2023 meeting agenda. The motion passed (5/0).*

**Approval of the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes:**

Two small errors were pointed out in the minutes to be amended.

*Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lenny Cottom, moved to approve the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed (5/0).*

Tara Brossa and Lynne Mason entered the meeting.

**Mark Freed – Boonerang '23 Recap and Survey Results**

Mark Freed presented the general feedback and results from the 2023 Boonerang Music and Arts Festival. Mark highlighted the festival's expanded events leading up to the festival and the street festival's expanded footprint. Feedback was overwhelmingly good, but there were also some reports of lower revenue from downtown businesses. Mark is requesting another \$10,000 marketing sponsorship from the TDA for the 2024 festival. Board of Directors members asked about off-mountain marketing, and the timing of the festival, plus shared feedback about the 2023 festival.

**Suzanne Livesay – Appalachian Theatre Sponsorship Presentation**

Suzanne Livesay, Executive Director of the Appalachian Theatre, reported on the theatre's first fully operational fiscal year since its reopening in 2019. The theatre has a completely new website design, thanks in part to a previous TDA marketing sponsorship. The theatre plans to continue marketing digitally and in regional publications and hopes to reach public radio in the

coming year. Suzanne also highlighted several of the theatre's top-selling events from the past year with large out-of-town audiences.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Kayla presented the Treasurer's Report. There was a beginning balance of \$122,713.77 on June 22, 2023. The total revenue was \$748,106.29 between that time and October 4, 2023. Expenses during that period totaled \$726,776.72. The ending checking balance was \$144,043.34 The beginning money market balance was \$1,994,875.50, and interest gained was \$33,955.80, leaving the ending money market balance at \$2,028,831.30. The ending cash balance for this time period was \$2,172,874.64.

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed (7/0).*

### **Occupancy Tax Report**

Town of Boone occupancy tax collections were down for the month of July, -6.19%. Watauga County collections were almost flat, while Blowing Rock collections were up 9.01% for that month. June occupancy tax collections were not included in this report but will be shared with board members after the meeting.

### **New Business**

- Election of TDA Officers

Sheri Moretz is the current Board of Directors Chairperson, Jerry Lamonds is the current Board of Directors Vice Chairperson, and Elisha Brown is the current Board of Directors Secretary. Each officer expressed they would serve again.

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Tara Brossa, moved to elect Sheri Moretz as Chairperson, Jerry Lamonds as Vice Chairperson, and Elisha Brown as Secretary. The motion passed (7/0).*

- Appalachian Theatre Sponsorship Request

*Lynne Mason, seconded by Elisha Brown, moved to award a \$30,000 marketing sponsorship for the Appalachian Theatre. The motion passed (7/0)*

- Boonerang Music and Arts Festival Sponsorship Request

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to award Boonerang Music & Arts Festival a \$10,000 marketing sponsorship. The motion passed (7/0).*

- High Country Soccer Association Sponsorship Request

The High Country Soccer Association Executive Director, Rick Suyao, contacted the TDA to request a \$5,000 sponsorship for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Since the request included facility maintenance, the board of directors would like to specify to HCSA that any funds awarded must be used for marketing. The board also asked if the HCSA would be willing to report where those marketing funds are being used. The board of directors would like to know when the upcoming year's tournaments will be as well. The request was tabled until the next meeting.

- November 15 Board Meeting Time Change?

It is unclear if Wright will be back in the office by the November 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting, but if he is the time may need to be changed. Staff will follow up via email if the meeting time needs to be changed in the coming weeks.

### **PR & Social Media Report**

Emily reviewed recent media coverage of the Boone area, including articles in *Our State*, *Southern Living*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Montauk Sun*. Emily also hosted the associate editor of *Our State Magazine* in the area on a scouting trip. She will be in New York City with Visit NC in early November for their media mission. Visit NC will be hosting an adventure-focused FAM trip in the area in June of next year, and Emily is working on planning that trip itinerary currently. She also reported on organic and paid social media posts and metrics.

### **Tourism Outreach Report**

Individual physical Visitor Guide requests have increased year-over-year in both July and August. 53.5 cases of bulk visitor guides have been distributed for the year both locally and regionally and will continue as needed. 17 cases of Adventure Maps have been distributed to local shops and outfitters, and a poster with a QR code with digital versions has gone to each of the locations that stock the map. E-newsletters continue to show wonderful engagement compared to the industry average. Website branding updates have been completed and content updates for the year are nearly complete, although seasonal updates will be ongoing throughout the year. Invitations for the November 9<sup>th</sup> annual partners meeting have gone out and there are already over 40 RSVPs.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.**