

Boone Tourism Development Authority Meeting Minutes
June 18, at 3:00 pm
Hampton Inn & Suites – Boone, NC

Present: Sheri Moretz, Jerry Lamonds, Lynne Mason, Elisha Brown, Tara Brossa, Brian Williams, Brian Crutchfield, Lenny Cottom, and Edie Tugman

Absent:

TDA Staff: Wright Tilley, Hope Thingelstad, and Emily Neeley

Guests: Kayla Trivette (Town of Boone Finance), Todd Moody (Town of Boone Public Works Director)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm.

Approval of the June 18, 2024 meeting agenda:

Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to approve the June 18, 2024 meeting agenda. The motion passed (9/0).

Approval of the May 15, 2024 meeting minutes:

Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Tara Brossa, moved to approve the May 15, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed (9/0).

Treasurer's Report

There was a beginning balance of \$178,438.47 on May 15, 2024. The total revenue was \$136,329.07 between that time and June 18, 2024. Expenses during that period totaled \$147,228.04. The ending checking balance was \$167,539.50. The beginning money market balance was \$1,733,087.69, and interest gained was \$7,412.74. The ending cash balance for this time was \$1,908,039.93.

Edie Tugman, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed (9/0).

Public Budget Hearing

Brian Crutchfield, seconded by Elisha Brown, moved to open the public budget hearing at 3:08 pm. The motion passed (9/0).

No members of the public inquired about the public budget meeting or attended the meeting to comment.

Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lenny Cottom, moved to close the public budget hearing at 3:09 pm. The motion passed (9/0).

Approval of FY 2024/2025 TDA Budget Ordinance

Wright presented the FY 24/25 budget ordinance and discussed each line of the ordinance with the board. He will add “TDA” to the line about the “general fund balance”.

Lynne Mason, seconded by Lenny Cottom, moved to approve the FY 2024/2025 TDA Budget Ordinance. The motion passed (9/0).

New Business

- **Budget Amendments**

The Marketing and Advertising line item will be over budget before the end of the fiscal year. Some of the marketing and advertising costs from FY 22/23 were carried over into FY 23/24. Mr. Tilley recommends a budget amendment to account for this.

Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Elisha Brown, moved to approve the budget amendment for Marketing and Advertising. The motion passed (9/0).

The Board Priorities line item will be over budget. One reason for this is the FY 22/23 sponsorship of the Appalachian Theatre was paid after receiving records of their marketing sponsorship in the current fiscal year. The current marketing sponsorship was also paid up-front out of the current fiscal year. Other board priorities included the Boone elements of the Imagine Watauga Plan, a digital platform for the Watauga Historical Society, and the Winkler’s Creek Bike Park plan.

Lenny Cottom, seconded by Tara Brossa, moved to approve the budget amendment for Board Priorities. The motion passed (9/0).

The Town of Boone – Tourism Related line item is projected to be over budget before the end of the fiscal year due to potential increases in occupancy tax revenue.

Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to approve the budget amendment for the Town of Boone – Tourism Related budget line. The motion passed (9/0).

- **Town of Boone Tourism Funds Request**

Todd Moody presented the Town of Boone’s request for the FY 23/24 infrastructure funding, above the \$450,000 allocation for Howard Street. The town’s request includes \$15,000 for the annual maintenance of the new Town Hall exterior restrooms. The request also includes \$9,286 for fencing for Boone/Jaycee Park. Board members discussed the TDA’s history of using this portion of the TDA budget to fund new projects

and replacements of tourism assets, instead of funding the maintenance of facilities. This would help maximize the impact of tourism dollars. The board of directors also discussed state-funded renovations in the planning stages at Daniel Boone Park, in addition to the fencing request.

Lenny Cottom, seconded by Brian Williams, moved to deny the Town of Boone's request for \$9,286 for fencing at Boone's Jaycee Park. (The motion passed 6/3).

YAY: Lenny, Jerry, Elisha, Sheri, Brian Williams and Tara
NAY: Brian Crutchfield, Edie, and Lynne

The board discussed potentially funding a different town development project, such as the sidewalk widening, instead of funding for maintaining downtown bathrooms. It was discussed that the primary intent of the 1/3 occupancy tax revenue was for new tourism product development.

Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to deny the Town of Boone's request for \$15,000 for bathroom maintenance. (The motion passed 7/2).

YAY: Lenny, Jerry, Elisha, Brian Williams, Sheri, Lynne, and Tara
NAY: Edie and Brian Crutchfield

Lynne Mason, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to allocate an additional \$15,000 towards the construction of the downtown bathrooms to divert the DBDA's contribution to that project and allow the DBDA to fund the maintenance of the bathrooms. (The motion passed 9/0).

- **Rent Payment to Watauga County TDA**

The Boone TDA and Watauga TDA Chairs met to discuss Boone TDA's rent payment for the new office building. The rent of \$1,600/month is less than average for downtown Boone, but it does account for the shared operational expenses the Boone TDA will be contributing to.

Lenny Cottom, seconded by Edie Tugman, moved to embrace the rent amount of \$1,600 per month at the new TDA office. (The motion passed 9/0).

PR/Social Media Report

Emily reported on recent media mentions, including Outside, Southern Living, and The Week. She recapped a recent FAM tour hosted alongside the PR team with Visit NC and a recent Wilmington influencer visit. Another influencer trip is scheduled for August through LHG. Emily also included top social media posts and recent PR pitching efforts with the Lou Hammond Group. Her report was not included in the packet but was emailed to board members after the meeting.

Tourism Outreach Report

Individual physical Visitor Guide requests increased year-over-year in April and May. Bulk visitor guide distribution has begun and 77.5 cases have already gone to regional visitor information centers. E-newsletter engagement in May dropped month-over-month and year-over-year, due to new Gmail regulations and seasonality. Hope reviewed the number of partner accounts and pages on the website and the recent tourism partners' newsletter, and notified the board about a website conversion study we have signed on to. She also recapped website analytics from GA4 for May.

Executive Directors Report

- Marketing and Promotion Update

The TDA recently won several Telly awards for recent advertising campaigns. Office renovations have been delayed slightly and are now expected to wrap up around the end of July. The team is finalizing furniture and light fixture options. The second phase of the county-wide wayfinding project is wrapping up and one sign will be moved. The TDA will be hiring an Administrative Assistant/Guest Services Representative and a Director of Destination Development.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.