

**Boone Tourism Development Authority Meeting Minutes**  
**June 21, 2023, at 9:00 am**  
**Hampton Inn & Suites – Boone, NC**

**Present:** Sheri Moretz, Jerry Lamonds, Tim Futrelle, Lenny Cottom, Lynne Mason, Elisha Brown, Jessica Auten, Tara Brossa, and Brian Crutchfield

**Absent:**

**TDA Staff:** Wright Tilley and Hope Thingelstad

**Guests:** Kayla Trivette

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

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

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Tim Futrelle, moved to approve the June 21, 2023 meeting agenda. The motion passed (8/0).*

**Approval of the May 17, 2023 meeting minutes:**

*Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to approve the May 17, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed (8/0).*

Brian Crutchfield entered the meeting.

**Public Budget Meeting**

*Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to open the public budget hearing at 9:07 am. The motion passed (9/0).*

*Lynne Mason, seconded by Tara Brossa, moved to close the public budget hearing at 9:08 am. The motion passed (9/0).*

**Treasurer's Report**

Kayla presented the Treasurer's Report. There was a beginning balance of \$70,105.20 on May 18, 2023. The total revenue was \$137,140.41 between that time and June 21st. Expenses during that period totaled \$80,531.84. The ending checking balance was \$122,713.77. The beginning money market balance was \$1,988,525.89, and with interest gained was \$6,349.61, leaving the ending money market balance at \$1,994,875.50. The ending cash balance for this time period was \$2,117,589.27.

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed (9/0).*

## **Approval of FY 2023/2024 TDA Budget Ordinance**

*Lynne Mason, seconded by Brian Crutchfield, moved to approve the FY 2023/2024 budget ordinance as presented. The motion passed (9/0).*

Lynne Mason asked about the addition of any projected interest into the budget, which Wright explained they did not.

## **Winkler's Creek Reservoir Project**

Tim Futrelle provided some background on the park, which was identified through the Imagine Watauga plan. Boone Area Cyclists approached the Town Council about the creation of a bike park at the Winkler's Creek Reservoir. He stressed that although discussions about the park started as a family-friendly, easy-to-moderate bike park, the council is also interested in seeing what other recreation uses could be there. Destination by Design has submitted a project scope and fees for a site master plan, for the TDA to consider funding. Town Council entered an agreement with the Boone Area Cyclists that if they were to maintain the trails the town would maintain a parking area if the park is built.

Board members expressed some concerns about starting a project before some other priorities are fully funded, like the Howard Street Project and Daniel Boone Park improvements. Though they were excited about the park for community members, they also had concerns about whether an easy bike park would be a tourism draw. The locals and hospitality industry professionals would likely really enjoy the park, but it could be more of a tourism draw if bike rentals are made available. If the project were to receive additional grant or state funding, a plan would be needed first. If the TDA were to fund the plan, funding could come from board priorities or from infrastructure funding.

## **New Business**

- Budget Amendment

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jessica Auten, moved to approve a budget amendment moving \$57,000 from the fund balance to the board priorities line item. The motion passed (9/0).*

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to approve a budget amendment moving \$10,000 from the fund balance to the Watauga County TDA contract fee line item. The motion passed (9/0).*

*Lenny Cottom, seconded by Jerry Lamonds, moved to approve a budget amendment moving \$110,000 from fund balance to infrastructure. The motion passed (9/0).*

- Town of Boone Tourism Funds Request

The town has a total amount of \$3,314,054 designated for the Howard Street project with \$2,235,867 of that coming from TDA funds. In FY 22/23 there is projected to be \$236,000 in available infrastructure funds, in addition to the \$450,000 designated for the Howard St. Project. \$70,000 of that revenue has been approved by the town council for the Greenway Skate Park, contingent on grant funding. An additional \$75,000 has been approved for Horn in the West and \$75,000 for Daniel Boone Native Gardens. Lynne asked about previous years' TDA contributions to improvements to Daniel Boone Park and asked if the town could retroactively find out what the correct funding towards Daniel Boone Park should be. Tim Futrelle also gave an update on the Howard Street project status.

***Lynne Mason, seconded by Brian Crutchfield, moved to approve the Town of Boone's tourism infrastructure funds request for FY 22/23, with \$450,000 allocated for the Howard Street project, \$70,000 allocated towards the Greenway Skate Park, and \$150,000 allocated towards Daniel Boone Park. The motion passed (9/0).***

***Jerry Lamonds, seconded by Lynne Mason, moved to approve the Town of Boone's tourism infrastructure funds request for FY 23/24, with \$450,000 allocated for the Howard Street project and all additional funds allocated for Daniel Boone Park. The motion passed (9/0).***

- Winkler's Creek Reservoir Project

***Lynne Mason, seconded by Brian Crutchfield, moved to approve funding the Site Master Plan for a Winkler's Creek Reservoir Park from the board priorities line item, without committing to funding the park. The motion passed (5/4). The board revoted after further discussion and the motion passed (9/0).***

### **Tourism Outreach Report**

Visitor Guide requests have fallen YoY, -34.75%. This decrease could be attributed to some decreased demand, as well as web users opting to use the digital PDF version of the guide as opposed to requesting a physical copy. This is a new addition to the website this year, and clicks on that are noted in the report. Nearly 50 cases of bulk visitor guides have been distributed for the year and will continue as needed. June's "Preservation in Practice" newsletter is performing well in both open and click-through rates. Website updates continue, and new pages have been in development in the hiking section of the site. The Discover Watauga Tourism Summit, or annual partners meeting, has been scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup> to take place in the morning/early afternoon at Grandfather Mountain's classroom in the clouds.

### **Executive Director's Report**

- Occupancy Tax Report

Boone collections were down 5.5% over last year for the month of April, and down 1.78% for the fiscal year so far. This decrease seems to be occurring across many mountain and beach destinations, as historic demand during COVID decreases. Wright discussed May occupancy as reported in the STR report as well.

- Marketing & Promotion

Graystone Lodge has celebrated its grand opening this week, after completing extensive renovations. The Watauga Arts Council has printed a county-wide public art map, with some advertising support from the TDA. The company that produces the TDA visitor guide has brought up cost increases, so the format of the guide may change next year.

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