

**Watauga County District U**  
**Tourism Development Authority – Annual Board Retreat Minutes**  
**Watauga County TDA / Explore Boone Office**  
**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

PRESENT: Matt Vincent – Chair  
Missy Harrill  
Tony Gray  
Lisa Cooper  
Tina Houston  
Brad Moretz  
TDA Staff:  
Wright Tilley  
Emily Neeley  
Hope Thingelstad

GUESTS: Lee Lilley, NC Secretary of Commerce, and Staff; Kenny Flowers, Olivia Collier  
Garret Burgen, David McRae  
Miles Partnership Marketing Agency; Elodie Badoual and Andi Baum  
Chris Adams (virtual)  
Boone TDA; Sheri Moretz and Jerry Lamonds

**Call to Order:** *The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vincent at 8:30 a.m.*

**N.C. Secretary of Commerce Lee Lilley**

Remarks and Discussion

**Approval of November 18, 2025 board meeting minutes:**

*Minutes approved with one amendment; Tina Houston was present virtually.  
Lisa Cooper, seconded by Tony Gray, moved to approve the November 18, 2025 board meeting minutes and amendment.*

**VOTE: AYE – 6 / NAY – 0**

*Secretary Lilley and his staff left the retreat.*

**New Campaign Presentation from Miles Partnership**

Elodie Badoual and Andi Baum, of Miles Partnership, presented the new advertising campaign for 2026.

**Lou Hammond Group PR Recap**

Emily Neeley presented a PR Recap of 2025 and reviewed the past years work with the Lou Hammond Group.

*Sheri Moretz and Jerry Lamonds left the retreat.*

**Imagine Watauga Plan / Tourism Infrastructure Discussion**

Group discussion of the Imagine Watauga Plan, tourism infrastructure, and priorities for 2026.

**Miles Partnership – Data / Trends / New Opportunities**

Chris Adams, of Miles Partnership, presented via Zoom on the topics of data, trends and new opportunities.

**Goals and Objectives for 2026**

The TDA board discussed goals and objectives for 2026.

**The retreat was adjourned at 1:28 pm**