

Meeting Minutes
Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority
May 16, 2024
Hilton Greenville (Julep)

Board members present: CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Vice Chair Candace Hollingsworth, CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, Aileen Peacock, Dr. Brenda Fairfax, (phone) Chamika White, Bob Sheck, Brett Morgan, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, City Finance Officer Jacob Joyner, County Commissioner liaison Chris Nunnally, City Council liaison Matt Scully, CVB Vice-President of Marketing and Development Sierra Jones, Vice-President of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten, Sports Sales Manager Ce’Nedra Dillard, Communications & Marketing Assistant Megan Singleton, and CVB Executive Director Andrew Schmidt were in attendance.

Board members absent: CVA Secretary Ken Ross, Jay Bastardo, and Christie Jahn, were unable to attend.

I. Call to order: CVA Chair Diane Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:09pm. Executive Director Andrew Schmidt recognized that Dr. Brenda Fairfax was joining the meeting via phone from Alexandria, VA.

II. Approval of minutes: Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the March 14, 2024, full board meeting and asked board members to review to see if any changes that needed to be made. Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Bob Sheck and passed unanimously.

IV. Executive Director’s report: Executive Director Schmidt shared the following during his Executive Director’s report:

- Schmidt gave a synopsis of his budget presentation that he recently gave to Greenville City Council on Thursday, May 9th. Within the budget presentation, Schmidt stated that the budget would support several legislative goals, staff additions, new marketing initiatives, and the 2024-2025 program of work. Schmidt elaborated on the legislative goals that included a wide range of initiatives that would support the travel and tourism industry.
- Schmidt also gave an update on the sports feasibility study for the City of Greenville. At the April City Council Workshop, the City Council received the final update from Victus Advisors who recommended that the city create a task force to look more closely at the possibility of moving forward with a sports complex. Schmidt shared that the City Council did agree and that a task force would be

created to look at such issues as location, type of facility, management, and potential partnerships. Schmidt said that the first meeting would likely not be until the Little League Softball World Series has taken place.

- In another piece of information, Schmidt shared that the ENC Alliance along with the City of Greenville and GUC have completed a study of how to redevelop First Street if the County decides to relocate all their offices in to one office building which would be at their Government Circle location.
- In a last piece of information, Schmidt gave details on two events. The first was the Juneteenth Celebration scheduled to take place on June 22nd. Schmidt said the goal of this event was to make it a regional annual event. Schmidt also summarized the events that will take place with this year's Little League Softball World Series scheduled for August 4th through the 11th.

Staff Updates:

Sierra Jones and Megan Singleton gave a marketing and communications update to the CVA Board of Directors.

- Jones gave an update on the web analytics for Visitgreenvillenc.com and social media statistics that covered the period from January through April 2024. Jones reviewed the number of users, sessions, page views, locations of viewers, and the top pages viewed for the website and number of followers and reach for the CVB's social media platforms.
- Jones shared that she is working to oversee the final additions to both the new version of the Greenville-Pitt County Destination Guide as well as the relaunch of the Pitt County Brew and Cue Trail. The new ETA for the Destination Guide is sometime in late June. Lastly, Jones shared the new timeline to get the CVB's Tourism Master Plan kicked off. She also spoke about the CVB's transition to Visit Widget, which is a major upgrade to our app and is now available for download. CVA Chair Diane Taylor asked if we could collect data from those who download the app. Jones replied that she would check on that capability.
- Jones gave details of the Visit NC Conference that was hosted in Greenville and specifically her and Megan's role in working with the media during the three-day event. Jones summarized their activities with the media attendees and reported that 25 articles about some of our downtown businesses have already been published because of their efforts.
- Jones gave a snapshot of her upcoming conferences, events, and activities for the summer months. Jones said there were two events that she wanted to share with the board. The first is that a film crew will be coming the week of May 21st to take video of

each of our breweries in Pitt County. (NC Brew Shots) Jones mentioned that this is particularly good timing with the re-launch of the Brew and Cue Trail. Jones also stated she has been working with NAMI to create a Summer of Pride event which consists of activities throughout the summer and will peak with the annual NAMI event at the Town Common on August 24th. Lastly, Jones reminded everyone that the CVB will be holding its National Travel and Tourism Luncheon next week.

- Singleton updated the CVB Board on several current projects that she has been working on including writing blogs, working on the CVB's events calendar, generating press releases as well as the CVB's monthly newsletter, and posting on our social media platforms. Singleton said that a particular focus of hers has also been to create new website content featuring our outdoor assets.
- Singleton gave a recap of her upcoming summer conferences, activities, and community involvement. Singleton highlighted June 2nd through the 7th in which she will be participating in the Southeast Tourism Society's Marketing College. This will be her second year of the three-year marketing college program.

VP of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten gave a sales program update to the CVA Board.

- Whitten gave an overview of her travels and conference activities that covered January to the present highlighting some of the groups and clients that she is meeting with. She also talked as well about future conferences she will be attending. Whitten specifically highlighted the Association Executives of North Carolina annual meeting which will be held in Cherokee and Connect Marketplace in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Whitten shared that the Connect Show was a national show that allowed us to stay visible with planners that will be considering Greenville as we continue to grow.
- Whitten gave a recap of her role in the Visit North Carolina Annual Conference's opening night celebration. Whitten summarized the Party on Pitt Street event and share a recap video of the entire conference with the CVA Board.
- Whitten gave an overview to the board of what business has recently been booked during the month of April as well as services provided. She also gave details on a new category she has created for business tracking which is listed as assists. Whitten explained that assists involved meeting planners that we work with to help make their conferences or events a success by providing services or finding solutions to help them provide a more positive experience for their attendees.

Sports Sales Manager Ce'Nedra Dillard gave a sports sales update to the CVA Board.

- Dillard gave a synopsis of her community involvement over the last several months. She also stated that she recently graduated from the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Institute the previous week. Dillard shared that her group created a new program for the Ronald McDonald House here in Greenville that would allow patients and families

that were not in the actual house to benefit from getting free items of need while in the hospital. The program is called Cart with A Heart.

- Dillard summarized her recent travel to the Sports ETA Summit and shared a list of those rights holders that she was able to meet with. Dillard also gave details of a new trade show that she and Rachel will be attending at the end of May. Dillard continued that the show was the first of its kind in North Carolina and centered around E-Sports. Dillard mentioned that members from East Carolina University also planned to attend to learn more about attracting these types of events to their campus.
- Dillard shared some of the recent late winter and spring tournaments that were held in Greenville. She also summarized the upcoming tournaments and meets that would take place later this spring and summer including the USTA-NC 65+ Tennis Championships starting on Friday.

V. Treasurers report:

CVB Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report for the month of March. Schmidt announced that collections for March 2024 totaled \$145,620.89 which was 7.13% higher than collections in March of 2023. Currently, 2023-2024 collections are 6.79% higher than collections for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Executive Director Schmidt reviewed the current year to date budget report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Schmidt reported that the CVB was currently at 61.4% of budget and should not exceed 83.3% by the end of May. Schmidt said that the County's recent ARPA Payment is the reason that the budget year to date is so much lower than where it should be this time of year.

Finance Director Jacob Joyner gave the cash balance report. Joyner said that revenues are looking very good for the CVA and Greenville Convention Center. Currently, the CVA has a reserve of \$1,118,736 and the Convention Center has a marketing reserve of \$282,962.

VI. Old business:

There were two items under old business on the agenda. The first was an update from Executive Director Schmidt on the pending move upstairs. Schmidt reported that the CVB has started its lease and is beginning initial preparations to move upstairs. Schmidt said that he has met twice with the city for wiring and data. Those meetings have gone well and there does not seem to be any large issues with getting the CVB networked into the city systems from the main conduits on the first floor. Schmidt also has contracted with Terminix for bug services, received quotes for trash pick-up, and will be contracting with Lowes to bring in new blinds for the office. The current estimate time for moving is thought to be the last week of June.

In a second piece of old business, Executive Director Schmidt shared that the budget process has been completed for this year with his May 9th presentation to the City Council. Schmidt said that the final approval for all city budgets will be made at one of their June meetings.

VII. New business:

In the first piece of new business, Executive Director Schmidt asked Rachel Whitten, VP of Sales & Services to give an update on hiring a new sales assistant. Whitten stated that she has received a good number of qualified applications for the position and that the review process would start on May 28th with the goal of having a new person start at the beginning of the fiscal year. Whitten thanked CVA Board member Brett Morgan for serving on the hiring committee.

In a second piece of new business, Executive Director Schmidt shared that CVA Board member Ken Ross has been battling some health issues and while he is improving would like to step away from the CVA Board to focus on his health. Schmidt also stated that Christie Jahn is no longer with Carolina Hospitality. As a result, Schmidt said that he would be working with CVA Chair Diane Taylor to address the two new board openings. Both openings are for County residents.

In a last piece of new business, Schmidt reminded the CVA Board that there would be no July meeting to observe the summer break. The next meeting will take place in August and will be for the Executive Committee. The next full board meeting is scheduled for September 19th.

IX. Adjournment: There being no further business, Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth proclaimed the meeting adjourned at 1:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Ross
Secretary

