

Meeting Minutes

Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority

November 21, 2024

Hilton Greenville (Julep)

Board members present: CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth, CVA Secretary Bri Lester, CVA Assistant Secretary Aileen Peacock, County Commissioner liaison Chris Nunnally, Bob Sheck, Aileen Peacock, Brett Morgan, Staci Moye, Brittany Parker, and Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker. CVA Staff members present included Andrew Schmidt, Ce'Nedra Dillard and Megan Singleton.

Board members absent: City Council liaison Matt Scully, Deputy Finance Officer Jacob Joyner Dr. Brenda Fairfax, Chamika White, and Jay Bastardo were not able to attend.

I. Call to Order: Chairwoman Diane Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:07pm. Executive Director Schmidt recognized two new board members, Staci Moye and Brittany Parker. Both briefly introduced themselves and Schmidt stated that he is excited to have them join the board and thanked them for their willingness to serve.

II. Approval of Minutes: Executive Director Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the September 17, 2024, full board meeting and asked the board members to review to see if any changes that needed to be made. CVA Assistant Secretary Aileen Peacock made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker and passed unanimously.

III. Executive Directors Report: Executive Director Schmidt shared the following during his Executive Directors Report:

- Schmidt gave an update on changes that the NC Sports Community are working on regarding the Major Events, Games, and Attractions Fund. This fund is a result of the taxes that are generated from sports betting across the state. The current law states that to qualify for funds that an event must be held at a professional sports facility or an indoor venue that can hold 22,000 or more spectators. Events that are sponsored by NASCAR or one of the Professional Golf Association affiliates also qualify. Schmidt continues that this severely limits who can benefit from the fund. Schmidt shared that many sports destinations across the state have asked for changes. For Greenville-Pitt County, the most important are reducing the number of spectators from 22,000 to 5,000 (can be calculated on a cumulative basis) and allowing the economic impact numbers to be considered at the local level and not the state level. Schmidt concluded by stating that budget writers are currently working on some changes for the bill, but it would be during the long session before anything was solidified.

- Schmidt shared he will be attending the North Carolina Travel Industry Association Public Policy Dinner on December 4th at the JB Duke Hotel in Durham. Schmidt said that the event thanks those legislators that stand firm on tourism issues. In other advocacy news, Schmidt said that he has been appointed by the Governor to serve as the tourism representative on the Economic Development Partnership of NC Board of Directors. Schmidt also represented Visit Greenville, NC at the Business North Carolina Magazine's roundtable on travel and tourism.
- Schmidt informed the CVA Board of a new partnership between Pitt County Arts Council at Emerge and Visit Greenville, NC. The Arts Council hosts the African American Music Series the second Friday of every month at 7pm from September through May. This fall, to try and jumpstart interest in the African American Cultural Trail, tours of the trail have been offered from 5:30pm to 6:30pm prior to the music series. This has gone well thus far and there are plans to continue offering the AACT tour prior the music series moving forward.
- In a last piece of business, Schmidt shared that he has begun a quarterly lunch and learn program for the staff. The first lunch and learn was held in October and centered around DEIA with a presentation given by the Travel Unity organization. The next lunch and learn program will take place in January.

Staff Updates:

Andrew Schmidt and Megan Singleton gave a marketing and communications update to the CVA Board of Directors. Sierra was unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

- Schmidt gave an update on the web analytics for Visitgreenvillenc.com and social media statistics that covered the months of September and October 2024. Schmidt 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. Schmidt shared that there has been a special push to market the holiday happenings in Pitt County and announced that this page already had 900 views.
- Schmidt stated that the final proofs of the new Brew and Cue Passport is in and that distribution of materials to both the breweries and restaurants should take place soon. Schmidt said that Jones is working to oversee the final additions of the updated version of the destination guide. On a last note, Schmidt shared that Jones had finished the last edits needed to send out the RFP for development of a tourism master plan for Pitt County. Schmidt stated that funds to pay for the plan were shifted from ARPA funds to those tied to the December budget amendment. As a result, that changed the timeline. It is expected that the Tourism Master Plan to be sent out in early January.
- On behalf of Jones, Schmidt gave a snapshot of the fall conferences that she has attended as well as ones that are upcoming for the rest of the year. Schmidt also summarized her committee responsibilities. Schmidt highlighted Jones's work with the

Art Walk, which is a partnership between the City of Greenville, Pitt County Arts Council, and CVB, and shared ridership numbers on the Emerald Express for the fall months. Schmidt also summarized the different community engagement opportunities that she has participated in this fall.

- Singleton updated the CVB Board on her current projects that she has been working on including the creation of new website material, events calendar management, generating the monthly newsletter, posting on social media, writing blogs, and participating in additional marketing projects.
- Singleton reviewed her community involvement and conference activity. Singleton shared that she has participated in many community engagement opportunities including National Night Out, Greenville's 250th Anniversary Celebration, and the ECU Wellness Walk.

Andrew Schmidt gave an update on behalf of VP of Sales & Services as Rachel was attending MPI-Carolinas Chapter Board Retreat.

- Schmidt gave an update on the meeting and convention leads that were generated during the months of September and October 2024.
- Schmidt shared that Whitten had coordinated two events for the APA annual Conference that was held in Greenville last month. She coordinated their off-site event, Party on Pitt Street, and guided a brewery and distillery mobile tour.
- Schmidt highlighted her travel and conference activities from September through November discussing some of the clients that she has met with during that period. Additionally, he reviewed her upcoming travel and conference schedule for the rest of the calendar year specifically calling out the AENC Trade Show in Raleigh which is the biggest show of the year for the sales team.
- Lastly, Schmidt gave an overview of her previous and upcoming community engagement and professional development opportunities noting that she has been quite busy supporting various groups.
- In a last piece of reporting, Schmidt shared that Joshua Meeks continues his work within the sales and services scope, adding tremendous value to our groups. Over the last two months, Schmidt reported that Meeks has provided services to ten groups. During this same time, Meeks has continued his facility audit work visiting five facilities and outlining their assets for the sales team.

Director of Sports Development Ce'Nedra Dillard gave a sports tourism update to the CVA Board.

- Dillard gave an update on the sports tourism leads that were generated in September and October 2024. Dillard specifically highlighted the SheTris Triathlon event which is scheduled to take place for the first time in Pitt County in the fall of 2025. Dillard is hopeful that this will become an annual event.
- Dillard summarized her recent fall travel which included over six different trips generating a total of 118 appointments. Dillard stated that she also participated in several client events designed to increase networking opportunities, one of which was a joint venture between the states of North and South Carolina at the TEAMS Conference.
- Dillard also summarized her community engagement and professional development opportunities during October and November. Dillard shared that she has attained her SDLT Designation from Compete Sports Diversity.

IV. Finance report:

- Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report. Currently, three months of collections have been recorded. Through three months, occupancy tax collections for the 2024-2025 fiscal year are 9.82% higher than collections for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Schmidt noted that the October collections should be available within the next five days.
- Schmidt reviewed the current year-to date budget report. The report, which was run on November 18th, showed that the CVB has spent 32.9% of its yearly budget thus far. Schmidt stated that the CVB should not expend more than 41.7% of its yearly budget by the end of November. Schmidt said that there were significant expenditures this week and anticipates the expenditure percentage to be around 38% by the end of November.
- Finance Director Jacob Joyner was unable to attend the meeting so Executive Director Schmidt summarized the Cash Balance Report. At present, the CVB fund balance stands at \$1,563,734. Of that total balance, the CVB operations portion is \$1,126,243 and GCC's marketing reserve is \$437,703.

V. Old Business

- Executive Director Schmidt gave an update on the budget amendment that he initially brought to the board for approval at the September 2024 meeting. Schmidt reviewed the amendment expenditures and stated that it would be part of the December 9th meeting via consent agenda.
- Schmidt gave an update on the sports task force. Schmidt said that they have had three meetings thus far that reviewed the benefits of sports tourism, the configuration and usage of a proposed complex, and potential sites. The group is currently looking at funding options, community outreach, and putting together a final presentation to be presented to City Council at their January retreat.

VI. New Business:

- Executive Director Schmidt told the CVA Board that he would like to spend 1 ½ days out of town with the staff to conduct a staff retreat with a facilitator. Schmidt shared that it would likely cost between 2K and 3K to conduct the retreat. Schmidt also stated that he is looking at the Swansboro Hampton Inn as the retreat site as he could get excellent rates there in January. Schmidt asked the board if they had any concerns with this plan. Bob Sheck asked if a motion was needed to approve the retreat, and Schmidt said it was not necessary. Board members agreed that it would be a positive thing for the staff and supported Schmidt in this endeavor.

VII. Adjournment: With no other business, CVA Chairwoman Diane Taylor closed the meeting at 12:48pm.

Respectfully submitted

Bri Lester
CVA Secretary

