

Meeting Minutes
Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority
Thursday, January 19, 2023
Hilton Greenville (Julep)

Board members present: CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, Aileen Peacock, Brett Morgan, Dr. Brenda Fairfax, Chamika White, Jay Bastardo, Bob Sheck, City Finance Director Byron Hayes, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, County Commissioner liaison Mary Williams Perkins, CVB Director of Marketing & Communications Sierra Jones, Director of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten, Sports Sales Assistant Ce’Nedra Dillard, and CVB Executive Director Andrew Schmidt were in attendance.

Board members absent: CVA Vice Chair Candace Hollingsworth CVA Secretary Ken Ross, Christie Jahn, and City Council liaison Rick Smiley were unable to attend.

I. Call to order: CVA Chair Diane Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. Executive Director Andrew Schmidt recognized Mary Perkins Williams as the new County Commissioner liaison to the CVA Board. Mrs. Williams gave a quick introduction of herself and some of the initiatives she will be working on as Chair of the County Commissioners. Schmidt also recognized Ryan Batts. Schmidt explained that Ryan will be working as an intern for the next four months for the Greenville-Pitt County Sports Commission.

II. Approval of minutes: Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the November 29, 2022 full board meeting and asked board members to review to see of any changes needed to be made. Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Aileen Peacock and passed unanimously.

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

- Executive Director Schmidt began his report by thanking the CVA board for their support during his knee replacement procedure and especially for the Edible Arrangements that the board sent. Schmidt said he is doing well and taking part in a lot of physical therapy.
- Schmidt stated the he had been selected to serve on Destination International’s Professional Development Committee for the 2023 calendar year. Schmidt said that he is excited about the opportunity to learn about new professional development opportunities that he and the staff can take part in.

- Schmidt shared that the CVB will be one of the sponsors of the upcoming AENC Legislative Reception on the evening of January 25th. The sponsorship will afford the opportunity to meet with our local delegation as well as other important legislators about tourism issues. Schmidt said that that NCTIA and ECU lobbyists will also be coming as part of the Greenville delegation.
- Schmidt announced that Ethelene and Vera would be representing our destination as part of a statewide tourism group marketing North Carolina as a leisure and retirement destination at the New York travel show January 27-29 and a the DC travel show February 3-5.

Staff Updates:

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

- Jones gave an update on the web analytics for Visitgreenvillenc.com for the period of November and December. Jones reviewed the number of users, sessions, page views, locations of viewers, and the top pages viewed. Jones also reviewed social media numbers for this same time period and gave a year over year comparison as well.
- Jones shared that the number of destination guides that have been requested over the last two months is 212. Request for the calendar year totaled 1,306.
- Jones shared some very positive numbers associated with new our media campaigns for the month of November and December with specifics on our digital and Spotify campaigns. Jones also shared that the CVB is now advertising on LinkedIn.
- Jones reported on her upcoming conferences and events as well as the CVB's progress on its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. One of the upcoming events that Jones highlighted was the CVB's National Travel and Tourism Week event scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th.
- In a last piece of business to share, Jones announced that 2023 was the Year of the Trail which fits in well with the CVB's current focus on outdoor recreation and sustainability.

Rachel Whitten gave a convention sales update to the CVA Board of Directors.

- Whitten reviewed the theme and results of the Association Executives Association of North Carolina annual trade show at the Raleigh Convention Center in December noting that this was a collaboration with the Greenville Convention Center and the campus hotel partners.

- Whitten shared the number of leads and bookings for the month of November and December. She stated that she is working with several planners to book both new and repeat business.
- Whitten gave an overview of upcoming events that she would be participating in to market Greenville-Pitt County meeting facilities. Whitten mentioned that this strategy also included joining the Black Coalition of Meeting Professionals.
- Whitten showed an example of her survey that she will be sending to meeting planners at the suggestion of Chairwomen Diane Taylor.
- Whitten is beginning work to obtain her Certified Hospitality Professional designation.

Andrew Schmidt and Ce’Nedra Dillard gave an update on activities from the Sports Commission to the CVA Board of Directors.

- Schmidt shared that for the first five months, the sports commission has booked 13 events with a little over 3.5 million in economic development. Schmidt said that the sports commission is a bit behind as compared to last year but January business looks strong.
- Schmidt reviewed the US Sports Congress event that took place in Richmond, Virginia in early December and the opportunities that came with sponsoring the first day’s event luncheon. Dillard reviewed the sales opportunities that existed and announced that the sports commission was successful in recruiting the Jackelope skateboarding tour to Greenville’s Jaycee Park.
- Dillard announced that the NC Sports Association quarterly meeting would be in Greenville next October.
- Schmidt mention that he and Dillard attended the Greenville United Soccer announcement the previous week. Greenville United will be part of the National Premier Soccer League and begin play in May.
- The Little League Softball World Series will be held August 6th through 13th.

V. Treasurers report:

CVB Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report for the month of November Schmidt announced that collections for November 2022 totaled \$116,474.33 which was 14.52% higher than collections in November of 2021. Currently, 2022-2023 collections are 14.04% higher than collections for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Executive Director Schmidt reviewed the current year to date budget report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Schmidt reported that the CVB was currently at 50.3% of budget as of January 17th and should not exceed 58.3% percent by the end of January. Schmidt said that the \$72,000

payment to the convention center for January expenses had not been processed and the main reason why expenditures look a bit low at this time.

Finance Director Byron Hayes gave the cash-balance report. The CVA's operating reserve stands at \$913,061 and that the marketing reserve is currently \$363,062. Currently the Capital Reserve Account balance \$2,886,517. Hayes stated the all accounts look to be in good shape and should increase as the spring continues.

VI. Old business:

Schmidt gave an update on the CVB's ARPA application with Pitt County. Schmidt shared that the application has been approved and Pitt County legal is currently looking at the agreement. Once approved, Schmidt will sign off on the agreement and the Pitt County Commissioners are expected to vote on them during their February 6th meeting. If approved, funds would be disbursed within a month or so of the February 6th meeting date. Schmidt thanked County Commissioner liaison Mary Perkins Williams for her support.

In a last piece of old business, Vice President of Marketing and Development Sierra Jones gave an update on the hiring process for the Marketing Assistant position. Jones said that Megan Singleton has accepted the position and will be starting on January 23rd. She thanked Chairwomen Taylor and others that served on the hiring committee.

VII. New business:

In the first piece of new business, Schmidt asked Financial Director Hayes to give a synopsis of the audit contract for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Hayes stated that the CVA will be again working with Cherry Bekaert for their audit services. Hayes reminded the board that the City uses the same firm as well. Hayes said the audit, like everything else is a bit more expensive this year at the cost of \$12,500. Schmidt thanked Hayes and stated that the board must vote to approve the contract. Bob Sheck made a motion to approve the audit contract. Dr. Brenda Fairfax seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

In a last piece of new business, Executive Director Schmidt shared that the sports commission is having some issues with pricing at some of the facilities. Schmidt continued that in December a Greenville based softball tournament organizer had asked to place ten tournaments at one of our facilities. The tournament organizer mentioned that he had been having these events in Wilson, Goldsboro, and Kinston as it was half of the price to do so. The particular planner would love to stay in Greenville but it's just not affordable to do so. Schmidt continued that a similar event has happened with flag football and North Campus Rec. The planner says that he has never had to pay the amount that NRC is asking. Schmidt made it clear that he is not expecting the board to have any type of solution to the problem but just wanted to make them aware.

IX. Adjournment: There being no further business, Dr. Brenda Fairfax made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:13pm. Brett Morgan then seconded the motion. A vote was taken which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Ross
Secretary

