

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority**  
**Thursday, September 21, 2023**  
**Hilton Greenville (Julep)**

**Board members present:** CVA Vice Chair Candace Hollingsworth, CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, Brett Morgan, Aileen Peacock, Dr. Brenda Fairfax, Christie Jahn, Chamika White, City Finance Director Byron Hayes, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, County Commissioner liaison Mary Williams Perkins, 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. Special guests from French West Vaughan advertising agency were Peyton Burgess, Leah Markam, and Scott Palmer.

**Board members absent:** CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Secretary Ken Ross, Jay Bastardo, Bob Sheck and City Council liaison Rick Smiley were unable to attend.

**I. Call to order:** CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth called the meeting to order at 11:36pm. Executive Director Andrew Schmidt recognized Leah Markam from French West Vaughan who relayed how much their staff enjoys working with the CVB. Peyton Burgess and Scott Palmer then gave a recap of the previous year's strategy results and previewed what the 2023-2024 advertising and marketing initiatives would entail. Burgess and Palmer also highlighted the most effective marketing strategies and gave details on some new opportunities that the CVB would be exploring as well. Upon conclusion of the presentation, there were no questions. Executive Director Schmidt told the board that if they would like to receive a copy of the slide deck, he would be happy to email it out.

**II. Approval of minutes:** Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the May 18, 2023, full board meeting and asked board members to review to see if any changes needed to be made. CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Brenda Fairfax and passed unanimously.

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

- Schmidt gave an update on expansion of the African American Cultural Trail for Greenville-Pitt County. Schmidt shared that he presented to the County Commissioners on September 11<sup>th</sup> to inform them that there will be three new stops added to the trail. Schmidt said the stops are Greenwreath Park in Falkland, the John Bryant Parker Homestead in Simpson, and the recently

dedicated cemetery in Ayden. Dr. Brenda Fairfax asked about the Brownhill Cemetery in Greenville. Schmidt said that would also be a planned stop but they are currently working on a civil rights designation for the grounds.

- Schmidt announced that he was going to be part of the Chamber's inter-city visit to Greensboro scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the trip is to learn about the explosive growth that downtown Greensboro has experienced and talk to local leaders about how that growth came to fruition.
- Schmidt shared that the CVB would be at the NC State Fair this year on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> to market Greenville-Pitt County and promote the craft breweries in our County. The event is part of the NC Brewers Guild Public House area at the fair which showcases the many craft breweries across the state.
- Schmidt stated that he was the featured speaker at the Chamber Power Luncheon Series earlier in the week. He was able to talk with 70 attendees about the importance of travel and tourism to the local economy and share future initiatives that the CVB will be engaging in to keep tourism moving forward in our destination.

#### **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 last fiscal year. Jones reviewed the number of users, sessions, page views, locations of viewers, and the top pages viewed.
- 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. Jones said that October are target dates for both projects.
- Jones gave a recap of her conference and events activities for the summer months. Jones shared that she recently returned from a statewide media mission with the goal of bringing travel writers to Greenville to create content for their individual publications and thus promoting Greenville-Pitt County.
- Jones summarized meetings of both the Greenville-Pitt County Destination Partners group and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility groups. Jones mentioned that the last meeting was a joint meeting and that each group will meet again in the fall.
- Jones relayed to the board that Megan Singleton was traveling back from a conference in Cherokee and had tried to join the meeting by Zoom but some technical difficulties

surfaced, and she could not be heard from her computer. Jones gave an update on Singleton's activities for the past few months.

Andrew Schmidt let the CVA Board know that VP of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten was attending the National State of Black Tourism event in Washington, DC. Schmidt stated that the Black Tourism market (on both the meeting and leisure side) is one that the CVB is striving to get more involved with and the conference that Whitten is attending is the start of that process.

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

- Dillard said that over the last fiscal year, 49 tournaments had been booked with an estimated economic impact of \$12.7 million dollars. Schmidt said that the numbers were lower this fiscal year as facilities were not as available as in 2021-2022 where programming was still not occurring on local fields due to COVID fears.
- Schmidt shared that planners from the Jackelope Skateboarding tour were in Greenville on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to see if Greenville might be a viable location for one of 5 initial tour stops in the United States. Currently, stops are mostly in Canada with one major event in Virginia Beach.
- Dillard gave a summary of a site visit with Body Armor State Games. Dillard explained that the games are much like the Olympics for the state of North Carolina. Events run for a full month bringing 13,000 athletes of all ages to compete in a variety of sports. The Sports Commission is working to bring the event here in 2025 and 2026. This event has never been east of Raleigh.
- Schmidt gave an overview of the 2023 Little League Softball World Series. Schmidt stated that there were over 700 hours of regional softball coverage leading up to the series in Greenville and that the final game was broadcast on ABC. Little League is scheduled to sit down with the City and discuss the future of Greenville hosting after years four and five of the contracts.
- Dillard summarized her two recent trips to Connect Sports Marketplace and SPORTS Relationship Conference. Dillard said that some excellent contacts were made and that she will be heading out again in early October for the TEAMS Conference.

#### **V. Treasurers report:**

CVB Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report for the month of July. Schmidt announced that collections for July 2023 totaled \$144,082.33 which was 15.23% higher than collections in July of 2022. Currently, 2023-2024 collections are 15.23% higher than collections

for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Schmidt also gave a summary of the 2022-2023 fiscal year collections. Collections for the fiscal year came in \$135,883.87 higher than forecasted allowing an extra \$90,589.24 to be put into fund balance and \$45,294.62 to be placed into the GCC marketing reserve.

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 21.6% of budget as of September 19th and should not exceed 25.0% percent by the end of September. Schmidt said the budget was on track to stay where it needs to be.

Finance Director Byron Hayes gave the cash-balance report. The CVA's operating reserve stands at \$927,469 and convention center marketing reserve is currently \$451,244. Currently the Capital Reserve Account balance is \$3,427,214. Hayes shared that the Capital Reserve amount would decrease as three expenditures will come out of Capital Reserve. Those expenditures are \$500,000 for renovations for Guy Smith Stadium, \$300,000 for the Sports Commission, and \$50,000 for the Sports Complex Feasibility Study. Despite the expenses, Hayes felt that by the end of the year, revenues in the Capital Reserve account would look about the same.

#### **VI. Old business:**

Schmidt informed the CVA Board that three re-appointments had been made by City Council liaison Rick Smiley at the August 7, 2023, City Council meeting. They were Candace Hollingsworth, Bob Sheck, and Bri Lester. All have accepted and Schmidt thanked them for their continued service.

Sierra Jones gave an update on the CVB's efforts to develop a Tourism Master Plan. Jones stated that the RFP was in its final stages and will be sent out in October. The goal will be for a selection before the end of the year and for work on the plan to start in January.

#### **VII. New business:**

In the first piece of new business, Schmidt shared that he had reviewed the idea of having a tuition reimbursement plan for CVB employees as the City of Greenville does. Schmidt said that the Executive Committee wanted Schmidt to bring them a plan but to check with the full board to see if they agreed. The full board stated their agreement and asked Schmidt to develop a plan for their consideration.

Schmidt shared that Victus Advisors had been selected to conduct a feasibility study for the City of Greenville on whether a new sports complex was needed. Schmidt stated that the consultants would be meeting with the Sports Commission Advisory Board directly after this meeting. County Commissioner liaison Mary Perkins Williams asked if an event center was part of the complex conversation as she would like to see more options for people to have

performing arts events. Perkins also mentioned band competitions. Schmidt replied that everything is on the table at this point and that is why Victus Advisors had been hired, to help see what needs our destination has.

In a last piece of new business, Schmidt mentioned that he had sent the CVB's 2023-2024 Program of Work to all board members last month. Schmidt welcomed any questions on the plan and is happy to talk with any board member who has suggestions or feedback.

**IX. Adjournment:** There being no further business, Christie Jahn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:45pm. Chamika White then seconded the motion. A vote was taken which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Ross  
Secretary

