

Meeting Minutes
Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority
Tuesday, November 29, 2022
Hilton Greenville (Julep)

Board members present:, CVA Vice Chair Candace Hollingsworth, CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, Christie Jahn, Aileen Peacock, Brett Morgan, Dr. Brenda Fairfax, Chamika White, Jay Bastardo, City Finance Director Byron Hayes, City Council liaison Rick Smiley, County Commissioner liaison Chris Nunnally, Emily Jarvis, CVB Director of Marketing & Communications Sierra Jones, Director of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten, Sports Sales Assistant Ce'Nedra Dillard, FWV and CVB Executive Director Andrew Schmidt were in attendance.

Board members absent: CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Secretary Ken Ross, Bob Sheck, and Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, were unable to attend.

I. Call to order: CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth called the meeting to order at 12:02pm. Executive Director Andrew Schmidt recognized Jay Bastardo as the newest board member of the CVA.

II. Special Award Presentation: CVA Executive Director Andrew Schmidt presented the North Carolina Travel Industry Association Public Service Award to Emily Jarvis. The award recognizes an individual or organization that has made significant contributions to the promotion of travel and tourism to North Carolina that transcends personal gain. Schmidt explained that the CVB nominated Jarvis for this award for her work partnering with the NC Museum of Natural Sciences to bring a higher quality of programming and exhibits to the people of Eastern North Carolina. Jarvis originally would have accepted the award in Charlotte at the NCTIA annual meeting but became ill and could not attend.

III. Approval of minutes: Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the September 28, 2022 full board meeting and asked board members to review to see of any changes needed to be made. Aileen Peacock 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 shared that he had been selected to serve as the Upton Beautification Committee Chair. Current projects include alleyway lighting of the Hodges and Merchant's alleyways, planter initiative, and Cleaning Uptown on a regular basis. Schmidt shared that there are now two dedicated public works employees to work in the Uptown District. City Council liaison Rick Smiley shared that the City

may be looking at combining trash services in the spring to also help with overflowing dumpsters.

- Schmidt stated the he and Ce'Nedra Dillard conducted a presentation on the role of the Sports Commission at the November City Council Workshop.
- Schmidt announced that the CVA has started the audit process for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The initial kick off meeting was held in mid-November and currently over twenty items have already been completed in Smartsheet. Dr. Brenda Fairfax will represent the CVA Board this year when talking to the audit team.
- The CVB and Greenville Convention Center have again been named as Readers Choice Award Winners by Convention South Magazine. This is the 7th year in a row that both organizations have been honored.

Staff Updates:

Sierra Jones gave a marketing and communications update to the CVA Board of Directors. Jones shared her screen via zoom to report on the following:

- Jones gave an update on the web analytics for Visitgreenvillenc.com for the period of September through November. 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.
- Jones shared some very positive numbers associated with new OTT and audio streaming initiatives that the CVB is participating in using the organization's 30 second commercial that was aired on ESPN during the LLSWS. Jones shared that both are performing above benchmarks when it comes to watching the complete message.
- Jones shared that the number of destination guides that have been requested over the last three months is 214. Since last summer, the number distributed is over 20,000.
- Jones announced that the CVB held its first DEI advisory board meeting in early November. She continued that the meeting was well attended and some good momentum is being generated. There will be another meeting towards the end of January.
- Jones reported that the hiring process for the new marketing assistant position is underway and the goal is to have a new staff member in place by the beginning of the New Year.

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

- Whitten shared that she has been on the road quite since September promoting Greenville-Pitt County meeting facilities at events such as AENC, MPI-CC, and Connect Faith in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Whitten reviewed the number of leads and bookings for the month of September and October. She stated that she is working with several planners to book both new and repeat business.
- Whitten gave a sneak peek to the CVA Board on what she and the campus partners will be doing for the AENC Trade Show coming up next week themed around the board game monopoly.
- Whitten highlighted both the NC Recreation & Parks Conference and NC Bike walk Conference. Both were well attended and grateful for CVB support.

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 four 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 both November and December are looking strong to help gain ground.
- Dillard reviewed the latest tournaments to book with Greenville including two that were cultivated at the SPORTS Relationship Conference in Savannah. Dillard also reviewed the types of tournament we would be seeing over the winter.
- Schmidt announced that he and Dillard would be traveling to Richmond on Sunday for a three day sports tourism conference and trade show. Schmidt stated there would be good opportunities for the sports commission to bring clients looking for smaller markets.
- Schmidt also shared that the state of North Carolina now has a grant program for those planning larger e-gaming events. The first of these grants was given out last month. There is a total of \$5million in the e-gaming grant fund.

V. Treasurers report:

CVB Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report for the month of October. Schmidt announced that collections for October 2022 totaled \$134,019.68 which was 24.31% higher than collections in October of 2021. Currently, 2022-2023 collections are 13.93% higher than collections for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. City Council liaison Rick Smiley stated that it was difficult to know what was good and what was not as there were no long term trends to look it such as a multiyear graph. Schmidt stated that he could put on together and share it with the board.

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 39.5% of budget as of November 28th and should not exceed 41.7% percent by the end of November.

Finance Director Byron Hayes gave the cash-balance report. The CVA's operating reserve stands at \$894,559 and that the marketing reserve is currently \$357,953. Currently the Capital Reserve Account balance \$2,886,517. Hayes stated that the capital reserve account balance is a bit lower as the payment for the sports commission funding has been made. Hayes expects the balance to increase again as occupancy taxes continue to look good.

VI. Old business:

Schmidt gave an update on the CVB's ARPA application with Pitt County. Schmidt shared the application had been approved. However, at the November 21st Pitt County Commissioners Board meeting, the board voted to reduce the CVB's allocation from \$681,000 to \$600,000 dollars to be able to completely fund another non-profit project. Schmidt thanked Commissioner Nunnally for his support on this and stated that the CVB was thrilled to be getting the financial assistance in any amount.

In a last piece of old business, Schmidt updated the CVA Executive Committee on the prospect of collecting occupancy tax from dorm room usage. Schmidt said the he had spoken with both the lobbying team and Executive Director of the North Carolina Travel Industry Association and both advised against pursuing trying to collect dorm room occupancy tax. Schmidt explained their reasoning behind this was that it could open up additional debates on the current occupancy tax laws in which they already expect some challenges to in the long session. Schmidt said that if the CVA Board wanted to pursue this anyway, he could have further conversations. City Council liaison Smiley said that if that was to occur, the city also has a lobbying team that could be consulted.

VII. New business:

In new business, Schmidt gave a recap of the NC Travel Industry Association's legislative goals for travel and tourism in 2023.

- Preserving the school start date law which says NC Public Schools cannot start school before the last Monday in August
- Working to receive funding for additional hospitality workforce development labs.
- Protect the integrity of the occupancy tax system.

VIII. Closed Session:

At 12:42pm, Rhesa Tucker made a motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Aileen Peacock and passed unanimously.

The full board came out of closed session at 12:55pm

IX. Adjournment: There being no further business, Bob Sheck made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:58pm. Brett Morgan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Ross
Secretary

