

Meeting Minutes
Pitt Greenville Convention & Visitors Authority
Wednesday, September 28, 2022
Hilton Greenville (Julep)

Board members present: CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Vice Chair Candace Hollingsworth, CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, Christie Jahn, Aileen Peacock, Brett Morgan, Chamika White, Bob Sheck, City Finance Director Byron Hayes, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, CVB Director of Marketing & Communications Sierra Jones, Director of Sales & Services Rachel Whitten, FWV representatives Leah Markham, Peyton Burgess, Sarah Butts, and CVB Executive Director Andrew Schmidt were in attendance.

Board members absent: County Commissioner liaison Chris Nunnally, CVA Secretary Ken Ross and Dr. Brenda Fairfax were unable to attend.

I. Call to order: CVA Chair Diane Taylor called the meeting to order at 11:35am.

II. Presentation from French West Vaughan: Sarah Butts and Peyton Burgess from French West Vaughan reviewed the 2021-2022 fiscal year advertising strategy numbers and showed examples of the scope of work that they did on behalf of the CVB. At the conclusion of the year-end review, Sarah and Peyton summarized the 2022-2023 marketing and advertising plan. Burgess shared that during the 2022-2023 year the CVB plans to add a few more strategies including OTT and advertising on LinkedIn. At the conclusion of their presentation, Executive Director Schmidt shared that the CVB has a wonderful relationship with the FWV team and that he and Sierra look forward to their continuing relationship.

III. Approval of minutes: Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the minutes of the May 31, 2022 full board meeting and asked board members to review to see if any changes needed to be made. CVA Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ken Aileen Peacock and passed unanimously.

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

- The CVB is working with Play Fly Sports to host the game day hospitality tent for each ECU home football game. Schmidt shared this is a great opportunity to get in-front of the public, bring clients to games, and show support for ECU Athletics. The CVB is also at each Freeboot Friday as well speaking to the public about what we do and how we positively affect the community.

- Schmidt announced that Josh Lewis has been named the new President of the ENC Alliance. Schmidt said he will be meeting with him next week to discuss how the two entities can work together.
- Schmidt shared that he will be graduating from Destination International's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Leadership Master Class in October.
- Schmidt shared that the North Carolina Travel Industry Association will lobby for a sports tourism grant fund during the 2023 long session. Schmidt said that a fund like this would be helpful for our larger events like the Little League Softball World Series.
- Ce'Nedra Dillard is working on her Sports Tourism Strategist Certification offered by Sports ETA. She has completed 8 out of 32 credits so far.

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 current year. 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 gave a synopsis of the number of destination guides that have been distributed since last summer. That number is over 20,000. Jones stated that the 2023 edition is being worked on.
- Jones gave a synopsis of two media familiarization tours that she has facilitated over the last few months and commented that the media market is getting back to more of a pre-pandemic pace. Jones shared that she will be participating in the statewide media mission coming up in October
- Jones shared an update on the CVB's DEI initiative and plans for the first advisory board meeting. Jones has been asked to speak at the Travel Unity Conference in Lake Charles, LA to share her work on our CVB's DEI plan.
- Jones reported that she is ready to begin the hiring process for the new marketing assistant position. The job will be advertised through October 31st.

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

- Whitten shared that she has been on the road quite a bit since June promoting Greenville-Pitt County meeting facilities at events such as AENC, MPI-CC, and the NC Traffic Safety Conference promoting Greenville as the conference destination in 2024.
- Whitten reviewed the number of leads and bookings over the last four months. She stated that the momentum for conventions and meetings has increased significantly over the last few months and is excited of what bookings may transpire in the fall.
- Whitten summarized some of the outside board work with Pitt Community College and NC Stop Human Trafficking

At the end of Whitten's presentation, Chairwoman Taylor asked if the CVB sent out surveys to the meeting planners holding events here. Whitten mentioned that there is follow up with the planner but that a specific survey has not been developed. Taylor asked if that could be accomplished. Sierra Jones stated that she could work with Whitten to make that happen.

Andrew Schmidt gave an update on activities from the Sports Commission to the CVA Board of Directors.

- Schmidt gave a summary of the 2021-2022 fiscal year end numbers for the sports commission. During this time, 64 tournaments were booked with an economic impact estimated at \$22.1 million dollars.
- Schmidt reviewed the success of the Little League Softball World Series. The series was the most watched in history giving Greenville-Pitt County excellent exposure. Schmidt shared that the CVB ran 126 commercials on the ESPN platform promoting our destination during that time.
- Schmidt informed the board that he and Ce'Nedra had just returned from Savannah and the SPORTS Relationship Conference. Schmidt said it was an outstanding marketing event and that progress was made in bringing new tournaments to our area.

V. Treasurers report:

CVB Executive Director Schmidt gave the occupancy tax report for the month of August. Schmidt announced that collections for August 2022 totaled \$126,767.74 which was 4.09% higher than collections in August of 2021. Currently, 2022-2023 collections are 6.05% higher than collections for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Schmidt summarized the 2021-2022 occupancy tax collections. The final 2021-2022 occupancy tax collections totaled \$1,297,957.32 which was 40.48% higher than 2020-2021 collections. Schmidt continued that he had projected collections for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to be \$1,140,589.98, creating a positive difference of \$156,942.81. Schmidt explained that the CVA would retain \$104,628.54 of these funds and that GCC would receive \$52,314.27. Schmidt

continued that GCC has the right to access their additional funds this fiscal year via budget amendment. The CVA's funds will go back into the reserve account.

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 23.3% of budget as of September 26th and should not exceed 25.0% percent by the end of September.

Finance Director Byron Hayes gave the cash-balance report. The CVA's operating reserve stands at \$965,713 and that the marketing reserve is currently \$338,576. Currently the Capital Reserve Account balance \$3,226,517. Hayes stated that the capital reserve account balance will drop slightly due to some project improvements in the front of the convention center.

VI. Old business:

In old business, Schmidt shared that City Councilman Rick Smiley has appointed Diane Taylor for an additional three year term as chair of the CVA Board. Schmidt also reported that Brett Morgan was reappointed to serve a three year term on the board. Schmidt said there was one current vacancy on the board which was a County seat and that he and Councilman Smiley were looking at potential candidates.

Schmidt gave an update on the CVB's ARPA application with Pitt County. Schmidt stated that he has turned in the formal application and that these will be reviewed during the first two weeks of October.

In a last piece of new business, Schmidt updated the CVA Executive Committee on the prospect of collecting occupancy tax from dorm room usage. Schmidt shared that during the short session Mitchell County filed a bill to increase the occupancy tax from 3% to 6% and included language to receive occupancy tax from Mitchell Community College for any overnight stays in dorm rooms. This part of the request was taken out so there are currently no occupancy tax dorm room collections in our state. Schmidt said that he will bring this issue up at the NC Travel Industry Association Board meeting in November to see how other destinations feel about the issue and then report back to the board.

VII. New business:

In new business, Schmidt shared the CVB's 2022-2023 Program of Work with the Executive Committee. Schmidt said that the document, which was an excellent roadmap for the fiscal year, was fluid and would be reviewed quite often. Due to its length, Schmidt asked for board members to review the document and come to him with any questions.

Senator Todd Johnson from Union/Cabarrus County was honored as NCTIA's legislator of the year for his work on working to modernize ABC laws, (Social Districts) safety legislation for short term rentals, and workforce development funding.

In a last piece of new business, Executive Director Schmidt passed out the 2022-2023 revenue projections that will be used to craft the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget. Schmidt shared that to forecast the next 8 months of revenue, he used a blend of historical data and economic reports regarding a possible recession related to inflation to come up with the monthly numbers. Schmidt said that the forecast was a bit conservative based on the fact that many economists say there is likely going to be a mild recession. Christie Jahn mentioned that she has just returned from their annual Hilton conference and they expect demand to increase by anywhere from 8 to 10 percent. Jay Bastardo inquired whether the increasing number of air bnb's could affect this forecast. Christie Jahn replied that she did not feel it would have any effect. Schmidt concluded by saying projected to actuals will be updated each month and shared with the board.

IX. Adjournment: There being no further business, Christie Jahn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:15pm. CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Ross
Secretary

