

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2020, 8:30 a.m.

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

	Bruce Eckard; Chair	
Donald Duncan	Renee Keever	Leroy Lail
Lindsay Keisler		Mark Seaman
Warren Wood		Phil Yount

A quorum was present.

Also present were Terry Taylor; Counsel, Mandy Hildebrand; CEO, Sarah Davis; Director of Sales and Marketing, and Amber Howard; Director of Events/TDA Clerk.

- I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Regular Meeting of February 9, 2020

Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the Minutes of February 9, 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- IV. Approval of Financial Reports - Ms. Hildebrand
 - A. February 2020 Financial Report

Ms. Howard reviewed comparison of events for February 2020 vs. February 2019 and event revenue chart. Event revenue is at 80.4% at the end of eight months.

Ms. Hildebrand also reviewed the occupancy tax chart which shows revenues collected through January 2020. Tax collected is at -2% of what was budgeted for the year.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the COVID-19 and how it may affect the economy. An event that was scheduled for April, The Voice of Evangelism Conference has decided to cancel because a majority of those coming to the conference would be traveling via airplane, a few of the Speakers included, and the Event Producer felt that cancelling would be the appropriate action to take.

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed financial report for February 2020. For the eighth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 66.7% of the budget. Income is at 61.7% without February Occupancy Tax and expenses are at 52%.

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Financial Report for February 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. New Business - Ms. Hildebrand

A. Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Audit

A contract to audit TDA financials was submitted by Debora Wentz, CPA for Board approval. Ms. Hildebrand recommends that TDA continue to contract with Ms. Wentz. Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Duncan, that Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Audit Contract with Debora Wentz, CPA be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Old Business

Mr. Wood made a recommendation that in the plans for renovation, the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation offices be included to incorporate a higher-level look than what has initially been presented. Mr. Wood would like for Mr. Mitchell, the Architect, to present as a separate item for bid an upgraded reception area and conference room for those EDC offices. Mr. Lail suggested using an Interior Designer for a more enhanced look after the renovations are complete as Mr. Mitchell has only designed exterior features for offices, not the furnishings, technology, etc. Mr. Wood reiterated that he would like to get a price for creating a more enhanced space for the EDC offices. Ms. Keisler asked if the Catawba County EDC would have to sign a lease for their updated space, as the money borrowed for the expansion from Catawba County will be paid off this year and part of the arrangement obligation with EDC being housed at the convention center at no cost would be over. Mr. Wood is not in favor of charging rent for Catawba County EDC space used. Chair Eckard feels that after next month, when original building lease is paid off through both the City of Hickory and Catawba County, a lease agreement for the EDC offices should be put in place, at least to cover utilities, cleaning/trash removal, and any other ancillary

matters. Mr. Wood feels strongly that the mission of the EDC is bigger and there is no need to ask them to pay for office space. Mr. Lail said that our mission is "heads in beds", which is also bigger, and he feels it is most important that the building be a destination, which is what Mr. Mitchell is focusing on through the architectural phase, because with the future Furniture Hall of Fame, folks will be stopping by to visit this exhibit. Mr. Lail doesn't disagree that the look of the EDC offices should look professional, but he also feels that the EDC should help finance or pay in some way for the updated space they will occupy. Ms. Hildebrand said that there will be a Building Committee Meeting before the next TDA meeting and discussion could continue then regarding the EDC Offices.

Ms. Hildebrand added that Scott Mitchell, Scott Millar and she have had conversations about making sure the new EDC and Convention Center Offices look similar to the new space at Hickory City Hall and that the new meeting/board room be accessible with top-notch technology. The Building Committee will report back after the next meeting

VII. Sales & Marketing Report – Ms. Davis

A. Sales

Kaplan Financial Education will hold majority of seminars at HMCC, seminars that HMCC were unable to accommodate will all be held at the Courtyard by Marriott.

NC Aggregates Association has submitted an RFP for their Annual Conference. Staff has been working on a relationship with their representative, Diane Weems, for several years and finally has been given a chance to bid on the event.

Western Basketball Regionals were held in Hickory this past weekend and Ms. Hildebrand and Mr. Seaman worked hard on that event providing hospitality, etc. Mr. Seaman commented that the only issue tournament ran into was that people were turned away from games because the gym was already over capacity.

Reported February 2020 hotel pickup for Building Material Suppliers Association, NC Cattlemen's Association, US Powerlifting Association, and NC Locksmith Association.

B. Marketing

Traveled to Lake Junaluska to present to VisitNC & Meredith Publishing; producers of the NC Travel Guide. The representatives then traveled to Hickory and spent the night and Ms. Hildebrand and Ms. Davis took them to dinner.

Working with UNC TV on commercial spots.

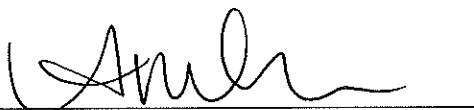
VIII. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Spoke about VisitNC - staff will go to 2020 Conference to invite them to Hickory for 2021, which will be the first time Hickory has hosted the event. Sarah is spending around 80% of her time working on the closing lunch, where she will present about Hickory and extend the invitation for 2021 Conference. Ms. Keisler asked if the City Walk would be done in March 2021, at the time of the VisitNC Conference. Mr. Wood said it would not be complete at that time.

- IX. The next TDA Board Meeting will be held on Monday, April 20, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- X. There being no further business, motion was made at 9:01 a.m. to adjourn by Chair Eckard, seconded by Mr. Yount. The motion carried unanimously.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By: 
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board Amber Howard