

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**November 14, 2022, 8:30 a.m.**

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Conover 1 meeting room of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, November 14, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

Bruce Eckard; Chair	
Tom Hart	Renee Keever
Lindsay Keisler	Leroy Lail
Mark Seaman	Warren Wood

A quorum was present.

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

I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m. All Board Members were present except for Patricia Hatch and Phil Yount.

II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of October 10, 2022.

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Minutes of October 10 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Reports

A. Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard reviewed a new report, which combines the event revenue chart and the monthly event comparison.

Event Revenue is at 53% of the Budget with a total made of \$221,797.

There were 26 events in October 2022, with eight of those being new events.

Ms. Howard discussed how events are priced. For new customers, they are given the rack rates and may receive a discount based on factors such as overnight rooms and/or food/beverage. For repeat customers, their room rent is increased every year based on the CPI rate (Consumer Price Index), which is currently 8%.

#### B. Occupancy Tax

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the Occupancy Tax chart. Occupancy Tax is at 42% of the Budget without October revenues.

#### C. Financial Report - Ms. Hildebrand

For the fourth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 33%. Overall, income is at 41% of what was budgeted without October occupancy tax, and expense is at 25% of what was budgeted.

Chair Eckard asked why the report no longer shows the amount of money in the bank? Ms. Hildebrand said that this Finance Report is created by the WPCOG so it doesn't include that information. Chair Eckard asked that a separate report be included for future meetings.

Mr. Wood commented that Rodney Miller (City of Hickory Finance) is working with bank to get details of the loan that the City of Hickory is borrowing on behalf of the HCTDA. Discussion ensued regarding loan repayment.

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Financial Report for October 2022 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

#### V. New Business - Nothing to Report

#### VI. Old Business

##### A. Renovation/Addition - Ms. Hildebrand

The Pre-Construction Meeting will be on December 8, so we will find out more details about when the project will break ground.

Rodney Miller had given Ms. Hildebrand a charge to come up with a budget for the next five fiscal years including a line item for paying the debt. Ms. Hildebrand said she has

made an educated estimate and feels good about the numbers, but she will be sitting down, along with Ms. Keever, to go over the numbers with Mr. Miller.

Ms. Hildebrand is also working on a list of other items that are needed for the renovation/addition that HCTDA could pay for out of the operations budget rather than using the financed money.

Ms. Keisler commented that it would be a good time to study the need for a county-wide Occupancy Tax. Discussion ensued regarding history of how the HCTDA came to be with only Hickory & Conover and Ms. Taylor mentioned that we need to be careful with our ask because the HCTDA is such a unique entity.

Ms. Hildebrand said that we need to be careful if two TDA's are created in one area. HCTDA will be contracting with Berkley Young and he will take a look at those needs. Mr. Hart commented that after the assessment, perhaps there will be a better snapshot of what having a county-wide TDA would look like and the conversation can be revisited.

## VII. CEO Reports - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand reported that Ms. Jones is in Asheville at a Marketing Conference and she and Ms. Jones will also attend the North Carolina Travel Industry Association Conference later this week.

HCTDA hosted a group of travel writers a few weeks ago and it has generated a good amount of buzz about what is going on in the Metro. We are also hosting a family this weekend who will be writing about things to do in the area, so we are getting good traction at this time.

Visit NC's theme for 2023 is Year of the Trail. The focus is on state and local trails throughout North Carolina. Ms. Hildebrand said that she would like attend Hickory, Conover, and Catawba County Board Meetings in January to receive a proclamation and speak about how the CVB plans to work with local governments on promoting trails.

There have been several parking complaints recently during events. This normally happens when there is a large show (MDI, Gun Show) or two to three events happening at the same time. Hildebrand will meet with Ms. Keever and Mr. Lail soon to discuss the possibility of using the old J&S parking lot for future events.

Have been able to host several of the football teams that have played LR University and App State this year, which is good PR for the area.

Team is working to promote Hickory hotels to visitors who are attending the NASCAR race in North Wilkesboro.

Planning an event for Tourism Partners on December 15 and the Board is invited.

Currently the HCTDA has nine full time and seven part time staff. The plan was to fill another full-time operations position, but with the strengths brought by the new facilities manager, Ed, staff decided hiring two part time event operations positions is the best move at this time.

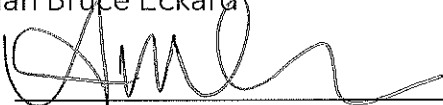
VIII. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on December 12 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

IX. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By:  \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest:  \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk to the Board