

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 12, 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, December 12, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

Also present were Rick Beasley; Assistant City of Hickory Manager, Terry Taylor; Counsel, Sarah Jones; Director of Sales & Marketing, Mandy Hildebrand; CEO, Alan Jackson; IT/AV, and Amber Howard; Director of Events/HCTDA Clerk. Attending via Zoom was Alan Thompson; Auditor with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A.

- I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. All Board Members were present except for Phil Yount.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Regular Meeting of November 14, 2022.

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Minutes of November 14 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- IV. Audit Report - Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Chair Eckard introduced Alan Thompson; Auditor, who is attending via Zoom. Mr. Thompson thanked the HCTDA Board for allowing his firm to perform the Audit. Mr. Thompson reviewed a summarized report of the audited numbers. He commented that the financials are well kept, and numbers were neutral, consistent, and clear. There were no

significant difficulties dealing with management or while performing and completing the audit. Overall, there was an increase in fund balance and revenues/expenditures were consistent.

Ms. Keever raised a question regarding the PPP loan and if that was included as part of the reported revenues. Ms. Hildebrand said that the loan was recognized as revenue when it was declared a "grant" in August of 2021.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Hart, that the audit for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Financial Reports

A. Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard reviewed the event revenue report. Event Revenue is at 65% of the Budget with a total made of \$278,517. There were 14 events in November 2022, with two of those being new events and making revenue for November 2022 the highest November in HCTDA history.

B. Occupancy Tax

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the Occupancy Tax chart. Occupancy Tax is at 58% of the Budget without November revenues.

C. Financial Report - Ms. Hildebrand

For the fifth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 42%. Overall, income is at 55% of what was budgeted without October occupancy tax, and expense is at 34% of what was budgeted.

Mr. Wood asked how staffing is going. Ms. Hildebrand said that we have lost a couple of part time staff, but we are doing ok for a small staff, and plan to hire in the new year either more part time or full time staff on the operations side of the organization.

Ms. Keever spoke about staffing at the hotels and how they are still struggling to have a full staff in this busy time.

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

VI. New Business

A. 2023 HCTDA Meeting Schedule

Ms. Hildebrand said that for 2023, most board meetings will be moved back into the Catawba River Board Room. Meeting dates listed are as follows: January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, and December 11.

VII. Old Business

A. Renovation/Addition Update - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand said that pre-construction meeting on December 8 went well. The plan is to break ground around May 1. The contractor is starting to gather materials and will warehouse those until start date.

Mr. Beasley commented that the only work they may have started before May 1 would be the smaller projects such as the walkway to parking deck. He said that the Catawba remodel could be done by this time next year if all goes well.

VIII. Marketing Report - Ms. Jones

Reviewed content and estimates of reach from the Fall Fam Weekend. Six influencers and/or couples, all different ages, followers, etc., came and did a variety of activities and experienced the Hickory Metro. From this, we were able to see several different perspectives of what our region has to offer. The CVB has never hosted anything like this before and Inspire PR estimated that from this Fam, our social media had 219k views. There was a total of six online pieces/blogs written about the experience and there were 32 social media post. On the last night, CVB staff took the influencers to a progressive dinner, where they had an appetizer, a main course, and dessert all at different local restaurants in our area.

CVB staff took over the NC Sports Association Instagram for a weekend, and during that time, posted about several events that were taking place in the Hickory Metro, including a Fishing Tournament, NAGA Competition, and Soccer Tournament.

Reviewed the data from Google Analytics from July 1-December 10, 2022, that shows the traffic for the CVB website. There were 87% of new visitors and 12% of returning visitors.

The new edition of the Destination Guide is almost ready to be printed. Staff has worked extremely hard on this update and are excited to roll out this extremely important marketing tool. Along with the Destination Guide, CVB staff has worked with a company to create a new map, which replaces the 11x17 paper copy that was used. This piece is foldable and will have points of interest from around the county as well as a detailed map of the downtown Hickory area.

2023 is the "Year of the Trail". Staff is working with City of Hickory and Catawba County on this project.

IX. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Mentioned that Ms. Jones has also been in Raleigh at the AENC Tradeshow, which is a tradeshow that staff attend every year to stay connected with meeting planners and find new business to bring to our area.

The Tourism Partners Christmas Gathering will be on December 15 from 3-5. All Board Members are invited to attend.

X. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on January 9 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

XI. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By: 
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board