

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2023, 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, February 13, 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; City of Hickory Assistant City Manager, Terry Taylor; Counsel, Mandy Hildebrand; CEO, Sarah Jones; Director of Sales and Marketing, and Amber Howard; Director of Events/TDA Clerk.

- 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 January 9, 2023.

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that the Minutes of January 9, 2023, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Reports

A. Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard presented the event revenue chart for January 2023. There were eight events total for January 2023 with a total event revenue of \$59,676. Event Revenue is currently at 85% of the \$350,000 budgeted, with five months left in the fiscal year and will be well above what was budgeted - which is a positive.

B. Occupancy Tax Report – Ms. Hildebrand

Occupancy Tax for six months (through December 2022) is at 82% of the budgeted amount. Occupancy Tax was predicted to be around \$2.1 million, but staff predicts at year end Occupancy Tax will be more than \$2.3 million.

C. Financial Report – Ms. Hildebrand

For the seventh month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 58%. Overall, income is at 77% of what was budgeted without January Occupancy Tax, and expense is at 50% of what was budgeted.

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Financial Report for January 2023 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Ordinance #1 Amending 2022-2023 Capital Projects Budget Ordinance

Ms. Hildebrand explained that this Amendment adds \$131,000 to the Capital Projects Budget for Architect/Project Management during the construction of the renovation/addition to HMCC, as well as soil testing fees.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that Ordinance #1 Amending 2022-2023 Capital Projects Budget be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Ordinance #1 Amending 2022-2023 Operating Budget Ordinance

Ms. Hildebrand explained that this Amendment takes \$111,623 from the Operating Budget to transfer to the Capital Projects Budget.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that Ordinance #1 Amending 2022-2023 Operating Budget be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Old Business

A. Hickory City Council Approval of New Debt for Renovation/Addition Project

Ms. Hildebrand said that a Public Hearing was held on February 7, 2023. Hickory City Council approved the Truist bid unanimously. The bid is a 20 Year loan at 3.83 percent with a Per Call on 4/1/2033, which means the loan can be refinanced at the time if rates are lower. In addition, the first two years will be interest payments only.

Materials are being ordered now so once the project starts most materials will be in and could be complete in a year to 14 months, added Rick Beasley.

Ms. Hildebrand said that the next step is that this request will go to the Local Government Commission Bond Council in March for approval and then the City of Hickory will officially be able to borrow the money after it is approved, which all are hopeful it will approve.

Ms. Taylor added that the only thing to keep in mind is that the financing goes to 2043, but HCTDA legislation flips in 2039, to 1/3 of the occupancy tax going to pay the debt/operations of convention center and 2/3 to marketing/promotions/tourism. Once that happens, the HCTDA will either get the legislation flip extended to 2043 or will need to pay for the remainder from operating budget.

B. Update on Renovation & Addition

No pre-construction meeting this month. Next meeting will be on March 9, 2023. Will focus on construction and overflow parking. Goal is to break ground on May 1.

Mr. Beasley said that Hickory Construction is confident, and they say the Catawba room renovation may be done by October 2023.

VIII. New Business

A. April 10, 2023, Board Meeting, Easter Monday - Chair Eckard

Chair Eckard asked if anyone was opposed to holding the next board meeting on its regularly scheduled date, which is Easter Monday? All agree that we are good to leave the meeting date for April 10.

IX. Staff Reports

A. Sales & Marketing Report - Ms. Jones

Spoke with Jennifer Jones (CVCC) - ESPN+ is broadcasting the men's basketball game at CVCC. Sports Commission helped with marketing dollars since this wasn't budgeted. This money will help offset cost of the rooms for broadcasters and crew. As part of package, we get a sponsorship in the form of the commercial. It is the NCJAA Game of the Week.

Staff is being flooded with request to book facility and we do not have open dates available. This is a great problem to have but events are constantly being turned away.

Points of Interest Map is being redesigned by Maps.com. It's a fold out map with the whole county on one side and a more detailed view of Hickory on the flip side.

Events coming up for "Year of the Trail".

Working with Accent Creative. Contact that was made at Marketing College. They are out of Georgia, and they are going to be assisting staff with construction marketing and signage and other things, which will help take care of some of the burden on our staff of only two people. Accent Creative will also assist us in the creation of the next Destination Guide.

NC Sports Association meeting will be held in Hickory in June 2023. This will be a two-day event.

Two additional freelance writers will be in town in May. Staff is working on itineraries for them.

B. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Fortunate for our small and mighty team as we do a lot with a little.

A new practice from the CEO - We have a lot always going on here at the convention center and CVB - ads and other marketing events happen so would you like to send an update in between board meetings. An example would be links to articles or ads or videos. May send one by Feb. 17, as we have some articles, a sports video, Mandy's recent interview on WHKY and send the next update March 1.

FY 23-24 Budget - staff has already begun thinking about numbers.

Personnel Policy/Handbook - Working with a retired HR Manager on updating the policies and putting together a thorough handbook. Also reviewing benefits and adding where it is necessary to retain employees and future employees. My plan is to have it complete by the end of March and share it with the Executive Committee (Bruce, Renee, Warren) then talk with all about it and have this on the April or May TDA agenda.

Eight Electric Charging Stations about complete as of the week of Feb. 6.

Duke Energy should be installing lights in the upper parking lot this month.

Young Strategies -it is underway and Berkley Young and Madelyn Matlock will be at the March Board Meeting to give an overview of what they are doing for us. The project should be complete by end of June and a presentation could be held in at the August TDA meeting.


Budget Requests to partners - have asked Hickory for \$35,0000, Catawba County for \$30,000 and Conover for \$10,000. These three government organizations have been marketing partners since day one of the CVB. These monies are specifically used to promote their cities and its attractions.

Destination Guides in CVB if anyone needs them.


Mr. Wood added that he appreciated all the work Rodney Miller did with the financing for the Renovation/Addition Project.

- X. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on March 13 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- XI. There being no further business, Chair Eckard adjourned the meeting.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By: 

Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board