

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2025; 8:30 a.m.**

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the MPSV meeting room of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

	Renee Keever - Treasurer	
Kimberly George	Tom Hart	Lindsey Keisler
Brad Lail	Mark Seaman	Warren Wood

Board Members Absent: Bruce Eckard

A quorum was present.

Also present were Rick Beasley; Assistant Hickory City Manager, Terry Taylor; Counsel, Chrystal Dieter; Office Manager/HCTDA Clerk, Sarah Jones; Director of Sales and Marketing, Amber Howard; Director of Events.

Present via Zoom was Mandy Hildebrand, CEO, Hickory Metro Convention Center.

I. Treasurer Keever called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. All Board Members were present except Bruce Eckard.

II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of December 9, 2024.

Mr. Seaman moved, seconded by Ms. George, that the minutes of December 9, 2024, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Executive Committee Meeting of January 27, 2025

Ms. George moved, seconded by Mr. Hart, that the minutes of the January 27, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Financial Report

a. Event Revenue

Ms. Howard reported to the board information for the December 2024 and January 2025 event revenue numbers.

December event revenue was at \$105,043.00, which is the best month for revenue ever. This is due to the convention center having 20 events, two of which were new to

the facility. The two largest grossing shows were the Christmas Show and the C&E Gun Show.

January event revenue was comprised of a total of 17 events, with 2 events being new to the facility. The two largest grossing shows were the Cars Racing Show and the North Carolina Septic Tank Association conference.

Ms. Howard reminded the board that event revenue is comprised of room rentals, equipment rentals, utility purchases for vendors, ticket fees for public shows of \$1.00 per ticket sold, concession commissions and catering commissions.

b. Occupancy Tax

Ms. Hildebrand informed the board of both November and December OT collections. In recent months OT collections have been higher due to Hurricane Helene among other influences.

Ms. Keever noted that December, January and February are typically the slowest months for the hotels. This year has been much busier because of the hurricane disaster relief room nights, normal travelers resuming stays and the increased business coming from the convention center events.

c. December Financial Report

Ms. Hildebrand reported that we are in month 6 of the fiscal year (50%). Total revenue is at 50% without November OT. Event revenue is at 56%. OT for 6 months is 60% of OT budget.

Expenses are at 47% and are where they usually are at this point in the fiscal year.

Ms. Keever moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that the financial report of December 2024, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

d. January Financial Report

Ms. Hildebrand reported that we are in month 7 of the fiscal year (58%). Total revenue is at 60% without December OT. Event revenue is at 66%. OT for 7 months is 73% of OT budget.

Expenses are at 50% with most being where they usually are at this point in the fiscal year. (Departmental Supplies is at 79% of budget due to more cleaning and restroom supplies with the entire building open.)

Ms. Keever moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that the financial report of January 2025, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

## V. Old Business – no old business

## VI. New Business

Mr. Wood discussed with the group that Benny Yount was interested in working to have the NASCAR Clash return to the Hickory Motor Speedway. Ms. Jones contributed that she could reach out to a colleague in Wilkes County that was just integral in bringing the NASCAR Clash to Bowman Gray Speedway recently. Mr. Wood presented that the City of Hickory had helped in obtaining a grant for updates to the speedway.

## VII. Sales and Marketing Report

Ms. Jones reported that last week Destination by Design was onsite continuing to help with the new branding rollout and marketing plan. Destination by Design will also be working with the convention center for implementation of materials for the Visit NC conference being hosted at the convention center in April of this year.

Ms. Jones updated the board on the planning for the Visit NC Conference in April. She wanted to impress upon everyone that this was an excellent opportunity to impress the peers in the industry, influential government officials and the media at large. She also added that there is a change that the Governor could be here for the conference, but that will not be confirmed until just a few days beforehand. Additional plans for the Visit NC Conference are to hold an afterparty on the opening night, which Destination By Design is sponsoring. The second night there will be a pickleball, cocktail and vendor display event. Ms. Jones stated that sponsors are covering many of the costs for these additional events.

Ms. Jones shared that Accent Creative is in the final weeks of preparing the new edition of our destination guide. We should be able to have a limited number of copies available at the Tourism Summit on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

At the Tourism Summit there will be a special education component facilitated by Jessica Isenhour, who is over tourism development in Mt. Airy. There will be a working lunch during the event. Ms. Jones also stated that this was an opportunity to thank our tourism partners in the area.

Ms. Jones shared that she has been working with Visit NC hoping for inclusion again in the State Visitor Guide.

Ms. Jones highlighted our newest employee Maddy Phillips, has joined our team as the Visitor Services and Receptionist.

Mr. Wood inquired as to what kinds of requests we are receiving for the new gym space. Ms. Jones and Ms. Howard shared that we have had requests for basketball, pickleball, cheer, dance, and wrestling. No groups have approached for volleyball currently. Ms. Jones shared that marketing in the Sports Destination Magazine is important for bringing our facility to the attention of groups looking to hold events.

## VIII. CEO Report – Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand highlighted several topics from the Executive Committee Meeting minutes, to include an update on Capital Project Funds; documentary project with ASU and the Lail family; naming rights being on pause until next fiscal year, and salary analysis & surveys in process. All details can be found in the minutes from the meeting.

Ms. Hildebrand also mentioned the March 5<sup>th</sup> Managers Meeting that will include city and county leaders. This is a great opportunity to show this group the importance of tourism and our new expanded facility.

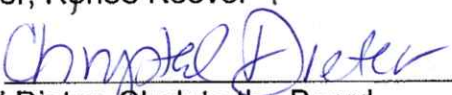
#### IX. Adjournment

The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on March 10, at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

There being no further business, Mr. Seaman moved, seconded by Ms. George, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By:   
Treasurer, Renee Kever

Attest:   
Chrystal Dieter, Clerk to the Board