

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**April 10, 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, April 10, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

	Bruce Eckard; Chair	
Tom Hart	Patricia Hatch	Renee Keever
Mark Seaman		Warren Wood

A quorum was present.

Also present were Rick Beasley; Assistant Hickory 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 8:33 a.m. All Board Members were present except for Lindsay Keisler, Leroy Lail and Phil Yount.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Regular Meeting of March 13, 2023.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Chair Eckard, that the Minutes of March 13, 2023, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- IV. Approval of March 2023 Financial Reports
  - A. Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard presented the Event Revenue Report for March 2023. There were 16 total events in March, with three of those being new events. The parking fees line item has been changed to ticket fees as that is what the fee is based on - the amount of ticket sales of a public show, so with event revenue plus ticket fees, we are \$510,327.

B. Occupancy Tax - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand presented the Occupancy Tax Report. For eight months, 77.4% of budgeted amount has been collected.

Ms. Keever commented that March was another record month for the hotels.

C. Finance Report - Ms. Hildebrand

For the ninth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 75%. Overall, income is at 85.5% of what was budgeted without March occupancy tax, and expense is at 52% of what was budgeted. All line items are in line with the budgeted numbers.

Chair Eckard asked why there was about \$4 million in the HCTDA Truist account, but no interest is being made on those monies. Ms. Keever added that they have an account at Truist that gets close to 5% interest. Ms. Hildebrand will follow up with Truist and with the NC Management Trust. Also staff will look into adopting an investment policy.

Mr. Seaman moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Finance Report for March 2023 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Old Business

A. Update on Renovation & Addition - Ms. Hildebrand

Groundbreaking will be on May 1. Ms. Hildebrand shared the invite list and will send out a media invite a week in advance. The program will include remarks from herself, Chair Eckard, Hickory Mayor Hank Guess and Mark Baucom with Hickory Construction and others.

A news release will go out May 2 and the renovation/additions will be promoted through newsletters, social media, etc.

Working with Ms. Keever and Brad Lail on restriping the parking lot where J&S was located.

Mr. Beasley added that the City of Hickory is designing spaces and working with the state on the on-street parking around the convention center.

On Tuesday, Ms. Hildebrand, Ms. Howard, and Ed Gudat (Facility Manager), will head to Davie County to look at moveable walls that may be used in the Catawba renovation.

Staff is exploring options on how to transport guests to parking lots that are not connected to the convention center. Some options include purchasing golf carts and working with City of Hickory Parks and Rec to shuttle folks during sporting events at convention center.

MDI is going to allow us to use a trailer during the construction and it will be where we store chairs and tables, which will save us money and we appreciate that partnership with MDI.

Mr. Wood asked if we had lost any regular business due to the upcoming construction? Ms. Howard said that so far, we have not and that all the regular clients who come on a regular basis are willing to work with us to make the space that will be available work.

## VI. New Business

### A. Audit FY 23 Contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A.

Ms. Hildebrand said she was pleased with working with the firm for the FY 22 Audit. Conover and the WPCOG work with this group as well. The cost of the Audit for FY 23 is \$11,500.

Chair Eckard moved, second by Mr. Seaman that the Audit Contract for FY 23 with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A. be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

## VII. Sales & Marketing Report – Ms. Jones

Ms. Jones reported that there were over 130,000 impressions on the Travel & Leisure ad.

Also doing some internet ads, which are easily tracked.

The NC Independent Schools Track Meet is coming up and staff is working with Mr. Seaman to place teams as hotels are already full.

Working with Media Writers to come in for visits so they will write about the area.

Tourism Week is the week of May 7. There will be a possible trail event and several "Hospitality Heroes", which will highlight great folks who are in our hospitality industry.

Working on marketing budget and plans for next year. Ms. Jones pointed out the information that Chrystal Dieter (Visitors Center Coordinator) put together showing the demographic of those who check our website, request info, and search our area January-March 2023. These findings help decide how we market and who we market to.

Mr. Wood asked what information they are requesting? Ms. Jones said that those who request can specify what they are interested in.

#### VIII. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Two new employees, Rob Chavis (Operations Crew) and Kim Flick (Custodial/Operations Crew).

By mid-May, Ms. Hildebrand plans to have a FY 2023-24 Draft Budget to the board.

Ms. Hildebrand has been working with Claudia Main (former City of Hickory HR) on a new HCTDA handbook/policy update. CEO will email to Board to review the handbook in advance, and it will be on the May 8, 2023 agenda for approval.

Reported that the ATM was broken into for the second time. The money that was stolen was not our money, as we switched to a vendor who provides the ATM & money. Mr. Wood asked if we have an alarm system. Ms. Hildebrand explained the alarm system we have put in place since the break-in and the current alarm systems being installed. Have also added cameras indoors, so there are over 20 cameras outside and inside of the building now as well as the alarm systems that are going in.

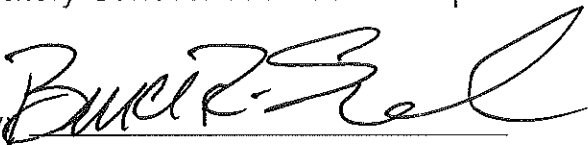
Ms. Hildebrand reported that there is a concerned community member who sent an email to the City of Hickory Manager and City Council, who then forwarded to email to Ms. Hildebrand. Ms. Hildebrand answered the email and copied Chris Kliesch (Event Producer), who also sent an email to the community member. Ms. Taylor prepared a memorandum to the Board and summarized that because we are a public authority made up of public entities we can't discriminate against the events that we rent the space to, so long as they follow our building rules and regulations.

IX. Adjournment

The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on May 8, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

There being no further business, Chair Eckard adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By 

Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 

Clerk to the Board