

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Catawba 1 meeting room of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

	Bruce Eckard; Chair		
Patricia Hatch	Renee Keever	Leroy Lail	
Mark Seaman	Warren Wood	Phil Yount	

A quorum was present.

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

Present via video/teleconference was HCTDA members Donald Duncan and Lindsay Keisler, and Sarah Davis; Director of Sales and Marketing.

- I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. All Board Members were present.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Remote Participation

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, to allow Donald Duncan and Lindsay Keisler to participate remotely for this meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of November 9, 2020.

Mr. Yount moved, seconded by Mr. Lail, that the Minutes of November 9, 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Reports – Ms. Hildebrand

A. November 2020 Financial Report

For the fifth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 42%. Overall, income is at 30.9% of what was budgeted without November occupancy tax, and expense is at 30.4% of what was budgeted.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the Financial Report for November 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

B. December 2020 Financial Report

For the sixth month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 50%. Overall, income is at 43.5% of what was budgeted without December occupancy tax, and expense is at 37.9% of what was budgeted.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the Financial Report for December 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

C. January 2021 Financial Report

For the seventh month of the Fiscal Year, income and expense should be at 58%. Overall, income is at 50.1% of what was budgeted without January occupancy tax, and expense is at 40.4% of what was budgeted.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the Financial Report for January 2021 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Capital Project Ordinance #1 Update

CPO #1 was adopted on February 10, 2020 for construction plans for convention center renovation and addition with a beginning balance of \$677,500. As of February 2, 2021, \$416,813.99 has been spent and the current balance is \$260,686.01.

E. Capital Project Ordinance #2 Update

CPO #2 was adopted on June 15, 2020 for renovating the Hickory and Conover restrooms with a beginning balance of \$275,000.00. As of February 2, 2021, \$84,901.77 has been spent and the current balance is \$190,098.23.

V. New Business

A. Approval of 2021 HCTDA Meeting Schedule

Ms. Hildebrand presented a schedule of meeting dates for 2021. 2021 meeting dates are February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8 and December 13. Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the 2021 HCTDA Meeting Schedule be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Amended Remote Participation Policy and the Remote Public Participation Procedures

Ms. Taylor presented an updated policy to the previously adopted Remote Participation Policy. The initial policy allowed for HCTDA Board Members to attend meetings virtually as long as there was a quorum present for the in-person meeting. The update allows for a totally virtual meeting in which all Board Members would attend virtually and specifies procedures that need to be followed in order for a completely virtual meeting to take place.

Mr. Yount moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Amended Remote Participation Policy and the Remote Public Participation Procedures be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

A. Future Renovation/Addition

Mr. Wood began by expressing the City of Hickory's interest in helping with funding for a new concept for the facility renovation/addition. The plan is to add a 35,000 square foot "flex" space that could be used for conference, public shows, and sporting events such as volleyball, dance, cheer, etc. This is an alternative to the plan that was previously proposed and approved by the HCTDA Board. Mr. Lail added that this is a timely idea because the market is changing and it's a new direction which he feels is a positive direction to move in and it will be less expensive than what was originally proposed.

Mr. Mitchell presented pictures of other facilities that have the same type of "flex" space. The space being proposed is a concrete floor, open ceiling, open space with unobstructed views.

Ms. Keisler asked about the number of volleyball courts that would fit in the proposed addition. Mr. Mitchell said that eight volleyball courts with 3-4 rows of spectator seats could fit.

Mr. Mitchell showed the original plan for a renovation/addition and then the new plans as well as a comparison of the square footage for current facility vs. original plan vs. newly proposed plan. Besides the "flex" space, the new plan includes two high tech meeting rooms and a redesign of Catawba 1-6. Mr. Mitchell also reviewed a cost comparison for the original plan vs. the new plan.

Ms. Keisler raised a point regarding the original intent of adding more natural light to meeting spaces and gathering spaces. Mr. Lail commented that the Hall of Fame will have natural light and that space can be used for receptions. Mr. Mitchell said that there will be no added natural light but that the Catawba rooms will undergo a renovation to be dressed up as more of a ballroom. Ms. Davis asked what the aesthetic of the newly planned addition will be? She would like to avoid a situation such as the one with NC Association of County Commissioners where they had to spend a lot of money to make the space look less industrial. Mr. Mitchell answered that it will be a room with concrete floor and open ceiling and that it has to be built that way in order to accommodate the sporting events. Chair Eckard reminded everyone that we will be working with over 90,000 square feet of meeting space if we go with the newly planned renovation/addition and said that because the addition will be a "flex" space, it will be an opportunity to market to several different types of events. Mr. Mitchell added that once we get into the details of the drawings, we can explore the aesthetic of the space. Ms. Howard asked about the equipment needed to host volleyball tournaments, such as the nets, poles, etc. Mr. Mitchell said those things would be rented by the client as well as the flooring that is needed. Ms. Keisler said that if we were not going to be in the market because of cost that would be associated with sporting events, then perhaps we should not spend the money to build the proposed type of space. Mr. Lail reminded everyone that we are funded by occupancy tax and he feels the new plan will be successful. Discussion ensued about ways to market the "flex" space.

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Yount to approve a motion requesting that Mr. Mitchell modify plans to take into account the new design scope based on the newly proposed renovation/addition. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Keisler reiterated that what the HCTDA has moved to approve looks good and she appreciates the new direction the Board has decided to go, she just wants to make sure that the "flex" space is done correctly, is as marketable as possible, and based upon what the customer needs and suggestions from the staff so that we can put as many "heads in beds" as possible. Ms. Hildebrand added that several convention center customers need more flex space, especially as they grow. She and the team will work together to market the new space once it is solidified and ready to sell.

IX. CEO Report

Ms. Hildebrand mentioned that an updated event calendar, that has already changed since being printed due to the cancelation of the March 2021 Gymnastics Competition, is in the HCTDA Notebooks. The calendar shows events scheduled for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

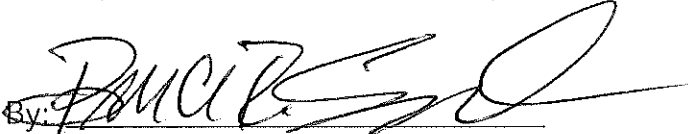
Ms. Hildebrand reported that staff is booking as many events as possible and that the Gun Show is scheduling a few extra shows on months they are not normally here.

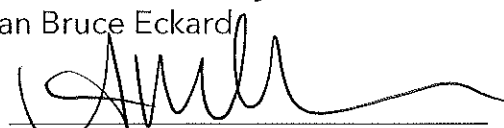
Ms. Hildebrand said that the audit is complete and at the next meeting Debora Wentz, CPA/Auditor, will be making a presentation to the HCTDA Board on the 2019-2020 Audit.

Ms. Hildebrand said that the HCTDA may be eligible for a PPP loan. In January 2021 Destination Marketing Associations (DMO's) were allowed to apply for PPP in this second round. The glitch is that HCTDA is a government authority DMO and she, along with other DMO's across the state that are government authorities, are waiting for the NC Legislators to approve that DMO's that are government authorities may apply for the "loan" that is really a "grant." Ms. Hildebrand has all the information needed once DMO's that are government authorities are eligible to apply.

- X. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on March 8 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- XI. There being no further business, motion was made to adjourn by Chair Eckard, seconded by Mr. Yount. The motion carried unanimously.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By: 
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board