

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Catawba River Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

Also present were Tim Swanson; Counsel, Rick Beasley; City of Hickory Assistant City Manager, 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 8:35 a.m. All Board Members were present except for Patricia Hatch and Phil Yount.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of December 12, 2022

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Seaman, that the Minutes of December 12, 2022, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Reports

A. December 2022 Financial Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the financial report for the six-month of the fiscal year. Income is at 66% without January occupancy tax and Expenses are at 41%.

B. December 2022 Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard reviewed the event report for December 2022. There were 14 total events in December, with three of those being first time events. Year to date event revenue is on track to exceed the budgeted amount of \$350,000.

C. November 2022 Occupancy Tax - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand said that more than 50% of budgeted occupancy tax has been collected in the five months of the fiscal year.

D. Approval

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

V. Old Business

A. Update on Renovation and Addition - Ms. Hildebrand

Pre-Construction Meeting is February 9, 2023

The plan as of now is to begin renovation and addition on May 1, 2023 and materials are being ordered now so once the project starts most materials will be in and project could be complete in a year to 14 months.

Ms. Hildebrand said Rodney Miller; City of Hickory Assistant City Manager, is working on a plan for the loan. When the city borrows the money (probably March or April), the earliest the city would make a payment is six months later, which will be in the fall of 2023.

HCTDA will pay the project management costs separately. On the February agenda there will be a budget amendment for about \$131,000 in to cover costs for architect fees during the project as well as some soil testing. There is currently \$92,337 in the fund and after the amendment that would bring the amount to a little more than \$225,000.

Staff will be working with a company to assist us with marketing during the renovation/addition.

Discussion ensued regarding parking availability during the construction/renovation. Ms. Hildebrand noted that parking is the number one concern of current customers (meeting and event planners as well as patrons) of large shows and events, especially when multiple events are going on. Customers are more concerned about parking during construction and more so in the future because if several events are being held at the convention center, where will customers park? Ms. Hildebrand said that she has talked with Renee Keever and Leroy Lail about being able to use parking lot where the J&S used to be as well as parking at the Piedmont Center if needed during construction.

Rick Beasley said the city is working with Ms. Hildebrand with some solutions which could include on-street parking in front and back of the convention center and perhaps a project that can occur sooner rather than later.

VI. Public Shows/Events - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard gave a report on public shows and their importance to HMCC. In the current fiscal year, there have been 11 public shows. Not only does HMCC collect room rental from these shows, but receives revenue from parking fees, food/beverage, electricity, and more. Some public shows do bring in a few overnight rooms for staff and vendors.

The number one goal of staff is to book events that bring in overnight rooms, but public shows are a great space filler. Public shows are only booked six months in advance; as most associations book a year out, so even though staff holds the public show dates if requested, there is no contract until six months out, so dates do not conflict with dates wanted by an association.

Our highest revenue public shows are the C&E Gun Show and Inside Pitch Promotions Toy Show.

VII. New Business - None to Report

VIII. Sales & Marketing Reports - Ms. Jones

Updated Visitor Guide is complete and will be distributed to Visitors Centers and tourism partners. This is a huge undertaking for staff and the next issue will most likely be done by a third party, rather than in-house.

Reviewed marketing pieces that have come about from the Influencer PR Weekends. Pieces have been published on Yahoo, Good Housekeeping, and more.

Working on promoting Year of the Trail with City of Hickory and Catawba County.

Fishing University, which was filmed in November, will air on the Outdoor Channel & World Fishing Networking January 16-21, 2023.

IX. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

At least every other month she would like to discuss a topic more in depth with the HCTDA to give an update on how things are going and trends or future plans. This month was a spotlight on Public Shows at the convention center that Ms. Howard gave earlier in the meeting.

Staffing has been an ongoing conversation and after losing a few part time employees and with Steve Pearson being on FMLA, it has been decided that we will hire a full time Custodian and another part time Event Operations Crew Member.

Will be making budget request to City of Conover, City of Hickory, and Catawba County for marketing dollars.

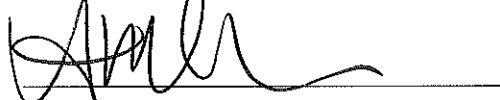
Working with Young Strategies, a firm that is taking a deep dive look at our organization as a TDA, destination marketing, etc. Will want to interview the Board at some point.

X. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on February 13 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

XI. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10am.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By: 
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board