

**NOTICE OF AGENDA OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA)**

Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. on Monday, October 14, 2019

**Location: Hickory Metro Convention Center
Catawba River Board Room**

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| I. Call to Order | Chairman Bruce Eckard |
| II. Recognition of Persons Wishing To Be Heard | Chairman Eckard |
| III. Approval of Minutes | Chairman Eckard |
| a. Approval of the September 8, 2019 Minutes | |
| IV. Approval Financial Reports | Mandy Hildebrand |
| a. September Events (Amber Howard) | |
| b. Occupancy Tax Chart (August 2019) | |
| c. September Financial Reports | |
| V. Survey Results | Alan Jackson |
| June – September 2019 | |
| VI. New Business | Chairman Eckard |
| VII. Old Business | Chairman Eckard |
| a. Update from the Building Committee | |
| VIII. Marketing and Sales Report | Sarah Davis |
| IX. CEO Report | Ms. Hildebrand |
| X. Adjournment | Chairman Eckard |

TDA Board Meetings in 2019 TDA Meeting Schedule:

Regular Meetings - November 11, December 9 all at 8:30 a.m. in the Hickory Metro Convention Center Catawba River Board Room.

Note: Whenever open meeting policies provide for a closed session in matters that concerning legal advice, real estate, contract, personnel, or security, the Board may find a closed session to be necessary. For the convenience of the citizens interested in an item preceded by an asterisk (*), notice is given that a closed session is contemplated.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT HCTDA is wheelchair accessible at 1960 13th Avenue Drive, S.E., Hickory, NC. It is not equipped with automatic doors. Assistive listening devices can be provided with advance notice by calling 828-324-8600 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2019, 8:30 a.m.**

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, October 14, 2019 at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

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

I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. All Board Members were present except Donald Duncan.

II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of September 9, 2019

Mr. Yount moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Minutes of September 9, 2019 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Financial Reports - Ms. Hildebrand

A. September 2019 Financial Report

Ms. Howard reviewed the comparison of events from September 2019 vs. September 2018. There were 13 events in September 2019 as compared to 12 events in September 2018.

Ms. Hildebrand presented the occupancy tax chart for August 2019. Business is slowing down and we need to plan how to move forward and continue to promote Hickory Metro in the best way possible. Ms. Keever added that occupancy for 2018 was 66% and for 2019 it's 55%. Mr. Lail mentioned that business has been on an upturn for several years, but we should expect a downturn. Mr. Lail asked that we work hard, look at website, what we are promoting, look at what employees are doing, and find ways to improve efficiency.

Ms. Keever reviewed an occupancy rate chart that she put together which includes the eight hotels owned by Piedmont Center Associates. Those eight hotels were divided by the number of total rooms that each hotel has to come up with an average occupancy rate.

Ms. Hildebrand provided a chart from the City of Hickory that compares ADR by the month for all hotels in the area that pay occupancy tax.

Ms. Keisler asked what the average occupancy was for a metro our size? Mr. Lail responded that the average is around 65%.

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the financial statement for September 2019. For the third month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 25% of the budget. Income is at 19.1% without September occupancy tax and expense is at 17.2% of the budget.

Mr. Lail asked how much electricity our Sub Lessee uses? Ms. Hildebrand answered that we have not analyzed it for this year but will do that. Mr. Lail added that they it has to be a lot of gas and electricity. Ms. Keever asked how much rent we get from Liazzo's for leasing HMCC kitchen. Ms. Hildebrand reported that we receive \$5,000.00 per month in addition to 7% of all events food/non-alcoholic beverage total. Liazzo's also pays up to \$500.00 on a quarterly basis for any maintenance on kitchen equipment performed in that quarter.

Mr. Yount moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Financial Report for September 2019 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Survey Results - Alan Jackson

A. Post Event Survey Results

Mr. Jackson presented post event survey data from surveys collected between June 2019 and September 2019. Of the 36 surveys sent out, we received 16 responses (44%). Staff received high scores for questions regarding the event planners overall experience and interaction with staff. The lowest scores were in regard to catering and price of facility and/or equipment, which is to be expected. Even though these categories received the lowest scores, they were still rated fairly high, with more satisfied than unsatisfied answers. Mr. Jackson pointed out that both food and pricing will always be extremely objective.

Mr. Wood mentioned that it would be helpful to know of the respondents, which of those had overnight rooms associated with their event. Mr. Jackson said that was not something he analyzed but that he could look at it for the results for next quarter.

B. Visitor Survey Results

Began collecting survey data in January 2019 in the Visitors Center and added a unit in September 2019 in the Chamber of Commerce Offices. Ninety responses have been collected. Questions relate mostly to why the surveyor is visiting the Hickory Metro and from where.

VI. New Business

Mr. Lail announced that he is working towards reviving the Catawba Valley Hospitality Alliance. Mr. Lail said the Alliance will be able to promote more of the things that draw people into our community, such as furniture. Ms. Keisler asked what he thinks may be missing from the CVB's efforts as that is really the CVB's role. Mr. Lail commented that the website should be more geared to bringing folks to the community. He also added that the Alliance would promote small businesses and look at other opportunities for promoting the Hickory Metro. Ms. Hildebrand said that she was a member of Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau Board for many years and remembered working with the Catawba Valley Hospitality Alliance. The groups worked together on some projects. Many years ago, the Visitors Bureau formed a Tourism Partner Group, which is made up of hotels, restaurants, attractions and organizations (arts, culture and even government) that are part of and/or bring events that would bring people to the community. Ms. Keisler commented that her only concern was she didn't want to see several groups get divided and try to promote the same thing separately instead of working together for the common goal.

Chair Eckard ended the discussion by stating that while Hickory is thriving, and he is pleased with the progress, Conover and Newton are also thriving and it should be a joint effort to promote our area as we have so many good things to promote.

VII. Old Business

Chair Eckard reported that the building committee met and has narrowed the renovation/addition plan down to a one level expansion rather than two levels. Mr. Mitchell is refining drawings with details (~~where offices will be, etc.~~) and should have another building committee meeting ~~very soon~~. The committee will try to bring a more finalized plan for approval in the next 30-60 days.

Mr. Wood expanded on Mr. Lail's comment about reviving the Hospitality Alliance. What can we do outside the convention center to expand or bring more people to the area? Mr. Lail commented that it's just good to have more people working to get people here. We will see more progress with the Alliance working to promote the area. Mr. Wood wants to be more plugged in to what they can do to all work together, especially with the sports marketing efforts.

VIII. Marketing & Sales Report – Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Howard reported that the NC Pupil Transportation, which is holding its conference in Hickory in June of 2020, had its committee meeting at the convention center and was very pleased with the space. If all goes well in 2020, they will be looking to do a multi-year contract with Hickory. Mr. Lail commented that there are certain groups that fit the convention center such as NC Pupil Transportation, and those are the groups we should be focusing on.

Ms. Hildebrand announced that the Hickory Metro Convention Center and Visitors Bureau recently received two awards at a NC Travel Industry Association meeting. The awards had to do with how the convention center and visitors bureau presents a bid/proposal to its clients as well as how a fishing event drove more fishing event travel and publicity.

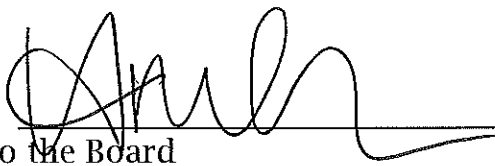
IX. CEO Report – Ms. Hildebrand

The Hickory rooms now have LED lights, which was a budgeted expense.

- X. The next TDA Board Meeting will be held on Monday, November 11, 2019 8:30 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- XI. There being no further business, motion was made at 9:29 a.m. 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