

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**October 10, 2022, 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, October 10, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

Also present were Rick Beasley; Assistant City Manager for City of Hickory, Terry Taylor; Counsel, Sarah Jones; Director of Sales and Marketing, Mandy Hildebrand; CEO, and Amber Howard; Director of Events/TDA Clerk.

- I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m. All Board Members were present except for Patricia Hatch, Mark Seaman, and Phil Yount.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of August 15, 2022

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Chair Eckard, that the Minutes of August 15, 2022, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Special Joint Meeting of September 15, 2022.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Chair Eckard, that the Minutes of September 15, 2022, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

#### IV. Approval of Financial Reports

##### A. Event Revenue - Ms. Howard

Ms. Howard reviewed event comparison charts for August 2022 vs. August 2021 and September 2022 vs. September 2021. There were several new events in September 2022 and with 29% of the budgeted event revenue already made, revenues reflect the Fiscal Year is off to a great start.

##### B. Occupancy Tax - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand said that July and August were the highest months of recorded occupancy tax to date.

Mr. Lail added that September 2022 Occupancy Tax should also set a record.

##### C. August 2022 Financial Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand presented the Financial Report for August 2022. For the second month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 16.6%. Income was at 24.7% and Expenses were at 12.9%.

Chair Eckard asked where the Parking Fees were counted before the revenue line item moved to the Operating Budget. Ms. Hildebrand said that the fees were previously being transferred into the Capital Budget, but during the transition with the WPCOG, and discussing where revenues go, it fit better under the Operating Budget, especially since the 1% occupancy tax covers debt costs to the parking deck debt.

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Lail, that the Financial Report for August 2022 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

##### D. September 2022 Financial Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Ms. Hildebrand also presented the Financial Report for September 2022. For the third month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 25%. Income was at 27.5% without September Occupancy Tax and Expenses were at 18.5%.

Chair Eckard moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Financial Report for September 2022 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

V. New Business (None to Report)

VI. Old Business

A. Update on Renovation & Addition - Mr. Beasley

Mr. Beasley said that the contract with Hickory Construction was approved and has been signed by all parties except the President of Hickory Construction as he was out of town last week.

Mr. Beasley also reported that Ms. Hildebrand met with Rodney Miller; Deputy City Manager for the City of Hickory, to work on the budget and the details of the loan. Ms. Hildebrand added that it was a great meeting with Mr. Miller.

VII. Marketing & Sales Report - Ms. Jones

Staff is planning the upcoming PR weekend coming up October 21-23, which includes six influencer couples/freelancers visiting from Washington D.C., Atlanta, Asheville, Raleigh, etc. Staff will be onsite the entire weekend to showing the guests around the area, taking them to the Hart Square Festival, and visiting the many restaurants and other attractions.

Fishing University will also be filming on Lake Hickory October 21-23 weekend. An education program will be held with CVCC angler team on October 24. The program about fishing on Lake Hickory will air next year.

Working on finishing the 2023-2024 Destination Guide. Staff has sold several advertisements to Tourism Partners, and it has been a huge undertaking but will be an excellent marketing piece once complete. Working on new map for the area and instead of using the old format, staff is working with Maps.com, which handles all the GIS information, etc., and the hope is that the new map will be revealed at the same time as the Destination Guide.

Ms. Jones attended Sports Relationship Conference in Savannah, Georgia. Made connections with several great contacts. She also attended the North Carolina Sports Association Board Meeting at Rocky Mount Sports Center, which is an impressive sports event facility which houses baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, as well as an indoor facility which includes meeting space.

## VIII. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Staying busy and Ms. Howard and team have been working well getting those events in and out of the convention center. There are a few new part-time team members, including two students from CVCC who are on the Fishing Team. Also, new Facility Director Ed Gudat is doing a phenomenal job and has been a great addition to our staff.

Working with Berkley Young who specializes in strategic planning for the travel industry, especially in the southeast. Ms. Jones added that he has been in the industry for a long time, and he is a contact that was made through the Southeast Marketing College. Along the way and after the assessment, Mr. Young will present his findings to the board.

Duke Energy will be installing eight electronic filling stations behind the Hampton Inn on the PCA property. Mr. Lail has agreed to allow Duke Energy to install these stations, and they can be used by guest at the hotels and/or customers at the convention center.

Working on a new ATM agreement with another firm, same business that the Hickory Crawdads work with.

Working on getting back out into the community to promote the importance of tourism in our community.

Annual Reports were sent out digitally and a few hard copies have been sent out to leaders in the community.

Shared an email from Matt Transue from James Madison University, regarding their stay in Hickory during their game vs. App State. Commented on how the convention center staff, the hotels, and the catering staff all work together as one team.

Mr. Wood said that they are adding additional runway at the Hickory Airport so that there will be over 7,000 square feet of runway space.

Ms. Keisler thanked Hildebrand and Jones for speaking at Leadership Catawba. Most who live here do not know the impact of tourism on this community.

Ms. Keisler also said that there are over 700 attendees for the Women's Leadership Conference, which is the most attendees they have had to date.

IX. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on November 14 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

X. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:13.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority

By:   
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest:   
Clerk to the Board