

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 9, 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, September 9, 2019 at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

Also present were Terry Taylor; Counsel, Mandy Hildebrand; CEO, Sarah Davis; 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.

II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of August 12, 2019

Mr. Lail moved, seconded by Mr. Yount, that the Minutes of August 12, 2019 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Introduction of New Full-time Staff - Ms. Hildebrand

A. Elizabeth Clark - Marketing Assistant

B. Caroline Coley - Convention Services Coordinator

V. Marketing & Sales Report - Sarah Davis

Reviewed meeting and convention sales activity.

Reported hotel pickup for August.

Reviewed sports sales activity, such as the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Event.

Mr. Lail commented that he doesn't feel that the MMA is an appropriate event for our convention center. Ms. Davis & Ms. Hildebrand explained how past events that have been held at the Clement Center and most recently L.P. Frans Stadium, have worked and the potential revenue from that event. Ms. Hildebrand said the space was available that day and it would add to event revenue. She will monitor the event before making any decisions on future bookings.

Ms. Davis discussed several successful interviews at the Connect Sports Marketplace Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. She had 48 appointments and has leads on a few potential events, such as a PGA Women's Golf Tournament and a USA Softball Tournament.

She also showed the board new marketing collateral.

Ms. Howard reviewed list of events for September 2019 through June 2020. Some highlights are Western Piedmont Council of Government SCAM Jam (guest speaker is Secretary of State Elaine Marshall); NC Society of Human Resources Management Annual Conference; Performance Food Show and many others. Fiscal Year 2019-2020 is going to be a busy year.

VI. Approval of Financial Reports – Ms. Hildebrand

A. August 2019 Financial Report

Ms. Howard reviewed the comparison of events from August 2019 vs. August 2018. There were seven events in August 2019 as compared to 10 events in August 2018. Although the number of events was higher in 2018, event revenue was exceeded by more than \$10,000 in 2019.

Ms. Hildebrand presented the occupancy tax chart for July 2019, which reports the highest July occupancy tax that we have on the record at \$197,803.81.

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the financial statement for August 2019. For the second month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 16.7% of the budget. Income is at 11.5% and expense is at 11.2% of the budget.

Mr. Wood asked when the Audit would be done. Ms. Hildebrand reported that Audit should be done in October and submitted for Board review at the November or December meeting.

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

VII. New Business

Mr. Lail mentioned Bradington-Young is expanding their manufacturing plant and Mr. Lail feels the company should be congratulated by the Board for their success in the furniture industry. Mr. Lail also wanted to reiterate that furniture is the future for the Hickory Metro. Chair Eckard suggested that Mr. Wood and/or Hickory economic development staff send Bradington-Young a congratulations note since the company is expanding in the city limit.

VIII. Old Business - Chair Eckard

A. Update on Facility Renovation/Addition

Building committee met with Scott Mitchell (Architect). Mr. Mitchell took Mr. Lail's original proposal and revised it and brought four options of what he thought a future expansion might look like. Mitchell is trying to keep the update and expansion within a budget between \$8 - \$10 million. The committee narrowed down two of the drawings for Mr. Mitchell to refine. The building committee meets again on September 18 and the current plan is that Mr. Mitchell will present the updated sketch or sketches at the October 14 board meeting.

IX. CEO Report - Ms. Hildebrand

Expanded on newly created positions for Caroline Coley and Elizabeth Clark. Social media has been more active than it has ever been.

Other items and thoughts brought up during this time from board members.

Mr. Wood asked about vacancy rate. Mr. Lail said that his properties control that rate. He also said that Hickory is a business town and that helps make the occupancy tax high. Mr. Wood asked, "where are the dead spots that need to be filled?" Ms. Hildebrand pointed out that July used to be a very slow month but because of staff finding new customers at that time and hotels working with rates, the past two Julys were better than the past and this July was the highest occupancy tax in 2019 ever reported. Ms. Keever added that when the hotels are close to being full the rate per night goes up and that increases the Average Daily Rate and Occupancy Tax. Mr. Wood would like to make request that we look at the rates vs. the dead spots. Wood believes it would be best for the entire Board to see that information.

Ms. Hildebrand said the report received by the City of Hickory is the 24 properties together and not separated as it is proprietary information. Ms. Keever said she will put together a chart of the properties in the company she works for and those hotels are next to the convention center.

Ms. Keisler asked if the move of the Corning Corporate building is going to make a difference in hotel pickup? Mr. Lail says it will make a big difference.

Chair Eckard added that he looks at it like if we have 64% occupancy and there is 34% vacant but we are keeping the building full then the staff is doing their job.


Ms. Hildebrand mentioned that Alan Jackson will give a report at the October meeting on the customer and visitor surveys that have been collected for the quarter.

Mr. Yount asked when the City of Hickory would be ready to put convention center renovation in front of Hickory City Council? Mr. Wood replied that they are updating Council every step of the way and do not foresee any issues.

- X. The next TDA Board Meeting will be held on Monday, October 14, 2019 8:30 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- XI. There being no further business, motion was made at 9:15 a.m. to adjourn by Chair Eckard, seconded by Mr. Duncan. The motion carried unanimously.

Hickory-Conover Tourism Development
Authority

By: 
Chairman Bruce Eckard

Attest: 
Clerk to the Board