

**Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**September 14, 2020, 8:30 a.m.**

A Regular Meeting of the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors was held in the Conover 3 meeting room of the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Monday, September 14, 2020 at 8:30 a.m., with the following members present:

	Bruce Eckard; Chair		
Donald Duncan	Renee Keever	Lindsay Keisler	
Mark Seaman	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.

Present via video/teleconference was HCTDA member Leroy Lail. Mr. Yount moved, seconded by Mr. Duncan, that Mr. Lail be allowed to participate via video/teleconference. The motion carried unanimously.

- I. Chair Eckard called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m. All Board Members were present except Patricia Hatch.
- II. Persons Wishing to Be Heard (None Appearing)
- III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of August 10, 2020.

Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Ms. Keisler, that the Minutes of August 10, 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Reports

A. Event Revenue Report – Amber Howard

Ms. Howard reviewed a list of currently scheduled events for September 2020 – June 2021.

Reviewed events from August 2020 vs. August 2019.

Ms. Howard went over Event Revenue Chart, which shows event revenue collected through August 2020. The Event Revenue budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 is \$515,000, and as of August 31, 2020, \$17,709.15 has been earned, which is \$497,290 away from what is budgeted.

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

Ms. Hildebrand presented the occupancy tax chart, which reports tax collected through July 2020, which is \$103,706.

Ms. Keever spoke about trends she has been seeing in hotel guest stays. Also discussed the Crowne Plaza hotel and future plans for that property. She commented that the Convention Center has been great to work with on the events that had to be rescheduled from the Crowne Plaza.

#### C. August 2020 Financial Report

Ms. Hildebrand reviewed the August 2020 Financial Report. For the second month of the Fiscal Year, income and expenses should be at 16%. Overall, income came in at 7.2% of what was budgeted without August occupancy tax, and expenditures came in at 10.4% of what was budgeted.

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

#### V. New Business - None to Report

#### VIII. Old Business - None to Report

Mr. Lail spoke about the Furniture Hall of Fame project that is part of the Convention Center renovations/additions. After doing research and working with Architect Scott Mitchell he said that it is going to be hard to tell the story of furniture in the small space and it is going to be expensive, but he is working on a plan and will update the board.

Ms. Hildebrand commented that staff will work with the architect and other professionals to come up with a list of items that will be needed that are not part of funds that the HCTDA will borrow. The items included in a Capital Project Ordinance would be audio and visual equipment, tables, chairs, and any art or other images on walls.

IX. Marketing & Sales Report - Sarah Davis

Reported that Visit NC received \$10Million in CARES relief for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. Visit NC has decided that part of the money will be used for a destination marketing organization (DMO) marketing credit program. DMO's will apply to receive the monies by discussing their losses from occupancy tax, event revenue, etc., due to COVID-19. The HCTDA received \$71,000 (no money is exchanged) from this program to use with LGA (the media company that represents Visit NC). All programs paid for through this program will run October - December 2020. The HCTDA was able to secure nine different digital programs and one print co-op program, including working with Garden & Gun and other major digital platforms.

X. CEO Report - Mandy Hildebrand

Visit NC is also using some of the funding from the CARES Act to hold a virtual meeting with DMO's for the meeting planners.

Speaking with one of the leaders for Visit NC, they are planning to move forward with the 2021 conference in Hickory. Staff has put a pause on planning the welcome reception for the time being. Chair Eckard asked if there was a time frame for when Visit NC needs to cancel? Hildebrand said that Visit NC hoped to make a decision by the end of October.

Caroline Coley has come out of furlough and now serving in a position called Convention and Visitor Services. This is a combination of her former position as Convention Services Coordinator, as well as sales assistant and assisting with the Visitors Center. The goal is to open the Visitors Center by the end of September with protocols for COVID-19.

Brought back two part time staff for the Gun Show this past weekend. The crowd was large, and it was a busy event.

Audit is under way with Deb Wentz.

Had a great meeting last week with The Chamber of Catawba County, CVCC, and hospitality folks. The goal is to start a Hospitality Academy next spring at CVCC. Sarah has been an instructor previous years at Caldwell Community College, so CVCC has already tried to tap into her expertise as an instructor.

Bathroom renovations are planned to start in October.

Mr. Seaman updated HCTDA Board on sporting events taking place in the Hickory Metro.

Reviewed the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Year in Review document. Catawba County ranked 16 in North Carolina in visitor spending.

Ms. Keisler spoke about job loss percentage in Catawba County. Mr. Wood commented that there are 4,100 jobs open within a 50 mile radius of Catawba County. Discussion ensued about how wage plays a factor in job turnover.

- XI. The next HCTDA Board Meeting will be held on October 12 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hickory Metro Convention Center.
- XII. 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