



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

June 19, 2019 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.

Holt Library Conference Room 112, SCC

447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779

Budget Hearing – FY 2019-2020 Budget

Finance Officer Darlene Fox gave a brief presentation of the 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance of \$1,203,599. No public was present for comment.

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Ann Self, Chair; Laura Bowers, Vice Chair; Kathy Korb, Secretary; Board Members Megan Orr, Brad Herman, Andrew Harlfinger, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Eli Ramirez (representing Cashiers Area Chamber for Stephanie Edwards), Jay Grissom (arriving after roll call)
- **Members absent:** Bob Williams, Dale Collins, Ron Mau
- **Others in attendance:** Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Self requested the agenda be amended to add discussion of the Grant Program.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda, amended to discuss the Grants Program. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Vice-Chair Laura Bowers had no comment at this time. Secretary Kathy Korb noted that Whiteside Mountain Brewing would be celebrating their first anniversary on Saturday with specials and activities throughout the day.

Review and Approval of May Minutes

Minutes of the May 22, 2019 TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Andrew Harlfinger moved to approve the May 22, 2019 minutes. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of May Financial Report

Mrs. Fox presented the financial reports. Highlights for May include Occupancy Tax collections of \$68,173.08, penalties of \$212.83, and YTD collection totals of \$962,509.17, which is 86.53% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$11,099.74. 133 accounts reported rentals for April. Collections were up 27.36% from the same period in 2018, and up 10.87% for the fiscal year. The May 31st cash balance was \$4,558.45 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. May expenses were \$79,230.98 with YTD expenses totaling \$1,107,370.08. Encumbrances of \$767.55 make a combined total of \$1,108,137.63, equaling 92.25% of the budget.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the May financial report as presented. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of FY 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance

A copy of the fiscal year 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance was provided for review prior to the meeting. Mrs. Fox outlined projected revenues and Director Breedlove gave a brief explanation of travel and training expenses, which have increased to include expenditures for the new employee position.

MOTION: *Laura Bowers moved to approve the FY 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance as presented. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Review and Approval of Budget Amendments

A copy of the budget amendment was provided prior to the meeting for review. The amendment requested an increase in Travel and Contingency expenses of \$6,400 and \$1,000, for a total of \$7,400, and an increase in Investment Earnings and Penalty revenues of \$5,200 and \$2,200, for a total of \$7,400. All travel expenditures were pre-approved prior to the expenditure, and the additional revenue is being received into the accounts.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Research and Strategic Plan Discussion/Adoption

A copy of the 2022 Strategic Plan was provided prior to the meeting for review. The research and DestinationNEXT study was reviewed over two board meetings, and the Strategic Plan was presented at last month's meeting. Input from those meetings is reflected in the final documents.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve the Research and Strategic Plan as presented. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.*

Grant Project Retooling

Based on the destination research, adjustments are warranted to the current grant program and application process. The required meeting for the next grant cycle is August 20th but should be delayed in order to give the Grant and Executive Committees additional time to incorporate the research into the grant process.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to postpone the grant program until the Grant Committee review the process in line with the Strategic Plan. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Directors' Report

Jackson County Chamber: Highlights of the Jackson County Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- 1,598 visitors were served in the Sylva and Dillsboro Visitor Centers.
- Visitor Center by the numbers: 836 Visitor Guides were distributed to direct inquiries; 272 to Welcome Centers, 200 fly fishing maps were placed in local shops, 169 phone calls were fielded, and 215 group packages were prepared for weddings, class and family reunions, and a DOT conference.
- The Facebook Fly Fishing Trail campaign for May resulted in 67 direct leads and will be repeated in the fall and in December.
- The Hook, Line, and Drinker Festival attendance was up from previous years, with over half of the beer vendors reporting selling out of product and the outdoor gear/fishing vendors all giving positive feedback from the event.
- The Kids Activity table and brochure is proving to be a hit with guests at the Visitor Center.
- Concerts On the Creek will continue through Labor Day weekend, and the next festival for Sylva is the July 4th Fireworks and Festivities.
- Ms. Spiro noted an increase in international travelers at the Visitor Center and sees a need for a motorcycle map for riders coming to Jackson County.
- Two new breweries and tap rooms are scheduled to open in August.

Cashiers Area Chamber: Highlights of the Cashiers Area Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- Jackson County Commissioner Gayle Woody received an introductory tour of the Cashiers area on May 16th.
- Joe Sam Queen was the featured guest at the Chamber's annual legislative update in May.
- The Chamber is launching a 'Welcome Campers and Families' campaign in coordination with the Retail Roundtable committee. An economic impact study on the camp industry will be released this fall. 2010 numbers showed 53,283 camper families stayed an average of 4 nights and spent \$2,096 per family. Camps in the region employed nearly 5,550 staff.
- The Chamber was active in addressing workforce development and training by submitting letters to federal elected officials, reaching out to officials at Mountainwest Partnership, Land of Sky, and to leadership in Boone and Blowing Rock.
- Discussion continues with the Highlands Cashiers Land Trust to secure property for a pull-off and parking area near the Shadow of the Bear.
- Groovin' on the Green concerts will continue every Saturday through Labor Day.

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove provided the board with a written report prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

- Director Breedlove would like the board to consider allocating \$2,500 in funds for the new Glenville signage project, based on the research study pointing to the importance of wayfinding signage.

MOTION: Kathy Korb moved to appropriate \$2,500 for wayfinding signage for Glenville. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

- The TDA will fund reprinting of the Jackson County Chamber dining guide and will begin to fund the printing of that guide and the Cashiers dining guide annually from its budget. The TDA will begin production of a motorcycle tour map soon.
- Mr. Breedlove has earned the Certified Destination Management Executive credential through Destinations International, which will be awarded at the annual conference in July.
- The Southeast Tourism Society's Annual Congressional Summit was very successful, with momentum being gained on the National Parks Deferred Maintenance funding.
- Brad Herman provided an update on the High Hampton renovations. Blackberry Farms developer Sandy Bell will be partnering to manage the amenities upgrades. The targeted reopening date is Spring 2021. Property sales are increasing, with the golf course targeted to reopen during the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Contract Approval – Video Capture for FY 2019-2020

A copy of a contract with Ksquared Media not to exceed \$5,000 was provided for review prior to the meeting. This video will be used for social media and website content.

MOTION: Kathy Korb moved to approve the contract for video content. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

Contract Approval – Photography Purchase

A copy of the contract with Jeff Bean for \$100 was provided for review prior to the meeting. The image is of the Historic Courthouse and will be useful for future marketing.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the photography purchase contract. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Contract Approval – Annual Audit with Dixon Hughes Goodman

A copy of the contract was provided for review prior to the meeting. The contract is up \$1,100 over last year, which is consistent with audit pricing increases across the area.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the audit contract for FY 2018-2019. Andrew Harlfinger seconded. Motion carried.

Announcements/Adjournment

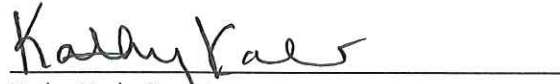
The TDA Board will not meet in July. Megan Orr announced that Nightstar Lodging has purchased the Microtel Inn in Dillsboro. Andrew Harlfinger noted that ten new units have opened under Bluegreen Vacations as part of the overall expansion plan.

MOTION: *Andrew Harlfinger moved to adjourn. Laura Bowers seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The Wednesday, August 21, 2019, TDA Full Board Meeting will be at 1:00 pm in the Holt Library Conference Room 112, Southwestern Community College, 447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Korb", is written over a horizontal line.

Kathy Korb, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: August 21, 2019