



MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
December 20, 2023 (Wednesday) @1:00 p.m.
98 Cope Creek Rd., Suite D
Sylva, NC 28779

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Ms. Mitchell, who as Secretary chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr. Fletcher. Ms. Orr, Vice Chair, was late joining the meeting.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Megan Orr, Vice Chair; Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary; Board Members, Craig Smith, Darlene Fox, Mandy Cantrell, Julie Spiro and Trevor Brown
- **Members absent:** Daniel Fletcher, Chair; Robert Jumper, Dale Collins, Mark Jones
- **Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group, Kara Addy, TDA Social Media Manager; Mark Hartzell, BGRM; Jason Kimenker and Krista Robb, Friends of Panthertown; Jane Maurer, Great Smoky Mountains Foundation; Madison Kosater, LHG

Approve Agenda

MOTION: Mandy Cantrell moved to approve the agenda. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Elect Vice Chair and Secretary

MOTION: Craig Smith motioned to approve Megan Orr as Vice Chair and Ashlie Mitchell as Secretary. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meeting is available on the JCTDA website. They were also attached to the agenda for this meeting. No comments were made.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve meeting minutes. Trevor Brown seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of October 31, 2023 Financial Report and November 30, 2023 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for October include Occupancy Tax collections of \$229,399.66 with penalties of \$345.81 and YTD collection totals of \$894,933.95 which is

35.80% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$52,949. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$25,907.49 and the VACASA, NC total was \$6,854.33. 91 accounts reported rentals for September rentals (increase of 6 accounts from last year). Collections were down 2.42% from the same period in 2022. The October 31, 2023 cash balance is \$1,000,180.42 with investments totaling \$3,000,000.00. October expenses were \$146,722.21 with FYTD expenses totaling \$593,359.89 with encumbrances of \$0.00 for a combined total of \$593,359.89, equaling 17.24% of the budget.

M. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for November include Occupancy Tax collections of \$285,177.49 with penalties of \$204.49 and YTD collection totals of \$1,180,111.44 which is 47.20% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$53,246.28. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$41,759.71 and the VACASA, NC total was \$10,145.52. 91 accounts reported rentals for October rentals (decrease of 4 accounts from last year). The November 30, 2023 cash balance is \$459,155.44 with investments totaling \$3,750,000.00. November expenses were \$102,631.68 with FYTD expenses totaling \$696,016.57 with encumbrances of \$5,319.93 for a combined total of \$701,336.50, equaling 20.38% of the budget.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve the October and November financial reports as presented. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.*

Grant Request – Friends of Panthertown

Mr. Breedlove explained the grant request which was attached to the agenda. Friends of Panthertown are asking for \$40,000 for the second phase of their trail enhancement project to upgrade the trail counters already installed in the first phase of the project. The upgrades will include the prioritization of trail maintenance, adding trail counters and adding an entity to perform analysis of information gathered from the trail counters. The Executive Committee has reviewed the grant request and recommends fully funding the request.

Mr. Kimenker made a presentation outlining the current results of the installed trail counters and the expected results of the improvements to be made in the 2nd phase of the project.

MOTION: *Trevor Brown motioned to approve the Friends of Panthertown grant request. Mandy Cantrell seconded. Motion carried.*

JCTDA Director's Brief

Mr. Breedlove presented the report as follows:

- The Visitor Guide was published three months early and contains more useful content with new sections on hiking safety, mountain setting weddings, Blue Ridge Parkway flora blooming times of the year, and a PSA on Leave No Trace®. The new sections were made possible by removing the map of Jackson County in the center of the Guide and removing the cabins, cottages and independent vacation rentals section. Most visitors browse those online and do not use text-based listings in visitor guides. The removal of the map, while popular, aligns with the goal to entice people to visit Jackson County, not to give information to visitors already here as we have a larger and easier to read hiking map for visitors in destination.
- There was a slight lodging decline in October.

- Mr. Breedlove introduced a new Board member, Trevor Brown, Outdoor Recreation Manager at Jackson County Parks and Recreation. Mr. Brown said that he was looking forward to working with the Board.

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director

Ms. Spiro presented the reports for October and November. Highlights are as follows:

- Chamber representatives have been busy in Dillsboro, visiting the arriving trains and celebrating the opening of Enloe House Wine Bar in November.
- The mailbox for letters to Santa has been a success, with many children submitting letters.
- There were international visitors from New Zealand, The Netherlands, and Poland.

Partner Update – BGRM/LHG

Mark Hartzell of BGRM updated the Board on their activities during October and November.

Carter Long of LHG introduced Madison Kosater, a new member of LHG. Ms. Long explained what LHG has accomplished during the previous two months.

New Business

None

Updates from Individual Board Members

None

Announcements

None

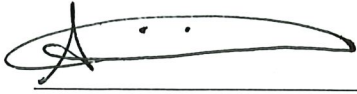
Adjourn

MOTION: *Craig Smith motioned to adjourn. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 P.M by Ms. Mitchell.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held January 17, 2024 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.



Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: February 21, 2024