



## MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

March 20, 2024 (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. Orr, Vice Chair, in Mr. Fletcher's absence.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Megan Orr, Vice Chair; Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary; Board Members, Craig Smith, Darlene Fox, Mandy Cantrell, Julie Spiro, Trevor Brown, Robert Jumper, Mark Jones, Susan Gregory and Mandi Cantrell
- **Members absent:** Daniel Fletcher, Chair, Kara Addy  
**Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Carter Long and Aneska Walrath, Lou Hammond Group; Madison Kosater and Mark Hartzell, BGRM; Jane Mauer, Guest from Smokies Life (formerly Great Smokies Association)

### Approve Agenda

**MOTION:** Robert Jumper moved to approve the agenda. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Jane Mauer from Smokies Life the former GSMA made brief remarks regarding the new organization's name.

### Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Megan Orr, Vice Chair – Ms. Orr welcomed Jane Mauer of Smokies Life.

Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary – None

Mark Jones, County Commissioner - None

### Review and Approval of February 21, 2024 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:** Robert Jumper moved to approve meeting minutes. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.

### Review and Approval of February 29, 2024 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for February include Occupancy Tax collections in January of \$96,172.93 with penalties of \$0 and YTD collection totals of \$1,607,102.56 which is 64.28% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$49,378.24. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$3,772.11 and the VACASA, NC total was \$3,678.45. 67 accounts reported rentals for January rentals (increase of 5 accounts from last year). Collections were down 3.35% from the same period in 2023. The February 29, 2024 cash balance is \$449,560.77 with investments totaling \$3,750,000.00. February expenses were \$186,351.12 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,172,584.30 with encumbrances of \$70,248.42 for a combined total of \$1,242,832.72, equaling 35.09% of the budget.

**MOTION:** *Robert Jumper moved to approve the February financial report as presented. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.*

### **Approve Audit Contract**

Mr. Breedlove explained that the audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPA's, PA is a standard contract for \$9,075.00. Ms. Fox confirmed that there was nothing new in this year's contract.

**MOTION:**

*Robert Jumper moved to approve the audit contract. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.*

### **Grant Request – Main Street Sylva Association Façade Program**

The Main Street Sylva Association is asking for a grant of \$20,000 to improve Mill Street facades by painting buildings, repairing awnings, window and door repairs, sign repair and structural repairs to maintain and improve the architectural and historic character of downtown Sylva. The Main Street Sylva Association has a \$10,000 grant from Community Foundation of WNC and a \$50,000 from a donation from the company which did architectural renderings of how Mill Street should look after improvements. It is anticipated that business owners would contribute up to \$6,000 toward the improvements with a \$2,000 grant subsidy.

The Executive Committee has recommended fully funding with the caveats that (1) an accounting of the spending (2) any unused funds will be returned to JCTDA.

**MOTION:** *Craig Smith moved to approve the full amount of the grant request with the caveat of how and where the funds are spent and that any unused funds will be returned to JCTDA from Main Street Sylva Association. Robert Jumper seconded. Motion carried.*

### **JCTDA Director's Brief**

The Director's Report was sent by email attached to this agenda. Mr. Breedlove presented the report highlights as follows:

- The TDA staff has made many presentations to many communities about the work that the TDA does.
- The Visitors Guides are out and are placed in kiosks and hotels around the county.
- Hotel occupancy is down; however, there are indications that the summer season will be strong.

- The TDA staff and LHG and BGRM are meeting Friday to strategize the marketing and communication plans for the coming year. There will be a two-hour Board meeting in May to review and approve the plan.
- The Shephard Center, which received a TDA grant has installed the wheelchair access station at the Green Energy Park for people with disabilities so they can take advantage of the art programs.

#### **Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director Report**

Ms. Spiro presented the latest report, which was emailed with the agenda for this meeting. Highlights are as follows:

- The annual Dillsboro Easter Parade will be held on March 28.
- A license plate tag office will be opening on March 26.
- Concerts on the Creek will begin in May.
- The Chamber will hold an open house this week.

#### **Cashiers Chamber Directors Report**

Ms. Gregory presented the report, which was emailed with the agenda for this meeting. Highlights are as follows:

- The Chamber is working on its Visitors Guide. The deadline for submittal is the end of this month.
- The Play On Guides have been received.
- The Chamber is getting new software to manage its Chamber members in May.
- The next Chamber roundtable will be held March 27.
- There will be a meet and greet at Hotel Cashiers at the end of April.
- The Chamber is working on a membership survey.

#### **Partner Update – BGRM/LHG**

Mark Hartzel of BGRM updated the Board on their activities.

- BGRM is working on the marketing and communications plan in anticipation of the meeting on Friday.
- BGRM is coordinating spring photo shoots for the Capture the Moment campaign in Jackson County.

Carter Long for LHG updated their recent activities with magazine story placement and visits by influencers.

### **New Business**

None

### **Updates from Individual Board Members**

Craig Smith announced that Bear Lake Reserve has a campaign underway with Canada Broadcasting Company (CBC).

Robert Jumper recognized the Lady Braves basketball team on winning the division championship.

### **Announcements**

None

### **Adjourn**

**MOTION:** *Robert Jumper motioned to adjourn. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 PM by Ms. Orr.

### **Next Meeting**

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



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Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board  
Approved: April 17, 2024