



MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
April 16, 2025 (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 Mr. Jumper.

Members in attendance: Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Robert Jumper, Chair, Megan Orr, Vice Chair, Craig Smith, Secretary, Peter Evers, Julie Spiro, Mandi Cantrell, Daniel Fletcher, Trevor Brown and Darlene Fox.

New Board member Jack Austin was approved by the County Commission last night (April 15) and is not in attendance.

Members absent: Jenny Lynn Hooper, Susan Gregory

Others in attendance: Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Ashley Svarney, LHG.

Approve Agenda

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to approve the agenda. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None

Recognize County Commissioner

Jenny Lynn Hooper was absent.

Review and Approval of a March 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

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

MOTION: Craig Smith moved to approve the March 19, 2025 meeting minutes. Peter Evers seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of March 31, 2025 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for March include Occupancy Tax collections \$107,063.25 with penalties of \$2.24 and YTD collection totals of \$1,603,690.82 which is 64.15% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$44,438.22. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$6,397.85 and the VACASA, NC total was \$1,877.92. 71 accounts reported rentals for February rentals (increase of 3 accounts from last year). Collections were down 30.09% from the same period in 2024. March 31, 2025 cash balance is \$83,992.09 with investments totaling \$3,150,000.00. March expenses were \$132,478.45 with FYTD expenses totaling \$2,393,111.45 with encumbrances of \$64,498.17 for a combined total of \$2,457,609.63, equaling 75.88% of the budget.

Ms. Fox commented that the collections were down 30.09% from the same period in 2024 due to a large late payment last year during the same timeframe.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the March 31, 2025 financial report. Dale Collins seconded. The motion carried.

Approve Annual Contracts

- **FY 25 Tembo Hospitality Group**
Tembo Hospitality Group does video and photos for the JCTDA. The contract for FY 25 is the same as FY 24 except for some additional funds for rush fees, photography, and food and beverage costs incurred during the video shoots in the amount of \$7,250. These expenses will be incurred if the items are utilized.

MOTION: Megan Orr motioned to approve the Tembo Hospitality Group contract. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried. Craig Smith abstained from the vote.

- **FY 25 Tourism Economics**
Tourism Economics is replacing Zartico to track visitor cell phone locations and spending in the county. This contract actually saves money over Zartico, whose price has gone up over the years to \$65,000 plus \$10K for credit card data. The Tourism Economics contract is \$61,000 total including credit card data. The second year the contract costs goes down to \$51,000 because there is no set-up fee.
- **FY 25 Smoky Mountain News**
This is a standard contract for the production of the Visitors Guide.
- **FY 25 Love Communications**
There is a slight fee increase for this year since Love Communications examined how many hours that they spent on search engine marketing services and updated our fee structure based on hours incurred. They make sure that the JCTDA is on the top of searches on Google. Mr. Breedlove receives a report every 90 days and Love will shift strategy depending on the results of the report. The total amount of the contract is \$207,520.

- **FY 25 Lou Hammond Group**
This contract has increased 5% over FY 24, which is standard in terms of contractual increases. LHG does the Public Relations for JCTDA at the rate of \$6,825/month for a total of \$81,900 plus Blog/copyright content for \$1,000/month and account/administrative fee of \$250/month. \$40,000 is budgeted for media visits and special projects.
- **FY 25 Jackson County Chamber Contract & Cashiers Area Chamber Contract**
This is a standard contract for the operation of the Visitors Center. This year there is a 2% increase plus an added line item for Visitor Center improvements such as signage, displays, furniture and other improvements to the physical Center as invoiced, up to \$10,000.

The requirement to maintain public restrooms has been removed from the Jackson Chamber Contract since public restrooms have been constructed by the Town of Sylva.

The Board entered Closed Session to discuss the FY 25 Director Contract under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

Mr. Jumper called for a motion to approve the Smoky Mountain News contract, Love Communications contract, Lou Hammond contract, Jackson County Chamber contract, Cashiers Area Chamber contract, and the Director contract.

Motion: *Craig Smith motioned to approve all of the above contracts. Mandi Cantrell seconded. Motion carried.*

New Business

None

JCTDA Director's Brief/Social Media Report

The JCTDA Director's Brief with updates on industry metrics and lodging performance was attached to the agenda. Mr. Breedlove presented the Director's Brief, highlighting the following:

- The new JCTDA website which will launch May 21.
- The County Commission approved Jack Austin to the JCTDA Board.
- Eight people have been interviewed for the position of Social Media Manager. Samatha Nelson was the preferred candidate and accepted the offer for the position. Ms. Nelson grew up in Cashiers and currently resides in Bethel. She will begin on May 5.
- Mr. Breedlove said social media for the month has been going well and in line with previous month's performance. He said they did PSA's for waterfall safety and wildlife safety in addition to regular content.

- The TDA is working on a new product, A Birding Guide to Jackson County. Birding has become a very popular activity that is gaining popularity.
- The TDA is working on a new fly fishing trail map, hiking map and waterfall map with the new branding. These maps will be put out when the existing stock of maps is exhausted.
- Mr. Breedlove is working on the budget for the coming year. This budget forecast is down slightly due to economic conditions. A board review of the budget will be done on a line by line basis so that Board members are familiar with the details of the budget.
- Madden Media will begin work May 15.
- The first week occupancy in April is very positive at 50%.

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Report was attached to the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Spiro presented the report highlights. The Chamber is looking forward to Greening Up the Mountains to be held April 26. The Chamber's booth will have two pop-up banner displays the TDA purchased showing the beauty of Jackson County.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director's Report

Ms. Gregory was absent. The report was sent with the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Breedlove reviewed the highlights.

- Cashiers Burger Week will be held April 26-May4.
- The Chamber is working on the 2025 Visitor Guide and Membership Directory.
- During the month of May, the Chamber will be spreading kindness with the Thomas Taulbee Kindness Challenge to honor the late Chamber director.
- Leadership Cashiers will begin in May for the class of 2025.

Partner Updates –LHG

Ashley Svarney reported that LHG has been actively getting the recognition for Jackson County in various publications.

Updates from individual Board Members / Announcements

Mr. Jumper reported that the Cherokee Splash Pad ribbon cutting will be held May 2.

Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 PM.

Next Meeting

Ms. Gregory was absent. The report was sent with the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Breedlove went over the highlights:

- The Visitor's Guide should be out in April
- Cashiers Burger Week will be April 26 – May 4.
- Applications for Leadership Cashiers are due March 31.
- Community Volunteer Expo is scheduled for June 11.

Partner Updates –LHG

Gina Stouffer explained the magazine and newspaper article placement activities of LHG during the past month. They are working on media visits for this Spring and Summer.

Updates from individual Board Members / Announcements

Trevor Brown announced that the Bike Rodeo will be held Sunday April 24 at the Cullowhee Valley School.

Mr. Jumper announced that the Cherokee Splash Pad is almost finished for summer fun.

Adjourn

***MOTION:** Dale Collins motioned to adjourn. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 16, 2025 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.



Craig Smith (Apr 16, 2025 15:59 EDT)

Craig Smith, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: April 16, 2025