



MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
August 16, 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 Mr. Fletcher, who reminded remote attendees of Zoom meeting etiquette.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Daniel Fletcher, Chair; Megan Orr, Vice Chair; Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary; Board Members Robert Jumper, Craig Smith, Darlene Fox, Dale Collins, Julie Spiro, Mandy Cantrell; and Stephanie Edwards
- **Members absent:** Mark Jones, County Commissioner
- **Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group, Kara Addy, TDA Social Media Manager, Anne Bernard, BGRM; Tiffany Henry, Jackson County Economic Development; Rachel Croyle Covey, BGRM; John Kautz, BGRM; Mark Hartzell, BGRM

Approve Agenda

MOTION: Craig Smith moved to approve the agenda. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Mr. Fletcher welcomed attendees.

Vice Chair, Megan Orr, had no comments.

Secretary, Ashlie Mitchell, had no comments.

Mark Jones, County Commissioner, was absent.

Review and Approval of June 14, 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: Ashlie Mitchell moved to approve meeting minutes. Robert Jumper seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of June 30, 2023 Financial Report and July 31, 2023 Financial Report

Ms. Fox was late attending. Mr. Breedlove presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for June include Occupancy Tax collections of \$188,440.33 with penalties of \$165.16 and YTD collection totals of \$2,272,072.72 which is 90.52% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$46,151.65. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$21,686.06 and the VACASA, NC total was \$6,151.32. 78 accounts reported rentals for May rentals (decrease of 2 accounts from last year). Collections were down 11.72% from the same period in 2022. The June 30, 2023 cash balance is \$374,591.08 with investments totaling \$3,000,000.00. June expenses were \$171,639.26 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,754,211.44 with encumbrances of \$0 for a combined total of \$1,754,211.44, equaling 63.40% of the budget.

Mr. Breedlove presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for July include Occupancy Tax collections of \$285,412.99 with penalties of \$17.90 and YTD collection totals of \$285,412.99 which is 11.42% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$53,509.38. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$47,685.36 and the VACASA, NC total was \$8,114.70. 81 accounts reported rentals for June rentals (increase of 2 accounts from last year). Collections were down 5.66% from the same period in 2022. The July 31, 2023 cash balance is \$454,234.34 with investments totaling \$3,000,000.00. June expenses were \$205,165.30 with FYTD expenses totaling \$205,165.30 with encumbrances of \$8,258.99 for a combined total of \$213,424.29, equaling 7.52% of the budget.

MOTION: *Dale Collins moved to approve the June and July financial reports as presented. Craig Smith seconded. The motion carried.*

Budget Amendment

Mr. Breedlove explained the budget amendment. The total amount of the amendment is \$42,000 for two items. Public Relations amount is \$6,000 for establishing a better tracking system for public relations based on analytics for publications to give better insights into how well the PR platforms (articles, social media, etc.) are performing.

The addition of \$36,000 to SEM Management is to correct the underbudget error for FY 2023/2024 to bring the budget for this FY up to \$178,000, which is in-line with previous spending for FY 2023/2023. The \$36,000 will come from the General Fund balance.

MOTION: *Craig Smith made a motion, Ashlie Mitchell seconded. Board approved.*

JCTDA Director's Brief

Mr. Breedlove sent the Director's Brief by email with the meeting agenda.

- Mr. Breedlove announced that all Board members will receive a letter on behalf of the TDA auditing firm, Martin Starnes & Associates, CPA, asking questions about the conduct of JCTDA business. Mr. Breedlove urges all members to promptly return the questionnaire so that the audit can be completed.
- The capital projects that were partially funded by JCTDA grants for the Towns of Sylva and Dillsboro are underway.

- Lodging specials are needed for the JCTDA website for fall.
- WCU has approached the TDA about a capstone project to increase sustainability in Sylva. This would be a pilot program that could be applied to other towns in Jackson County.
- Mr. Breedlove introduced Mark Hartzell, who will be replacing Rachel Covey of BGRM who will be going on maternity leave. Congratulations and well wishes were given to Rachel and welcome to Mark.

Amended Agenda

A grant item from the Mountain Heritage Festival has been introduced. A motion and second is needed to add this item to the agenda.

MOTION: *Robert Jumper moved to add this item to the agenda. Mandy Cantrell seconded. Motion carried.*

The organizers of the Mountain Heritage Festival approached the JCTDA in person with a request for a grant to increase the grant for the Festival because the key sponsor of the Festival, Harrah's, has dropped the event. They are requesting an increase in the grant from \$2,500 to \$5,000 to pay for portable toilets, hay bales for sitting, and general festival support, etc. The increase has the approval of the Executive Committee.

MOTION: *Robert Jumper moved to increase the grant to Mountain Heritage Festival. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.*

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director

Ms. Spiro presented her report. Highlights are as follows:

- The Chamber will have a booth at the Mountain Heritage Festival.
- Since the GSM Railroad is now stopping in Dillsboro, the Chamber is greeting train passengers and telling passengers about restaurants and shopping in the area.
- The Chamber is celebrating its 100th anniversary.
- A new business is opening in Dillsboro. It is the Emerald House Wine Bar and will be on the first floor of an historic house on Front Street.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director Report

Ms. Edwards announced that she is leaving the Chamber to take a new position in Cashiers. Mr. Fletcher thanked her for her service to the Chamber for the past 11 years. Ms. Edwards then gave her report.

- The Cashiers Designer Showcase is going on and has been enthusiastically embraced by visitors and residents.
- Interest has been shown in the Labor Days activities scheduled in town.
- Ms. Edwards introduced her replacement, Thomas Taulbee, who has been working at the Chamber for several years.

New Business

None

Updates from Individual Board Members

Craig Smith asked about the advantages of outdoor ice skating in Jackson County since the rink in Highlands seems to be doing quite well. A discussion of ice skating ensued.

Anne Bernard, Lou Hammond Group, gave an update on PR activities in the past month.

Rachel Covey, BGRM, presented an update on advertising activities.

Mr. Jumper announced that a new Destination Marketing Director for the EBCI.

Announcements

None

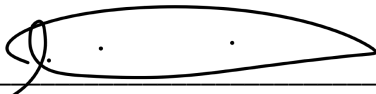
Adjourn

MOTION: *Dale Collins motioned to adjourn. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 P.M by Mr. Fletcher.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held September 20, 2023 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashlie Mitchell', is written over a horizontal line.

Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: September 20, 2023