



MEETING MINUTES
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
January 21, 2026 (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. Collins.

Board Present:

Dale Collins, Chair	Darlene Fox, Ex-Officio Board Member (Via Zoom)
Craig Smith, Board Member (Via Zoom)	Todd Vinyard, Ex-Officio Board Member
Peter Evers, Board Member (Via Zoom)	Jack Austin, Board Member (Via Zoom)
Jenny Lynn Hooper, Ex-Officio Board Member (Via Telephone)	
Trevor Brown, Board Member (Via Zoom)	Susan Sapienza, Ex-Officio Board Member (Via Zoom)
John Faulk, Board Member	Brett Stewart, Board Member
Jason Kimenker, Board Member	

Others Present

Executive Director Nick Breedlove	Samatha Nelson, TDA Social Media Manager (Via Zoom)
Alexandra Noto, Madden Media	Ashley Svarney, LHG
Dale Gordon, ED, The Village Green	Bernadette Peters, Main Street Sylva Ass.
Jane Mauer, Smokies Life (Via Zoom)	Cheryl Osborne, Clerk to the Board

Absent: Mandi Cantrell, Board Member (Excused Absence)

Approve Agenda

Motion: Jason Kimenker moved to approve the agenda. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Jane Mauer presented Great Smokies Mountain National Park visitor statistics for 2025. The Park had 11,513,038 visitors, which is down approximately 5% over 2024.

Recognize Secretary, Comments from the Chair

Mr. Smith and Mr. Collins had no comments.

County Commissioner Updates

Ms. Hooper shared that some equipment has been moved to the middle school construction site.

Review and Approval of December 17, 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: Jason Kimenker motioned to approve the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes. Trevor Brown seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of December 31, 2025 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report highlighting December collections. Collections were up 61.43% from the same period in 2024. The tax rate increased from 4% to 6%, effective July 1.

MOTION: John Faulk moved to approve the December 17, 2025 financial report. Peter Evers seconded. Motion carried.

TCPF Applications

The Village Green Restroom Rebuild and Expansion

This project involves the demolition and replacement of the existing, deteriorating restroom facility with a new, expanded, year-round structure. The current building is over 20 years old, unheated, and lacks the capacity to serve peak tourism crowds. As the only public restroom facility in the Cashiers Commercial District, this infrastructure is vital for maintaining a positive visitor experience and supporting local shops, hotels, and restaurants. They are requesting \$204,000 out of a total project cost of \$675,000, which will be funded by Jackson County (\$425,000) and private donations (\$46,000). The entire grant application was attached to the agenda for this meeting.

Pinnacle Park Master Plan Implementation (Phase Two)

The requested funds will be utilized to implement Phase Two of a shovel-ready master plan designed to upgrade critical infrastructure and accessibility of paved trailhead infrastructure, enhanced visitor facilities (single-stall vault toilet and high-durability trash receptacle areas), creation of a 303-linear-foot accessible trail section leading to an accessible viewing platform with interpretive signage, providing nature access for seniors and individuals with movement limitations, expanded recreation assets, and construction of an outdoor classroom to support school groups and university researchers. The grant request is for \$341,322 in addition to matching funds from a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant. The entire grant application was attached to the agenda for this meeting.

Mr. Breedlove explained that there is \$250,000 left in the Capital Projects Fund. The above two projects, which are worthy projects and are investments for the future, exceed this amount by \$295,322. This shortfall can be made up from taking the shortfall from the Fund Balance, which has \$3.5 million. The state requires that each TDA keep 8% of the Fund in reserve. JCTDA's internal policy is to keep 30% of the balance in reserve in preparation for a potential disaster, leaving approximately \$2 million in reserve. We can comfortably fund the \$292,322 from Fund Balance and still have more than the required 38% in reserve.

MOTION: Jason Kimenker motioned to forward the two Capital Projects on to the County Commissioners for approval to fund the projects. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.

JCTDA Director's Brief

The JCTDA Director's Brief with updates on industry metrics and lodging performance was attached to the agenda. Mr. Breedlove mentioned preliminary discussions with Parks and Recreation and the Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission about increasing sports tourism in Jackson County. There was an increase in lodging expenditure in December. Mr. Breedlove attended an airport planning board meeting about the new terminal.

Social Media Report

Ms. Nelson reported on the improved metrics in various social media platforms, highlighting successful content and upcoming features.

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for December are attached to the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Vinyard summarized highlights of the Chamber's activities, including the successful Christmas events and the upcoming Concert on the Creek series.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for December is attached to the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Sapienza updated the Board with a summary of activities, highlighting new billboard campaigns with QR codes and ongoing renovations to the visitor center.

Madden Media

The update for December is attached to the agenda for this meeting. Advertising highlighted activities were summarized by Alexandra Noto. Mr. Collins remarked that there was an article in the Washington Post about Cashiers as a great place to live. Ashley clarified that their team did not influence the recent Washington Post article about Cashiers.

Partner Updates – LHG/Madden

The Lou Hammond Group report on public relations activities in December was given by Ashley Svarney.

New Business

Trevor Brown announced upcoming dates for forest therapy trails on the Jackson County Greenway, led by a certified guide.

Updates from individual Board Members / Announcements

Craig Smith mentioned the purchase of Castle Ladyhawke, which will allow more control over marketing efforts.

Jason Kimenker provided updates on trail work and conservation efforts in Panther Town, including a trail work day and plans for a new management plan for a recently acquired property.

Adjourn

MOTION: Jason Kimenker motioned to adjourn. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 PM.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on February 18, 2025 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

Craig Smith, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: March 18, 2025