



## MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority  
Meeting  
June 21, 2017 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

**Public hearing 2017-18 Budget - Public Hearing opened at 1:02pm by Robert Jumper. No comment was received.**

### **Call to order/Roll Call**

Robert Jumper closed the public hearing and called the regular meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

**Members in attendance:** Ann Self, Bob Williams, Mark Jones, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Mary Lanning, Robert Jumper, Ron Mau, Stephanie Edwards, Kathy Korb, Laura Bowers (conference call), Gareth Daley, Joel Sowers (joined by conference call after the budget presentation).

**Members absent:** Sarah Jennings, Kelly Custer, Megan Orr, Vick Patel.  
A quorum was present for the meeting.

### **Recognition of Vice Chair and Secretary**

Chairman Jumper recognized the Vice Chair, who had no comments at this time. The Secretary was not in attendance.

### **Review and Approval of May 24, 2017 Minutes**

The board reviewed the May 24, 2017 minutes.

**MOTION:** Mary Lanning moved to accept the minutes as amended. Stephanie Edwards seconded. Motion passed.

### **Review and approval of year-to-date financial report**

The Financial Report was presented by Darlene Fox. Collections for May were \$ 61,133.25 with \$2300 collected in penalties. The YTD collection total is \$839922.66, or 79.28 % of budget. 120 units reported for April rentals with collections up 7.93%. The total increase for the fiscal year is 14.33 %.

April expenses were \$119,581.28. YTD expenses totaled \$863,389.89 with encumbrances of \$2,063.74 for a combined total of \$ 865,453.63, or 87.62% of budget. The Cash balance on April 30, 2017 was \$459,492.49.

**MOTION:** Henry Hoche moved to accept the financial report. Lanning seconded. Motion passed.

### **2017/2018 Budget Ordinance**

A hard copy of the budget ordinance was presented to the board and the floor was opened for questions. No changes were proposed.

**MOTION:** Lanning moved to accept the budget. Ann Self seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Audit Contract**

Darlene Fox presented the contract with Dixon Hughes, LLC for the annual audit. The cost for 2017 will be \$6,100 (no increase from last year).

**MOTION:** Mary Lanning moved to accept the audit contract. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Committee reports: Personnel & Governance**

No report per Ann Self.

#### **Marketing Committee**

Executive Director Breedlove advised that Board that marketing highlights will be provided in the Director's Report.

#### **Jackson County Chamber of Commerce activity report**

Julie Spiro presented Chamber updates:

- July 4<sup>th</sup>. The Chamber is grateful to county commissioners, Jackson County, and Parks & Rec for partnering with them on this event. A kid's area opens at 5 p.m. There will be a presentation of colors by Boy Scouts. The band will play at 6:30 – 9:30pm with fireworks to follow.
- Concerts on the Creek: this summer has seen the best crowd in years. Concerts continue to be better attended each Friday.
- Today is two months away from the solar eclipse. An email went out to chamber members with a parking map, safe viewing map, and solar eclipse tips. Glasses will be sold for \$3 each with proceeds going to the Concerts on the Creek program.
- Hands On Jackson meeting has been set for 11/2018. The Chamber is working with the Department on Aging, Meals on Wheels and other county groups. They are looking for people who will need the particular skill sets that group can provide.
- Certified work ready application has been submitted.
- Met with Dillsboro Merchants Association about doing a "Just the Girls" event with a possible date of September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- The Front Street Arts & Crafts event was well-attended.
- Chamber website was updated with a lake fishing brochure with a downloadable brochure. This was updated based on advice from fly fishing guides.
- Summer BBQ for Chamber is set for 6/27. The event is free of charge and TDA members are invited. The BBQ will take place from 5pm – 6 :30pm on Tuesday in the courtyard of Boots Steakhouse in Dillsboro. Bring a folding chair and a side dish to share.

#### **Cashiers Chamber of Commerce activity report**

Stephanie Edwards presented highlights:

- Exciting event this weekend – Pots on the Green featuring Justin Allman and regional potters.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations are planned at Lake Glenville (with fireworks) and Village on the Green. Ann Self indicated that the concert will take place at 6:30pm with fireworks at dark. Sapphire Valley also does "Yankee Doodle Dandy" day.
- Some tickets are still available for the Joy Garden Tour. This very popular event typically sells out.



- Ongoing events include Grooving on the Green, Sapphire Valley Concerts on the Slopes, Village Nature Series, and the Sapphire Valley Arts & Crafts Shows.
- They have ordered eclipse glasses and business is brisk selling glasses. They ordered 4500, which represents 30 businesses ordering.
- Workforce development initiative: online support is in beta test. This is an online digital marketplace for area employers. They can post jobs on this site and job seekers can apply through the site. The Chamber offers this as a benefit to their members.
- Crossroads improvement: improvements are being made at the gateway location.
- Visitor Center Facility Improvements: repair work being done to the building will get underway in the next two weeks.
- The Chamber has invested in 4 traffic counters. The counters can provide monitoring year-round rather than the quarterly monitoring offered by NCDOT. They will be installed in time for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. The monitors provide useful analytics data, and can be lent to others in the Chamber.
- There was a major fire at the Sapphire Valley Country Club. No one was hurt, but the club is critically damaged. The Cashiers-Glenville fire department did an excellent job in spite of the highway being blocked by a downed tree, and being hampered by a water shortage. Ann Self reported that the employees will be covered by the facility's insurance.

### **New Business**

Chairman Jumper invited members to bring new business before the Board. No new business was brought forward.

### **Director Report Highlights**

Executive Director Breedlove provided the board with highlights of his report:

- Commended Edwards and her Board of Directors for their work on job retention and training. She will be featured in the Smoky Mountain News this week detailing the issue.
- Suzan Brand was recognized for attending our meeting, and Executive Director Breedlove thanked her for all the work she does.
- Breedlove received an application for signage from the Appalachian Women's History Museum at the Monteith Park in Dillsboro. He will update the board when the quotes are turned in.
- A FAM (media familiarization) trip will take place this weekend centered around the Sylva-Dillsboro area. Executive Director Breedlove will host Blake Guthrie with the Atlanta Journal Constitution; Jonathan Fredin from Cary Magazine, Caitlin Harrison from Raleigh Magazine, Dayvee Sutton and a videographer from Extraordinary Experiences. Offering them a full itinerary: fly fishing, ale trail, Guadalupe Café, Concerts on the Creek, breakfast in downtown Sylva, rafting on the Tuck, lunch at Haywood Smokehouse in Dillsboro, Pots on the Green in Cashiers, tour of High Hampton Inn, llama hike, Silver Run Falls, ending the day at the Library Kitchen and bar. Sunday will include a hike to Waterrock Knob. All of the writers are in our key demographic markets. A question was asked about the choice of lodging. Breedlove responded that the lodging was chosen for its location central to the Sylva-Dillsboro area and the focus of this FAM trip is on Sylva-Dillsboro.
- Breedlove hosted *Our State Magazine* on their first trip to Jackson County. The Executive Editor and Art & Creative directors attended. Their exploratory trip included High Hampton Inn, fly fishing, hiking and more. We hope that this trip will pique their interest in WNC, Breedlove said. They are currently working a year out on articles and features.
- Good Grit Magazine, comparable to Garden and Gun, will name Cashiers as the Publisher's Choice this Fall. A self-guided itinerary will be created and we are hosting that writer in July.

- August 17 is a media mission in Charlotte. Pineapple and Breedlove will be attending.
- A volunteer from WCU, Aaron Alexander, is assisting Breedlove with website projects over the summer. A number of accommodations need to be updated on the website.
- Solar Eclipse weekend: developing signage. A proof of proposed signage was sent to WCU yesterday. (50) 18x24 eye safety signs will be made regarding Eclipse safety and includes a QR code. Signs will be placed at all observing sites and anywhere they expect people to gather.
- The TDA is bringing in Chris Cavanaugh in July to consult with Jumper and Breedlove on long range planning. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed, such as succession planning, the structure of the TDA, the role of the Chairman after he leaves the TDA, updating bylaws and policies (which have not been reviewed since 2013), and employment issues that need to be addressed since Breedlove now works for the county. They will also work on a capital projects policy since \$15,000 has been budgeted this year for the first time in a capital projects line item this year. Funding applications for capital projects would go to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners per the bylaws.
- The fiber optic conversion is moving forward. The switchover will wait until December to avoid early termination fees from Frontier. A purchase order has been signed for fiber construction to begin in July. This will allow the conversion to be ready for the December start date. The TDA is excited about reducing costs by almost half, Breedlove said.
- The Comprehensive Plan for Jackson County has been completed. It guides the county through 2040. There are goals and objectives for the tourism area for the first time.
- Breedlove met with Andre Nabors, Director of Retire North Carolina, a certified retirement community program. Breedlove will meet with the Town of Sylva Manager to see if they are interested in the program. This type of retirement community has an effect on the destination tourism industry, but the Town must initiate an application. The application fee is \$10,000 and the cost is often paid through a partnership between towns and local businesses including hospitals. The program is only offered to incorporated areas. The average retiree that comes to North Carolina has a \$150,000 household income, far above the local median household income. The average retiree that moves to a retirement community injects about \$25,000 into the local economy. Breedlove will provide assistance to the Town of Sylva as needed, if they decide to apply.
- Breedlove and Julie Spiro met with Leap Frog Tours ([leapfrogtours.com](http://leapfrogtours.com)), a chamber member based in Waynesville. They offer highly customized tours operating in Western North Carolina targeting a higher-level clientele. In the Jackson County area they offer brewery tours and pickup at hotels. They are currently the only local custom tour operator. Leap Frog Tours will be added to the website.

### **Additional Comments**

Stephanie Edwards reiterated that the Joy Garden Tour usually sells out, and that if anyone wants tickets they should act quickly. The gardens are stunning, and two of them have been nationally recognized. On Wednesday, there is a garden talk which requires tickets, but there are free speakers on Saturday.

### **New Business - none**

### **Announcements**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 16, 2017, 1:00 p.m. at Cordelia Camp Building Room 143, WCU.

### **Adjournment**



The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 pm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Jennings, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: August 16, 2017