



MEETING MINUTES
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
March 18, 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.

Present:

Dale Collins, Chair	Executive Director Nick Breedlove
Darlene Fox, Ex-Officio Board Member (Via Zoom)	
Craig Smith, Board Member	Todd Vinyard, Ex-Officio Board Member
Peter Evers, Board Member	Jack Austin, Board Member
Jenny Lynn Hooper, Ex-Officio Board Member	Trevor Brown, Board Member
Susan Sapienza, Ex-Officio Board Member (Via Zoom)	
John Faulk, Board Member	Brett Stewart, Board Member
Jason Kimenker, Board Member	Cheryl Osborne, Clerk to the Board
Alexandria Noto, Madden Media	Ashley Svarney, LHG (Via Zoom)
Olivia Lamme, LHG (Via Zoom)	Samatha Nelson, TDA Social Media Manager
Marsha Almond	Mandi Cantrell, Board Member (Via Zoom)

Approve Agenda

Motion: Trevor Brown moved to approve the agenda. John Faulk seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None

Recognize Secretary, Comments from the Chair

Mr. Smith and Mr. Collins had no comments.

County Commissioner Updates

Ms. Hooper announced that the county had purchased a plot of land near the courthouse/library as an investment.

Appoint Vice Chair

Mr. Collins announced that Jason Kimenker has volunteered for the role of Vice Chair.

Motion: Craig Smith motioned to approve Jason Kimenker for Vice Chair. Brett Stewart second. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of January 21, 2026 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: Trevor Brown motioned to approve the January 21, 2026 meeting minutes. Peter Evers seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of January 31, 2026 and February 28, 2026 Financial Reports

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports highlighting January collections. Collections were up 53.09% from the same period in 2025. The tax rate increased from 4% to 6%, effective July 1.

Ms. Fox presented the financial reports highlighting February collections. Collections were up 40.75% from the same period in 2025. Mr. Breedlove explained that the collections were slightly down from last year, even accounting for the tax increase, as last year we had internet service provider crews and flood relief workers.

MOTION: Trevor Brown moved to approve the January 31, 2026 and the February 28, 2026 financial reports. Jason Kimenker seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Amendment

Mr. Breedlove discussed a budget amendment, explaining that an additional \$295,322 would be moved from fund balance to Capital Projects for two approved capital projects - the Pinnacle Park trail expansion and Village Green restrooms.

MOTION: Peter Evers motioned to approve the budget amendment. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Grant Request – Greening Up the Mountains

Greening Up the Mountains is in its 28 year and draws between 5,000-10,000 visitors to Jackson County. The request is for \$3,000 to advertise outside of the immediately area (Jackson, Swain, Haywood and Macon) to attract visitors from other areas in North Carolina. The Executive Committee approves this effort.

MOTION: Jason Kimenker motioned to approve the Greening Up the Mountains grant request. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.

JCTDA Director’s Brief

The JCTDA Director’s Brief with updates on industry metrics and lodging performance for January and February was attached to the agenda. Mr. Breedlove shared a report from Jane Mauer, Smokies Life, regarding upcoming ranger activities in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park from March to April, including wildlife programs, blacksmithing demonstrations, and wildflower walks.

Mr. Breedlove provided an update on the visitor guide, highlighting new itineraries and a focus on budget-friendly activities to address the K-shaped economy where luxury travel is increasing while budget travel decreases. He announced plans to send the guide to press with 60,000 copies, representing cost savings from \$55,000 to \$29,000 in printing costs due to a change in distribution.

Mr. Breedlove noted that the board meeting in May was scheduled for May 20th starting at 12:30 with lunch and a 2-hour meeting to review the draft budget and marketing plans. He also reported positive media coverage including features in the New York Times and Travel + Leisure, and mentioned upcoming TDA-sponsored events including the Dillsboro Glass Arts Festival and Tuckaseegee River cleanup.

Social Media Report

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

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for January and February are attached to the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Vinyard summarized highlights of the Chamber's activities, noting that Friends Night Out in Sylva will be held March 26. The first Friends Night Out is scheduled to be held in Dillsboro on April 30.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for January and February are attached to the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Sapienza updated the Board with a summary of activities, highlighting the Open House at the Chamber's newly renovated building.

Partner Updates – LHG/Madden

Madden Media

Advertising highlighted activities were summarized by Alexandra Noto. Madden Media achieved significant media coverage, including placements in Travel and Leisure and the New York Times, reaching millions of potential visitors.

The Lou Hammond Group report on public relations activities in January/February was given by Ashley Svarney, who introduced Olivia Lamme.

New Business (Items for Board Action)

- Jason Kimenker asked if the JCTDA is participating in NC2026, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Mr. Breedlove stated he will check with the County Commission NC2026 planning committee.
- Mr. Collins asked if the TDA communicated local/state laws/regulations to visitors. Mr. Breedlove stated that the Visitor's Guide had a section entitled "Know Before You Go." Additionally, there is information about visitor safety guidelines, including regulations about elk viewing and pet leashes, with additional information about waste cleanup requirements to be added.

Updates from individual Board Members / Announcements

Craig Smith shared updates on successful marketing partnerships, including a new high tea event at the castle and the concept of "Golden Gap Years" tourism.

Trevor Smith asked if there was a plan to rotate board meeting sites.

Jason Kimenker provided updates on fishing stockings and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's volunteer program, while also announcing that the U.S. Forest Service has approved a design for Macks Gap bridge replacement in Panthertown Valley, which will receive funding from the National Forest Foundation.

Adjourn

MOTION: Trevor Brown motioned to adjourn. John Faulk seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2026 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

Craig Smith, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved: April 15, 2026