



DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
November 19, 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, Secretary, Mandi Cantrell, Daniel Fletcher, Darlene Fox, Jack Austin, Todd Vinyard, Trevor Brown, Dale Collins, Craig Smith, Jenny Lynn Hooper, Susan Sapienza, Peter Evers and Megan Orr

Members absent:

Others in attendance: Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk; Ashley Svarney, LHG; Alexandra Noto, Madden Media; Samantha Nelson, JCTDA Social Media Manager; Jane Mauer, Smokies Life; Morgan Coley & Felicia Pomainville, Martin Starnes & Associates CPA, PA

Approve Agenda

MOTION: Trevor Brown moved to approve the agenda. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Jane Mauer stated that, although she did not have updated visitor numbers for GSMNP, August visitors totaled 11,000,000 for the year.

County Commissioner Updates

Ms. Hooper arrived after the start of the meeting and explained her absences from previous TDA meetings. She indicated she did not return after the first meeting because she was told she “didn't have a say” due to the TDA having its own board, though she stated her only intent was to ask questions, not to vote. Mr. Jumper and Mr. Breedlove apologized for the misunderstanding, saying that she is welcome at all meetings and noting that her commissioner updates are a standing agenda item.

Review and Approval of September 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: Dale Collins motioned to approve the September 17, 2025 meeting minutes. Peter Evers seconded. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of September 30, 2025 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for September include Occupancy Tax collections of \$468,163.60 with penalties of \$90.53 and YTD collection totals of \$1,334,973.94 which is 38.40% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$90,498.00. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$66,424.00 and the VACASA, NC total was \$9,298. 105 accounts reported rentals for August rentals (increase of 8 accounts from last year). Collections were up 53.06% from the same period in 2024. The tax rate increased from 4% to 6%, effective July 1. The September 30, 2025 cash balance is \$226,998.77 with investments totaling \$2,900.00. September expenses were \$913,716 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,251,457 with encumbrances of \$30,200 for a combined total of \$1,281,657 equaling 36.19% of the budget.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the September 30, 2025 financial report. Jack Austin seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of October 31, 2025 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for October include Occupancy Tax collections of \$311,185.30 with penalties of \$2,545.00 and YTD collection totals of \$1,339,507.04 which is 38.53% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$86,522.94. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$28,364.52 and the VACASA, NC total was \$6,117.15. 99 accounts reported rentals for September rentals (increase of 16 accounts from last year). Collections were up 75.60% from the same period in 2024. The tax rate increased from 4% to 6%, effective July 1. The October 31, 2025 cash balance is \$295,862.29 with investments totaling \$2,900.00. October expenses were \$243,997 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,495,454 with encumbrances of \$30,200 for a combined total of \$1,526,074 equaling 36.19% of the budget.

MOTION: Dale Collins moved to approve the October 31, 2025 financial report. Peter Evers seconded. The motion carried.

Grant Application: Dillsboro Glass Arts Festival

Mr. Breedlove has been meeting with Morgan Kennedy of the Dillsboro Creative Arts Center (formerly Jackson County Green Energy Park) to find a suitable date for a new event, the Dillsboro Glass Arts Festival, to be held. Mr. Breedlove shared dates with Mr. Kennedy that are off-season in JC. After reviewing historical attendance records, March 28 was chosen since it is the slowest occupancy day of the year. The grant request is for \$6,000 for various festival expenses. Mr. Kennedy hopes that the event will become an annual event. The Executive Committee has reviewed this application and approves.

MOTION: Megan Orr motioned to approve the Dillsboro Glass Arts Festival grant request. Trevor Brown seconded. Motion carried.

True Omni Presentation, Proposal and Budget Amendment

True Omni supplies digital touch screen kiosks that draw information directly from our website, eliminating the need for additional work by the Chamber staff for programming the kiosk. The kiosk will be initially installed at the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

Note that this year an additional \$10K has been programmed into the budget for the Visitor Centers / Chambers of Commerce in the county to make the visitor experience better. The Jackson County Chamber would like to use their \$10,000 in funding toward this digital kiosk.

The first year's cost is \$17,000, reduced to \$4,000 in subsequent years under a three year contract. The kiosk will supply information about which events and attractions visitors are most interested in. If the kiosk in Sylva is successful, an additional kiosk will be added at the Cashiers Area Chamber. The kiosks are weatherproof so they can be added outdoors in the future.

Since there is \$10K in the budget for Chamber improvements, \$7K will have to be added from contingency to pay for the kiosk first year.

MOTION: Dale Collins motioned to approve the budget amendment for \$7,000 and execute the contract for True Omni. Trevor Brown seconded. The motion carried.

Bylaws Amendment

The new JCTDA Bylaws did not specify that the nine members of the Board were voting members, and the four ex-officio members were non-voting members. The previous revision of the Bylaws had this specification. The attorney stated that this was a clerical correction/scriveners error since it was previously stated. There are no other changes in the Bylaws.

MOTION: Trevor Brown motioned to approve the change in the Bylaws. Peter Evers seconded. The motion carried.

Audit Presentation

Felicia Pomainville from Martin Starnes & Associates CPA, PA presented the results of the June 20, 2025 financial statement audit. The report is an unmodified opinion that shows no significant deficiencies or internal control weaknesses were identified.

MOTION: Darlene Fox motioned to accept the audit. Craig Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried.

New Business

None

JCTDA Director's Brief

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:

- Mr. Breedlove noted that this meeting is Mr. Jumper's last meeting as Chair. Mr. Jumper was recruited to the board 10 years ago in order to help unify the two separate TTA boards which ultimately became the TDA. Mr. Jumper was instrumental in changing the direction of the goals of the TDA, from merely advertising Jackson County to managing all aspects of tourism. Mr. Jumper saw the need for a full time Director and hired Mr. Breedlove. In subsequent years, the TDA under Jumper's continued leadership developed grant programs, capital project funds and significantly increased re-investment back into the community. Mr. Breedlove thanked Mr. Jumper for his service and leadership to JCTDA.
- The TDA and the Chambers have created a Gift Card Guide for shopping locally to promote small businesses. The Guide will give information on which small businesses have gift cards, either to be purchased in-store or online.
- Mr. Breedlove emailed to Board members a summary of economic trends both national and local.
- According to Smith Travel data, Mr. Breedlove expects October to be a very good month for travel in Jackson County. The occupancy rate is down from last year; however, this can be explained because Jackson County hosted relief workers in the wake of the flooding caused by Hurricane Helene. The November average daily rate is up.
- The County Commissioners approved new Board Members last night, Jason Kimenker and John Faulk, and approved Dale Collins as Chair.
- Mr. Breedlove urges everyone to attend the January meeting because new Tourism Capital Project Fund applications will be reviewed.

Social Media Report

Ms. Nelson reported on the improved social media metrics.

- The Instagram Giveaway has over 1,000 entries for a two night stay at Hotel Cashiers and a \$200 gift certificate to Orchards Restaurant. The winner will be announced November 25.
- Holiday Season events promotions are keeping staff busy. Events are planned in Cashiers, Dillsboro and Sylva. The Gift Card Guide and Small Business Saturday features are going live in December on social media.
- November content has been highlighting Fall events, such as hiking, bonfires, and coffee shops.
- Staff are looking forward to adding content on social media in 2026 for missing events in 2025.
- The Shadow of the Bear got 1.8 million views on Facebook with 10,000 shares which means that the content is reaching more people.
- Followers on Facebook and Instagram are increasing.

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for September and October are attached to the agenda for this meeting. Mr. Vinyard gave the highlights as follows:

- Mr. Vinyard is excited about the Gift Card Guide and the addition of True Omni kiosk.

- The Chamber has been decorated for Christmas and will host Christmas in Downtown on December 5 in connection with the Christmas tree lighting.
- The long awaited Mable's Kitchen has opened and will have their Grand Opening on November 20.

Cashiers Area Chamber Director's Report

The Director's Reports for September and October are attached to the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Sapienza updated then Board with a summary of activities as follows:

- Ms. Sapienza is excited about the Gift Card Guide.
- Christmas in Cashiers is collaborating with the Festival of Trees on the Greenway Ramble highlighting different retail shops who are sponsoring trees.
- The Christmas Parade will be held December 6. The theme is The Gingerbread Man's Mountain March. The Cashiers Historical Society sponsored a gingerbread house contest that carries this theme. The winner will be announced during the parade.
- From December 1, the Chamber will host the *12 Days of Christmas* with live music each day at different places around town.
- The *Falling for Cashiers* Scavenger Hunt was held in October and November. The winner won a waterfall cruise for 4 on Lake Glenville.
- The CACOC Spirit Awards were held. The CACOC Citizen of the Year is Serenity Richards.

Partner Updates – LHG/Madden

The Lou Hammond Group report was given by Ashley Svarney. Highlights are below:

- Two new blogs were written for the website. One was Fall in Jackson County, which told about where to go and what to see and how to get there in the Fall. Two is a Holiday Gift Guide which directs readers to locally-owned shops.
- The new Gift Card Guide gives LHG an exciting opportunity for promotions.
- There were 21 pieces of media about travel to Jackson County, Forbes spotlighted Hotel Cashiers, and High Hampton as luxury hotels with fall foliage outside your window. Southern Living did an article one year after Helene. Jackson County was also spotlighted in Travel and Leisure, Conde Nest Traveler, Modern Luxury Magazine, and Town and Country.
- They are heavily promoting Jackson County as being the only destination with two forest wellness therapy trails.
- Since Secret Season is starting and is being heavily promoted.

Madden Media

The update for September and October was attached to the agenda for this meeting. Highlights were presented by Alexandra Noto.

- The media teams are optimizing campaigns that are currently running.
- The Email team has successfully migrated the old Mailchimp account to a new one in October. They are seeing positive results already by reducing spam.
- Creative and advertising teams are refreshing images to high quality Fall images.

- They are beginning to push wedding content and have partnered with Romantic Asheville to promote weddings in Jackson County.

Updates from individual Board Members / Announcements

Trevor Brown announced that the Greenway has been certified as a certified trail for forest therapy. The grand opening will be December 6 at 1:00 PM.

Dale Collins thanked Mr. Jumper and Mr. Breedlove for their support in naming him Board Chair. He looks forward to working with the new Board members and the County Commission.

Mr. Jumper thanked Megan Orr and Daniel Fletcher for serving on the board and for their key role in the TDA's rebranding process.

Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 PM.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 17, 2025 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

Craig Smith, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board
Approved December 17, 2025