

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12 pm, April 12, 2023**

Present: R Childrey, WE Andrews, M Smith, J Hoke, J Jennings, P Boucher, B Cook, M McDonnell, J Pritchett
Absent: C Roby, C McLamb
Staff: D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

I. Call to Order – R Childrey, Chairperson

R Childrey called the meeting to order at 12:13 pm and stated that a quorum was present. R Childrey asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None were heard.

R Childrey asked for a motion to accept the March minutes that were previously sent to the board.

J Jennings motioned to accept the March minutes as presented to the board. WE Andrews seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Finances – March Financial – D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-Date Revenue for March was \$150,350.45. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$98,096.24. Net positive variance for the month was \$52,254.21. Year-to-Date Revenue was \$1,395,290.07. Year-to-Date Operation Expense was \$955,984.74. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$439,305.33. The February County 3% revenue was \$88,936.12. Smithfield's 2% Revenue was \$29,723.91. Selma's 2% Revenue was \$6,375.29. Kenly's 2% Revenue was \$1,733.71. Benson's 2% Revenue was \$4,528.57.

III. Marketing Committee - P Boucher

P Boucher stated that DB Taylor shared the proposed 2023-24 budget spreadsheet with the committee. A Brame reviewed a PowerPoint marketing presentation for the fiscal year 2023-24. It was noted that the bureau is using Near.com as it provides detailed data which helps the bureau know where to target ads. The bureau will continue to use Google Ads, YouTube, and other means to reach potential visitors. DB Taylor shared info about the JoCo Works sponsorship.

IV. Sports Council – B Cook

B Cook noted that sports are very active around the county this Spring. Adrian O'Neal shared that the countywide grants were almost ready to go out and that the Cleveland Park master plan is almost complete and the feasibility study is wrapping up for completing the MST from Smithfield to Benson. East Clayton Park expansion is within 30 days of completion and the renovations to the Clayton Community Park on Amelia Church Rd are in the design phase. Benson Community Day is scheduled for May 6th. This is "Opening Day" for Spring sports and there will also be a ribbon cutting for the PK Vyas PARTF projection completion. Smithfield litter pick-up event is scheduled for Earth Day, April 24th. Smithfield is planning to convert two tennis courts into six pickleball courts and has a tournament happening in June. Cleveland School Rotary has a 5K on April 15th with half of the proceeds going to Friends group. Archer Lodge is continuing to work on the new park. JCPS have approved the 2024 School Calendar. Three high schools will have spring Lacrosse programs and middle schools are looking into changing traditional play dates due to official shortage in some fall sports. Kenly will have a Community Input meeting on April 18th.

V. Special Projects Committee – WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee met on April 5th and reviewed a brief history of Capital Grants

with new board member J Hoke. The categories for grants are Bricks and Mortar, Museum Artifact and Conservation, and Municipalities without Hotel Taxes. DB Taylor explained how the guidelines and grants were sent out in February and were due back on April 3rd allowing time for the committee to review and make recommendations to the full board before the budget is voted on in April.

The Special Projects Committee brought forth a recommendation to the full board to update the Capital Grants guidelines to include a Chamber of Commerce category in the amount of \$50,000. The full board discussed the proposed recommendation.

B Cook made a motion to accept the updated guidelines as presented. P Boucher seconded. Motion approved.

DB Taylor presented a summary of the grant requests to the committee. The following grants were received and are on target for completion in FY 2024:

Smithfield Parks & Rec – Smithfield Community Park Renovation - \$30,000
Town of Archer Lodge – Benches and bicycle storage racks - \$5,000
Clayton Chamber of Commerce – Window repair or replacement - \$25,000
Town of Selma – New Pickleball courts at Richard B. Harrison Complex - \$50,000
Town of Benson Parks and Rec – Replace handicapped ramp at Grove - \$30,000
Ava Gardner Museum – Conservation grant - \$10,000

The proposed 2023-24 Budget for Capital Grants is \$150,000.

J Jennings made a motion to accept the grant requests as presented for a total of \$150,000. P Boucher seconded. Motion approved.

VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

DB Taylor shared that the bureau currently has the JoCo Grows Strawberries campaign running as the season started early. The bureau is working with WQDR and local radio host, Amanda Daughtry. Interviews with local strawberry farmers and Nicole Youngblood Cooperative Extension will air soon. The staff will start having monthly meetings with the Extension during the marketing staff meetings on Tuesdays at 2pm.

Meetings have happened with the new CEOs of Visitors Bureaus in Wilson and Dunn about the 301 Endless Yard Sale. E Dean has the 2023 rack card at the printer and marketing has begun, with hits on the website increasing.

Media coverage and articles are also on the rise, with Critical Mention service the bureau can track audience and value of media. For Example, the March Print Audience was 9,180,850 and value of Online & Print Publicity was \$229,081.

The Amphitheater Renovation Project in Downtown Smithfield, is in the final stages of completion and should be done by Ham & Yam Festival, May 6th. D Bailey-Taylor encouraged the board to check out the project if they are downtown.

The bureau staff will be visiting the North and South Welcome Centers for National Tourism Week, May 11-12. The Hospitality Association luncheon will be held on July 25th at the Ag Center. The Hospitality Association is still collecting items for the spring community project to support the women at the Harbor House. D Bailey-Taylor asked any board members interested to drop off items before April 25th.

VII. New Business

J Jennings moved for the Board to go into a Closed Session according to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6). M Smith seconded. Motion carried.

The board returned to the board meeting.

M McDonnell made a motion for the Executive Committee to adjust current salaries for the Visitors Bureau staff and set the FY 23-24 salaries for the budget. M Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark McDonnell, Secretary/Treasurer

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, May 10, 2023
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**