

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12N, April 9, 2025**

Present: WE Andrews, J Hamilton, J Hoke, J Lassiter, J Pritchett, M Smith, K Pickett,
B Cook
Zoom: M McDonnell
Absent: C McLamb, J Jenkins
Staff: D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

I. Call to Order – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called the meeting to order at 12:19 pm and stated that a quorum was present. B Cook asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None were heard.

B Cook asked for a motion to accept the March minutes that were previously sent to the board.

M Smith motioned to accept the March minutes as presented. K Pickett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Finances – March Financial Reports – D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-date revenue for March was \$154,724.07. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$148,337.21. The net positive variance for the month was \$6,500.60. Year-to-date revenue was \$1,408,043.00. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$1,431,754.23. The Year-to-Date net negative variance was -\$23,179.20. February Johnston County 3% revenue was \$94,878.64, Smithfield's 2% revenue was 26,500.24, Selma's 2% revenue was \$5,200.23, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,342.66, Benson's 2% revenue was \$8,067.37, and Clayton's revenue was \$2,601.87.

III. Executive Committee – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called for a closed session pursuant to GS 143-318.9, public policy section (6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. K Pickett seconded the motion and the board voted unanimously to go into closed session.

The board returned from the closed session with no action taken.

IV. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee met April 2nd to review the Capital Grant applications for the FY 2025 budget. D Bailey-Taylor presented a summary of the grants to the committee outlining the requests, and the following grants met the Bureau guidelines for funding.

Johnston County Heritage Center – Conservation grant - \$10,000
Johnston County Heritage Center – Repair walls & move built-in case - \$8,000
Historic Smithfield Foundation – Purchase period furnishings/hologram creation - \$15,000
Town of Pine Level – Replacement of bleachers for Sam Godwin Park - \$5,000
Town of Wilson's Mills – Upgrade park and town - \$5,000
DSDC – Library corner redevelopment project - \$50,000
Ava Gardner Museum – Conservation grant - \$10,000
Triangle East Economic Development – Repair windows/Yelvington Lee House - \$50,000

WE Andrews recommended to the full board to approve the grant requests listed for a total of \$153,000 and to allocate \$275,000 in the FY 26 budget.

K Pickett made a motion accept the recommendation by the Special Projects Committee to approve the grant requests listed for a total of \$153,000 and to allocate \$275,000 in the FY 26 budget. J Lassiter seconded. Motion approved.

The Board considered applications for Matching Marketing grants.

K Pickett motioned to fund the matching marketing grant for the State Annual Singing Convention for \$1,000 as presented. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

M Smith motioned to recommend to the full board to fund the 160th Bentonville Battlefield Reenactment Matching Marketing Grant for \$3,000. J Lassiter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was had about the grant application process, as some grants the staff expected were not submitted this year. Having a second grant round for applications would give organizations more flexibility, and get more grant funds out into the community. D Bailey-Taylor will work on the revisions to the current application to accept grants in March and October. Organizations would still only be able to receive one grant per fiscal year.

M Smith made a motion to accept that the Capital Grant Applications have two grant cycles per fiscal year beginning in FY27. K Pickett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Special Projects Committee also discussed the five-year waiting period to apply for grants once an organization reaches the cap of \$50,000, and changing that to a two-year cycle, which would again fund more projects in the county.

K Pickett made a motion to change the 5-year grant cycle to a 2-year grant cycle beginning in FY 27. M Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Marketing Committee – M Smith

M Smith reported the committee met to review the Town of Selma's FY 26 budget adopted by Selma Town Council which was submitted to the Tourism Authority for approval. The committee reviewed the budget and had concerns on the removal of all billboards to attract transient overnight visitors along I-95. Additionally, the committee discussed how best to work with the Town moving forward.

Discussion was held on approving the Town of Selma's budget of \$82,000 without an admin fee and Selma staff requesting reimbursement for all projects providing invoices and copies of checks to the Bureau staff. WE Andrews noted the Bureau staff still had time involved in processing and overseeing this process, and recommended a reduced admin fee.

K Pickett made a motion to accept the Town of Selma's 2% Marketing Budget of \$82,000, with a 5% Administration fee remitted to the Johnston County Visitors Bureau. Second by WE Andrews, the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Sports Council - J Jenkins

In the absence of J Jenkins, D Bailey-Taylor asked the board to review the minutes from the March 19th meeting.

VII. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor shared that she was in the process of working through the retirement with HR, including working with the staff on the CEO Transition Duty Assignments. D Bailey-Taylor assured the board that the staff would continue to execute their jobs as they always have, and that the

appropriate board members chairing committees, and county departments will be there as needed, in this transition time until the CEO is in place.

D Bailey-Taylor shared that J McGowen, Digital Marketing Manager, will be resigning as of April 30th to move back to Michigan. The board preferred not to fill this position now, allowing the new CEO to lead that process, and recommended contracting out any projects necessary during this time.

VIII. New Business

The board was presented with the proposed budget for FY 26 for review, and after discussion of several line items, B Cook entertained a motion for approval.

J Hamilton motioned to accept the FY 2025-26 Budget as presented to the board. J Pritchett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer*

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, May 14, 2025
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**