

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Noon, August 14, 2024**

Present: B Cook, M McDonnell, WE Andrews, J Hamilton, J Jenkins, M Smith,
J Hoke, C McLamb, K Pickett, J Lassiter
Absent: J Pritchett
Guest: Trenton Haire, Intern with Eastfield Development
Staff: D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

I. Call to Order – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called the meeting to order at 12:17 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 adopt the agenda as presented.

M McDonnell made a motion to adopt the agenda. WE Andrews seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

J Jenkins motioned to accept the June minutes as presented. M Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

B Cook welcomed guest Trenton Haire to the meeting. Trenton is an intern with Eastfield Development.

II. Finances – June & July Financial Reports – D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-date revenue for June was \$201,177.78. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$138,660.56. The net positive variance for the month was \$62,517.22. Year-to-date revenue was \$2,749,462.33. Year-to-date operation Expense was \$1,631,984.95. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$1,117,477.38 (includes \$700,000 appropriations for Bentonville). The May County 3% revenue was \$120,776.52, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$35,031.34, Selma's 2% revenue was \$7,182.96, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,661.57, Benson's 2% revenue was \$6,879.97.

Month-to-date revenue for July was \$162,840.33. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$167,260.63. The net negative variance for the month was -\$4,420.30. Month to Date and Year to Date are the same. The June County 3% revenue was \$116,998.59, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$36,515.41, Selma's 2% revenue was \$6,943.86, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,968.46, Benson's 2% revenue was \$7,284.36.

D Bailey-Taylor stated that in years past, the Bureau had a standing policy to move any funds from the checking account over \$130,000 to the interest-bearing accounts. It was noted that the policy needed to be updated with the County Finance Department to keep a balance of \$300,000 and D Bailey-Taylor asked for funds over that to be moved to the NCM account.

K Pickett motioned to update the policy to move funds over \$300,000 in the checking account to the NCM Investment Account as presented. WE Andrews seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee received Matching Marketing Grant applications for Four Oaks Acorn Festival, Ava Gardner Festival, St. Ann's International Food Festival, My Kid's Club Selma RR Run 5K, and Clayton Piano Festival Fall Season.

WE Andrews motioned to fund all five of the matching marketing grant applications. J Hamilton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Committee – M Smith

Smith noted that the BWST Passport launched on July 1st. The program is off to a good start and the staff is pleased with the launch and participation. A Brame presented the new 2025 Marketing Content Spreadsheet. This tool is a comprehensive spreadsheet that allows the staff to place integrated top to bottom campaigns in various target markets which were researched in Placer AI. E Dean presented the new ad campaign creative for Bentonville. D Bailey-Taylor shared a DRAFT resident tourism sentiment survey to go out in 2025. D Bailey-Taylor reviewed upcoming sales and PR projects, and A Brame hosted an *Our State* staff member toured the county for three days researching partners in Benson, Selma, Smithfield, Kenly, Four Oaks and Clayton for future articles.

D Bailey-Taylor presented to the board examples of new ads designed by E Dean for FY 25 marketing campaigns and how Placer.ai has been used to target zip codes in top feeder markets.

V. Sports Council - J Jenkins

J Jenkins shared that the Sports Council continues to bring much needed information to the committee. Kimetha Fulwood with JoCo Public Health Department shared that the health department publishes a monthly newsletter. The August edition includes information on back-to-school vaccines, heatstroke prevention tips, and details about local community events and training.

VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor shared that the JCVB welcomed Christina Arena to the team as our new Visitor Center Assistant. The website audit continues as well as the integration of our new Corridor Marketing plan as new content on the website. Work continues with JoCo Grows Agriculture as E Dean is helping with several design projects with Johnston County Cooperative Extension. (swag, banners, and print materials). The grants will end this December 31st. D Bailey-Bailey said she completed the JCVB staff reviews and she couldn't say enough about the Bureau staff for the quality of the work they produce, the dedication to learn and grow with the destination. In September, Johnston County will be featured on Travels with Darley, on a PMS show that will

feature Revolution history in NC. Although we don't have Revolutionary Battlefields per se, we have some Colonial history that Todd Johnston will talk about. The American Battlefield Trust that is sponsoring the show, requested Bentonville be featured. Filming will take place September 8-9 and the show will air in Feb. 2025.

VII. New Business

J Hamilton mentioned having a Railway Magazine writer visit Selma. Stated that we provided information and fun facts about the railroad in Selma. D Bailey-Taylor shared that visitor spending went up 4.9% in 2023, based on data released by the Visit NC report received this week. Eric will be updating the business card for board members to hand out, to say Visitors Spend \$819,041 a day in Johnston County.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer*

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, September 11, 2024
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**