

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12 pm, August 9, 2023**

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

I. Call to Order – R Childrey, Chairperson

R Childrey called the meeting to order at 12:16 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 adopt the agenda that was previously sent to the board.

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

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

WE Andrews motioned to accept the June minutes as presented to the board. J Jennings seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Executive Committee - No meeting held in July

III. Finances – June Financial – D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-Date Revenue for June was \$208,210.14. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$241,423.96. The net negative variance for the month was -\$33,213.82. Year-to-Date Revenue was \$1,946,480.87. Year-to-Date Operation Expense was \$1,464,022.17. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$482,458.70. The June County 3% revenue was \$114,891.96. Smithfield's 2% Revenue was \$34,992.25. Selma's 2% Revenue was \$9,408.65. Kenly's 2% Revenue was \$2,796.38. Benson's 2% Revenue was \$6,879.97.

Month-to-Date Revenue for July was \$189,117.50. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$131,288.33. The net gain variance for the month was \$57,829.17. Year-to-Date Revenue was \$189,117.50. Year-to-Date Operation Expense was \$131,288.33. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$57,829.17. The July County 3% revenue was \$129,710.49. Smithfield's 2% Revenue was \$45,776.82. Selma's 2% Revenue was \$9,012.05. Kenly's 2% Revenue was \$2,333.42. Benson's 2% Revenue was \$6,924.85.

D Bailey-Taylor stated that the board needed to review and approve the county contract to conduct the 2023 financial audit for the Visitors Bureau.

J Jennings motioned to approve the contract to audit the 2023 financial accounts as presented to the board. M McDonnell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Committee - No meeting held in July

V. Sports Council – B Cook

The County Park Master Plan has been adopted with plans in the works for a 1.64-mile trail in Wilson Mills. Friends of Johnston County Parks will be hosting another Walk & Talk About Trails event in October, details to follow. The first 2 murals are complete with more to come in 2023-24 from the Friends partnership with the Arts Council. Parks and Recs are finishing up summer ball and moving into registration for fall sports throughout the county.

Kristin Radford as the Sales & Services Manager is taking over managing the Recreation & Sports Council, inventorying, and promoting the county's sports facilities, and providing bags for tournaments.

VI. Special Projects Committee – WE Andrews

W.E. Andrews stated that the Special Projects Committee met just prior to the board meeting to discuss matching marketing grants that have been received for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The bureau has received nine grant applications; Clayton Harvest Festival (\$1,500), 74th Benson Mule Days (\$1,500), Four Oaks Acorn Festival (\$1,500), Neuse Little Theatre (\$500), Bentonville Fall Festival (\$500), My Kid's Club 5K Run & Walk (\$500), Touch-A-Truck (\$500), Clayton Piano Festival (\$500), and International Food Festival (\$500). The committee also discussed Selma Railroad Days (\$1,500), another major festival that will be held this fall. A discussion was held about the importance of organizers completing applications for events to help the bureau with any changes or updates so information is correct on the bureau website for events/festivals.

The Special Projects Committee recommended that the board award all ten grants (including Selma Railroad Days) as presented for funding.

J Jennings motioned to recommend to the full board to fund the matching marketing grants as presented. P Boucher seconded. Motion approved, with J Pritchett and M Smith abstaining from the vote.

VII. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor shared information about a new book *Johnston Creates* produced and published by the Johnston County Arts Council that is now available to purchase through the Arts Council.

A lot of work is going towards helping the Town of Selma with the promotion of Selma Railroad Days: 15 digital billboards, revised logos, *Our State Magazine* ad, new social media carousel, purchasing unique domain SelmaRailroadDayFestival.com, live landing page on the bureau's website and designing a poster for the festival. The bureau is also running social media and promotions for Ava Gardner Festival, Mule Days, and Clayton Harvest Festival.

A new visitor map for Smithfield is currently in design. The bureau invested in new graphic map files to help upgrade maps, brochures, and the website.

The bureau held the first JoCo Hospitality Association lunch with guest speaker, Chris Mackey with the NC Restaurant and Lodging Association who discussed workforce development issues and training that is offered by the association. That information is being shared with tourism partners via the Tourism Does That?! newsletter.

VIII. New Business

Upcoming events in August include the River Rat Regatta, the 1-year anniversary of the Food Hall with Jonathan Levin performing on the 25th. Bentonville Battlefield will dedicate another driving pull-off (Bull Pen Trail Grand Opening) on September 15th at 10 am. D Bailey-Taylor will send out

an invitation to the board for this event.

Discussion was had about the potential impact of sports tournaments for tourism in the county, the quality of our facilities, and the potential for the Senior Games, travel basketball, volleyball, softball/baseball and other tournaments. It was noted that the goal of the Sports Council was to bid on bringing in major tournaments to the county, however, local facilities are primarily used for local tournaments and the high demand by residents.

P Boucher reviewed the dates and events for Benson Mule Days this September 21-24, and J Pritchett shared the plans for Acorn Festival scheduled for September 9th.

IX. Old Business

None

X. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Childrey, Chairperson

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**