

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Noon, December 11, 2024, 2024**

Present: B Cook, M McDonnell, WE Andrews, J Hamilton, J Jenkins,
J Hoke, K Pickett, J Lassiter, J Pritchett, M Smith

Absent: C McLamb

Staff: D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

I. Call to Order – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called the meeting to order at 12:22 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 November minutes that were previously sent to the board. A correction was noted for the September minutes which should have been October minutes.

J Jenkins motioned to accept the November minutes as corrected. WE Andrews seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Month-to-date revenue for November was \$183,868.74. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$225,588.46. The net negative variance for the month was -\$41,719.72. Year-to-date revenue was \$811,695.75. Year-to-date operation Expense was \$853,589.39. The Year-to-Date net negative variance was -\$41,893.64. The October County 3% revenue was \$117,029.43, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$34,070.00, Selma's 2% revenue was \$7,683.72, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,448.04, Benson's 2% revenue was \$7,612.83.

D Bailey-Taylor noted the expense line item of Capital Grants was \$55,000, which was paying both the Town of Selma and Town of Archer Lodge capital grants.

III. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee received two Matching Marketing Grant applications. One for the Kenly Christmas on Main and the other for the Partnership for Children Golf Tournament.

WE Andrews motioned to fund both of the matching marketing grant applications for \$1,000 each. J Lassiter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Committee – M Smith

The Marketing Committee did not meet in November. D Bailey-Taylor shared a copy of the 2024-25 marketing plan, noting that it is now available to download on the website. The Marketing Committee meeting will in February, where work on the FY 25-26 budget will begin.

V. Sports Council - J Jenkins

J Jenkins shared that the Sports Council Committee met and as usual he was very impressed with all the updates. Jenkins asked if there had been any updates about the 330-acre property at the corner of Devil's Racetrack Road and I-95. D Bailey-Taylor will share updates once they are available. It was also noted that about 1 in 4 kids in Johnston County are involved in sports, which is higher than the national average.

VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor stated the bureau is now using drip campaigns in Act-on to recipients that don't open an email the first time it is sent, a reminder email is sent out 5 days later with another headline like "Don't Miss December's Holiday Events" to increase the open rate. The first drip campaign ran in November and saw additional 1,500 opens to the Events Calendar.

D Bailey-Taylor announced that *Our State* Magazine is running a 6-page article on Activate Selma which will hit the news stands next week and PR is going out now on the article. When the Visitors Bureau pitches story ideas to *Our State*, the timeline can take 12-18 months for the story to appear. This section was about "loving local", and the work that Activate Selma is doing fit that pitch idea. D Bailey-Taylor noted how well deserved the article is for the group.

D Bailey-Taylor noted that the Bureau is using Placer.ai to run reports for Eastfield Crossing, Smithfield Parks & Recreation putting in all the town's parks, Clayton Harvest Festival and the recently ran reports on the number of visitors to the Smithfield/Selma area over Black Friday weekend. D Bailey-Taylor shared that from Wednesday to Sunday there were 152.3k shoppers to the area: Carolina Premium Outlets, 93.5K, DeWayne's, 23.3K, and Eastfield Crossing, 35.5K. Also noted was the crossover of shoppers that go from CPO to DeWayne's and also Eastfield Crossing. Discussion was had about when the access roads would be completed, and M McDonald stated that roads are to be completed by the end of the week.

The Bureau is currently working on several projects for Selma: 4x9 Events Calendar for 2025, new Visitor Guide with a map, and vinyl replacement on Reid's Printing building. These projects are in design and being shared with the Tourism Committee for approval. D Bailey-Taylor noted she saw that a meeting will be held on Friday, December 13th at 9am. D Bailey-Taylor thanked everyone who contributed to the Angel Tree project this year.

VII. New Business

D Bailey-Taylor shared that the bureau would be sending out a copy of the 2025 Meeting Schedule and the board reviewed the term limits of the board members. D Bailey-Taylor announced that effective April 30, 2025 she would be retiring after 28 plus years with the bureau. B Cook and M McDonnell have met and will be sharing the next steps in searching for a replacement. The board shared congratulations and thanks Bailey-Taylor for a job well done.

B Andrews announced the dates for the George Whitfield 52nd Annual Baseball Clinic as January 11, 2025 which is free to children 10 and older.

J Hamilton shared that the Christmas Jubilee Christmas show is doing well with an average of 300 guests per show.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer

Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon