

JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Noon, February 12, 2025

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

I. Call to Order – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called the meeting to order at 12:18 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 January minutes that were previously sent to the board.

J Jenkins motioned to accept the January minutes as presented. J Lassiter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Month-to-date revenue for January was \$132,765.37. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$146,713.62. The net negative variance for the month was -\$13,881.68. Year-to-date revenue was \$1,111,663.75. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$1,150,805.14. The Year-to-Date net negative variance was -\$39,141.39. December County 3% revenues (\$95,031.61), Selma's 2% revenue (\$6,874.44), Kenly's 2% revenue (\$2,774.53), Benson's 2% revenue (\$7,333.62).

III. Executive Committee

B Cook stated that he and M McDonnell have a meeting scheduled with the consultant Chris Cavanaugh on February 13th to discuss the CEO search process. B Cook will report back to the board on next steps and timeline.

IV. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

WE Andrews shared that the Capital Grants applications have been mailed as hard copies and emailed. WE Andrews asked how many applications were sent, and D Bailey-Taylor reported to all Town Managers, Chambers of Commerce Directors, and non-profit tourism attractions. D Bailey-Taylor stated the applications must be received by 5:00pm on March 28, 2025. The Special Projects committee will meet on April 2nd at 11:30 am to review Capital Grant Applications.

V. Marketing Committee – M Smith

The Marketing Committee did not meet in January and the committee's next meeting will be February 19th at 9am.

VI. Sports Council - J Jenkins

J Jenkins reported that the Sports Council met on January 15th at noon. Jenkins was excited to hear about the county's acquisition of the Rose Dairy Farm property along Devil's Racetrack Rd., a 330-acre site bordered by Black Creek on one side and the Neuse River on the other side. The site already includes trails, a house that will become offices for county staff, two large shelters, a dairy barn, and two fishing ponds.

VII. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor stated that work has started on the FY26 budget and presented to the board a DRAFT budget spreadsheet. There will be a presentation on ROI on current marketing programs and suggestions for FY 26 to the Marketing Committee, and the Special Projects Committee will

review Capital Grant applications and make recommendations for funding at the April board meeting.

D Bailey-Taylor reviewed that the county has instituted some changes in how to code Dues and Subscriptions (5305), Research (2605) and Software (4420), which will make major changes in these line items in the Bureau budget. D Bailey-Taylor shared the Placer.ai contract is up for renewal. D Bailey-Taylor asked for feedback on continuing to use this technology for the Bureau and our partners. It has been very helpful in targeting key feeder cities and running visitation reports for our festival partners and major retail. After some discussion the board agreed that keeping it one more year would be beneficial. D Bailey-Taylor reminded the board when the \$5,000 scholarship grant for the JCC Culinary Program was approved in FY 25, that the board wanted to vote on this every year to continue. D Bailey-Taylor reported that two students received the scholarship in FY25, and after some discussion the board agreed that the scholarship will remain in the budget.

D Bailey-Taylor has requested the Town Selma submit their tourism marketing budget by April 1st to the Tourism Authority for approval. The Authority discussed the enabling legislation, that two-thirds of the net proceeds *must* be used to advertise or market an area, and one-third *must* be used for tourism-related expenditures designed to increase the use of lodging. The board suggested that a letter be sent from the Chairman of the Tourism Authority to the Selma Town Council on the allowed use of occupancy taxes before they submit a budget to the Authority for approval.

D Bailey-Taylor reported that the JCVB Annual Report was mailed out to hotel owners, county and state elected officials, and hospitality association members. K Pickett complimented the staff on the design and content of the report.

It was noted that due to scheduling conflicts with several board members, the March 12th meeting date may be changed; the staff will send out notices announcing any change.

VIII. New Business

WE Andrews asked about the number of pickleball courts in the county and how many have been built with tourism grant funds. D Bailey-Taylor responded that the Authority has awarded grants for pickleball courts in Selma and Smithfield, and that there were certainly enough courts now in the county to hold a tournament. K Pickett announced that the Town of Benson received a \$250,000 private donation for building pickleball courts in Benson.

IX. Old Business

None

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer

Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
March 12, 2025 (possible change of date)
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon