

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Noon, January 8, 2025**

**Present:** B Cook, WE Andrews, J Hamilton, J Jenkins,  
J Hoke, K Pickett, J Pritchett, M Smith  
**Zoom:** M McDonnell  
**Absent:** C McLamb, J Lassiter  
**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 December minutes that were previously sent to the board.  
***J Hamilton motioned to accept the December minutes as presented. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

**II. Finances – December Financial Reports – D Bailey-Taylor**

Month-to-date revenue for December was \$166,844.82. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$150,502.13. The net positive variance for the month was \$16,342.69. Year-to-date revenue was \$978,831.81. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$1,004,091.52. The Year-to-Date net negative variance was -\$25,259.71. The November County 3% revenue was \$96,912.36, Smithfield's 2% revenue was not reported, Selma's 2% revenue was \$5,312.61, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,118.19, Benson's 2% revenue was \$7,600.30, Clayton's 2% revenue was \$408.21 (first report with only Expedia remitting tax).

**III. Executive Committee**

B Cook presented the need for the bureau to secure a consultant to assist with the search for and hiring of a new CEO pending the retirement of Donna Bailey-Taylor. Discussion was had by the board members concerning consultant vs. recruitment firms' costs.

***WE Andrews motioned to accept the proposal of Magellan Strategy Group consultants. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

**Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews**

WE Andrews shared that the staff has updated the Capital Grants application and asked for the board to review and approve. D Bailey-Taylor stated the applications would go out in January to give potential applicants time to submit by March 28, 2025. Discussion was had on moving the request amount lines up to the first page of the application.

***M Smith motioned to approve the application with the recommended changes. K Pickett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

The Special Projects Committee received a Matching Marketing Grant application for the Sip & See Wine Walk in Benson. The committee discussed the project as this is a first time application.

***J Hamilton motioned to fund the matching marketing grant application for \$1,000. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

The Special Projects committee will meet on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:30 am to review Capital Grant Applications..

#### **IV. Marketing Committee – M Smith**

The Marketing Committee did not meet in December and the committee's next meeting will be February 19<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm.

#### **V. Sports Council - J Jenkins**

The Sports Council did not meet in December and the next meeting will be January 15<sup>th</sup> at noon.

#### **VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor**

D Bailey-Taylor stated the bureau was working on a new landing page for “Experience Our JoCo Towns in 48 hours”. The landing page will feature custom itineraries based on five themes. Outdoor Recreation, Shopping, Art & Entertainment, Culinary Experiences and Trails, and Pet Friendly Travel. This is part of a campaign with VisitNC which will go live in March.

The staff has several projects pending for the Town of Selma: 4x9 events rack cards (printed and delivered), other projects awaiting approval are the *Our State Magazine* ad, new vinyl on Reid’s storefront, and the new Visitor Guide/Map which is just starting the design process.

D Bailey-Taylor informed the Board she likes to mention staff projects each month, and this month is the Bureau contract photographer, Jonathan Levin, who recently conducted a night shoot at Meadow Lights. D Bailey-Taylor stated how difficult night shoots are and the photos are incredible. The staff also secured photos from influencer NC Tripping, the Smithfield video shoot, and photos from *Travel with Darly* from the PBS shoot. D Bailey-Taylor stressed to the board how vital quality photography and video is for promoting the destination.

#### **VII. New Business**

J Pritchett shared that the Main St. streetscape project in Four Oaks has started from US 301 to the railroad tracks. K Pickett stated that the pedestrian wayfinding signs were up in Benson and that the Town and Chamber tracked website activity for Mule Days, and a high volume of traffic is referral from the Visitors Bureau pages. She thanked the Bureau for all the staff’s efforts to promote Benson.

J Hamilton shared that The Rudy Theatre is offering new concerts in addition to the regular show. He will share with the staff information for the Visitor Bureau calendar of events. D Bailey-Taylor reported she asked the Town of Selma about presenting the *Our State Magazine* poster for Town Hall, and asked J Hamilton if there was a place for one with Activate Selma. J Hamilton stated the Activate Selma organization would like to have one at Ron Hester’s office.

#### **VIII. Old Business**

None

#### **IX. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer*

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