

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Noon, June 12, 2024**

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

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. J Hoke seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

J Jenkins motioned to accept the May minutes as presented. J Pritchett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Finances – May Financial Report – D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-date revenue for May was \$223,833.25. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$152,189.58. The net positive variance for the month was \$71,643.67. Year-to-date revenue was \$2,548,284.55. Year-to-date operation Expense was \$1,493,324.39. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$1,054,960.16. The April County 3% revenue was \$116,328.94, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$38,864.41, Selma's 2% revenue was \$8,208.37, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,631.52, Benson's 2% revenue was \$7,352.59.

D Bailey-Talor presented the annual contract for the County Audit provided to the Tourism Authority by Chad McLamb. D Bailey-Taylor noted the annual cost is approximately \$4,000.

M Smith made a motion to approve the audit contract provided through the county. J Lassiter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee received Matching Marketing Grant applications for Chick-fil-A 3 Little Pigs Triathlon, Mule Days, and Selma Railroad Days.

J Hamilton motioned to fund all three of the matching marketing grant applications. J Jenkins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Committee – M Smith

M Smith reported the Marketing Committee met May 22nd and that D Bailey reviewed the committee the Bandwango pass for the Beer, Wine, Shine Trail. The committee reviewed JCVB's effort in helping market the Ham & Yam Festival using Placer.ai, showing around 10,000 attendees. A comprehensive report was sent to Mike Scott, Town Manager for Smithfield so he may share with the Town Council the efforts of the JCVB staff to help market the festival. D Bailey-Taylor will send similar reports to each festival the JCVB supports as part of the continued advocacy plan for the bureau. The Town of Clayton has approved the 2% room tax which will go in effect August 1st. D Bailey-Taylor presented the committee with a preview of the creative direction for FY 25, focusing on a thematic approach centered around "we believe" statements about the journey or road trips themes for corridor marketing along I-95 and I-40.

V. Sports Council - D Bailey-Taylor

J Jenkins reported that the Sports Council met on May 15th. J Jenkins expressed his amazement at the ongoing progress within the county. Additionally, D Bailey-Taylor informed the group that County Open Spaces is hosting public comment meetings for the feasibility study of the East Coast Greenway. The Four Oaks session is scheduled for June 18th at 5:30pm at the Town Hall, and the Smithfield session will take place on June 25th at 5:30pm at SRAC.

VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor discussed as a way to share news about the Capital Grant program, recipients will be presented with an oversized check for their reimbursements. D Bailey-Taylor shared with the board the Clayton Chamber's check and she will work with M Smith to schedule a photo op. E Dean is working with Jonathan Levin on a photoshoot at Bentonville for the first new advertising campaign for the road trip theme, "Where History and Hiking Happen". K Radford and J McGowen visited the I-95 NC Welcome Centers for National Travel & Tourism Week. Additionally, D Bailey-Taylor thanked J. Hamilton's for his attendance as it was greatly appreciated. D Bailey-Taylor gave an additional update that the Bandwango test site has been created, and J McGowen will be visiting each location to assess the accuracy of the geo-locations. Once completely tested it will go live, hopefully next week. Given that the JCVB website serves as the main marketing tool for the county, the staff is currently framing up an internal audit to address navigation issues, headers, and other relevant aspects concerning content, and SEO issues. The road trip campaign will make its way to the content on the website, as well as, all the deliverables and methods of advertising from print, digital, social, and video.

Critical Mention online and print audience in May: 327,586,124, and provided a value of \$3,043,395.

D Bailey-Taylor reported on the top social posts in May:
301 Endless Yard Sale BLOG - 53,453 impressions 2,218 clicks
Ava Gardner Museum Carousel - 317,936 impressions, 2,370 clicks
Raleigh Brewing BLOG - 42,479 impressions, 1,384 clicks.

D Bailey-Taylor stated she remains engaged with the Elevate Benson group. This includes an upcoming meeting with Adam Leath with the Hampton Inn to explore strategies for connecting hotel guests with Downtown Benson businesses and events.

VII. New Business

J Lassiter read aloud the JCVB core values and commended D Bailey-Taylor for her insightfulness and professionalism at the luncheon with Town of Selma members of the Tourism Marketing Committee. J Lassiter, along with several other board members, have been distributing JCVB advocacy business cards, with positive feedback from the public expressing amazement at the information provided. J Lassiter suggested that board members should tour local attractions as a group such as the Ava Gardner Museum and Bentonville to better advocate the Visitors Bureau's impact on tourism. D Bailey-Taylor agreed, viewing it as a valuable initiative, and committed to organizing a tour.

B Cook emphasized the importance of retaining everyone on the JCVB team by ensuring they are properly compensated. It was noted that the process of training someone for a new role incurs both staff time and financial expenses, which underscores the rationale behind the recent staff raises approved in FY23.

J Pritchett shared that the chamber will be celebrating the opening of their new office space on July 11th at 5:30pm with a Hot Dog Cookout and invited the board to attend. The chamber is also participating in a travel program to Portugal in May 2025. The Chamber will hold a webinar with the travel agency on June 20th for those interested.

D Bailey-Taylor informed the board about the necessity of voting on the new HR Personnel Policies and integrating them into the JCVB's policies, which encompasses updates to the Safety Manual, Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation policies, and compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act as it pertains to exempt employees and overtime pay.

M Smith motioned to accept the updated HR Personnel Policies as adopted by the County as presented by staff. M McDonnell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, August 14, 2024
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**