

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12 Noon, June 18, 2025**

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

I. Call to Order – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook called the meeting to order at 12:16 pm and stated that a quorum was present. B Cook asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. J Pritchett stated that she would need to abstain from the “Oaks Alive” matching marketing grant.

B Cook asked for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

M McDonnell made a motion to adopt the agenda. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

WE Andrews motioned to accept the May minutes as presented. M McDonnell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Finances – May Financial Reports – A Brame

Month-to-date revenue for May was \$178,318.28. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$116,651.98. The net variance for the month was \$61,666.30. Year-to-date revenue was \$1,762,454.53. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$1,787,608.38. The Year-to-Date net negative variance was -\$24,504.12. April Johnston County 3% revenue was \$130,832.57, Smithfield’s 2% revenue was \$37,501.37, Selma’s 2% revenue was \$7,787.25, Kenly’s 2% revenue was \$2,960.17, Benson’s 2% revenue was \$12,417.97, and Clayton’s revenue was \$9,080.58.

Clayton’s revenue included late payments for Airbnb from Dec. 2024-Mar. 2025.

The board briefly discussed the updated County of Johnston Purchasing Procedure Manual (effective June 1, 2025). Board members shared concern about needing time to review the purchasing policy before voting.

M McDonnell motioned to table the approval until the next board meeting. J Lassiter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Executive Committee – B Cook, Chairman

B Cook shared updates about the ongoing executive search process. The first candidate completed the interview process on May 28th with an in-person interview with staff and board members. B Cook stated that the second candidate had been removed from the search. The board received a resume for the third candidate. This candidate is data-driven, plus has experience in tourism and grants. They also have family in the area. B Cook confirmed that the staff and board would participate in an in-person interview with the candidate on June 25th at the JCVB Conference Room.

Upon more discussion, the board determined that they would need to move forward with a decision about filling the CEO position as soon as possible.

WE Andrews motioned to schedule a special-called board meeting for Friday, June 27th at 9 am. The agenda items will include selecting a CEO, reviewing and adopting the updated County of Johnston Purchasing Procedure, and reviewing and approving the 2025 Audit Contract. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The board agreed to offer the meeting via Zoom for those who may not be able to attend in person.

IV. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee received a Matching Marketing Grant application for the Three Little Pigs Triathlon and the Oaks Alive – Four Oaks. The committee also received a request for an extension from the Johnston County Heritage Center for their capital grant for historical markers.

WE Andrews motioned to approve the Three Little Pigs Triathlon and Oaks Alive matching grants and to approve the extension request for the Johnston County Heritage Center capital grant for historical markers. B Cook seconded. The motion passed with J Pritchett abstaining.

V. Marketing Committee – M Smith

No Meeting.

VI. Sports Council - J Jenkins

In the absence of J Jenkins, A Brame stated that the Sports Council minutes from the May 21st meeting were included in the board packet. Brame asked that the board review the minutes and direct any questions they may have to the Bureau.

VII. Staff Report - A Brame

Emily Prickett has ended her internship with us and begun her full-time job with VisitNC; she will be back to report resident survey findings to the board at a future meeting (likely August or September). A Brame and VisitNC attended the annual DotDash Meredith in-office editor “tradeshow” event in NYC. After deciding to build their presence and pitch around a tea theme, the state looped in JoCo, and Quantum Toad attended the event that was “tea-themed”. Attendees presented to the editorial staff from publications like Travel & Leisure, Southern Living, Food & Wine, along with others. Content creators Scott and Ash, known on Instagram as The Hive Drive, visited JoCo in May. They bring a different perspective to their audience as full-time RVers with a converted school bus that they drive across the country. This was the Bureau's first time hosting “camping/RV lifestyle” influencers. July’s issue of *Our State* magazine will include a big story about Clemmons Educational State Forest, a direct result of the Bureau hosting *Our State* Associate Editor Katie Saintsing last year. In addition, there is an in-depth story about two glass bottle collectors in Selma. The issue also includes the JCVB’s first 2-page spread ad - Free to Roam in JoCo.

VIII. New Business

Following approved increases for the FY 2025-26 by the Johnston County Board of Commissioners the Johnston County Tourism Authority reviewed the increases.

M Smith motioned to follow the County guidelines to approve a 3% increase beginning July 1, followed by a 2% merit in October . J Lassiter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer

Next Meeting

Johnston County Tourism Authority

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon