

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12 Noon, May 13, 2026**

**Present: J Hoke, J Lassiter, M Smith, J Pritchett, J Cobb, WE Andrews,
P Boucher, N Youngblood**

Absent: C McLamb, A Whitehurst, K Pickett

Staff: A Mullins, A Phillips, A Brame, A Davis

I. Call to Order – J Hoke, Chairperson

J Hoke called the meeting to order at 12:07 pm and stated that a quorum was present. J Hoke asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None was heard.

J Hoke asked for a motion to accept the April minutes that were previously sent to the board.

N Youngblood motioned to accept the April minutes as presented. J Cobb seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Finances – April Financial Reports – A Mullins

Month-to-date revenue for April was \$182,383.12. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$159,024.51. The net variance for the month was \$23,358.61. Year-to-date revenue was \$1,742,807.68. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$1,761,020.88. The Year-to-Date net variance was -\$18,213.20. March Johnston County 3% revenue was \$129,848.11, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$39,943.67, Selma's 2% revenue was \$7,417.07, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,811.35, Benson's 2% revenue was \$9,415.46, and Clayton's 2% revenue was \$4,975.25.

III. Executive Committee – J Hoke, Chairperson

No meeting was had.

IV. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

W.E. Andrews reported that the Bureau received one Matching Marketing Grant request:
51st Annual Selma Railroad Days Festival

WE Andrews motioned to recommend to the full board to fund the 51st Annual Selma Railroad Days Festival Matching Marketing Grant for \$3,000. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Marketing Committee

No meeting was held.

VI. Staff Report - A Mullins

A. Mullins announced that Kevin Moore, the new Digital Producer, had joined the Visitors Bureau staff. Mullins stated that the Bureau is now fully staffed with seven full-time employees and one part-time employee.

A. Brame shared updates regarding marketing and public relations efforts. Through the Bureau's partnership with Lou Hammond, several local businesses received mentions in *Southern Living*, including:

- Magnolia Inn
- Waffee Station
- Carolina Packers

Additionally, Jerry Stevens and Atkinson Mills were featured by Travel South Global in California and the United Kingdom.

The Bureau's participation in the in-state tourism conference resulted in mentions by:

- *Our State Magazine*
- WRAL Tar Heel Traveler
- PBS

A. Brame also reported ongoing collaboration with Todd Johnson on the Johnston County America 250th Celebration. Johnston County will commemorate America's 250th anniversary in 2026 through commemorative events, heritage programs, and community celebrations honoring the nation's founding while highlighting the county's historic legacy and cultural traditions.

Kevin Pittman, Supervisor of Clemmons Educational State Forest, provided an overview and updates regarding the forest. Clemmons Educational State Forest encompasses more than 800 acres and features:

- Self-guided trails and exhibits
- Ranger-led classes
- Picnic areas
- A reservable shelter with a large stone fireplace and ample seating

Trail markers and trailhead signage are located throughout the property. Trails consist of natural terrain, including gravel, mulch, and some boardwalk sections.

Annual visitation averages between **80,000 and 90,000 visitors**, in addition to approximately **3,000 students** each year.

VII. New Business

A. Mullins shared that projections for the remainder of 2026 indicate that travel activity will remain steady and consistent. Travelers are expected to continue favoring road trips, weekend getaways, and family-oriented travel.

The Bureau is realigning priorities to focus more heavily on social media and digital content while continuing its partnership with public relations firm Lou Hammond. Staff will also continue attending travel and trade shows to further promote the county and its tourism story.

The proposed FY 2026–2027 budget was presented to the board for review. Following discussion of several line items, J. Hoke called for a motion to approve the budget.

M. Smith made a motion to approve the FY 2026–2027 Budget as presented. J. Cobb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

Next Meeting

Johnston County Tourism Authority

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon