

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Noon, May 8, 2024**

Present: **B Cook, M Smith, WE Andrews, K Pickett,
J Hoke, J Jenkins, J Hamilton, M McDonnell, J Pritchett,
J Lassiter, C McLamb**

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 adopt the agenda as presented.

M McDonnell made a motion to adopt the agenda. WE Andrews seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

J Jenkins motioned to accept the April minutes as presented with corrections. K Pickett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Month-to-date revenue for April was \$214,686.78. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$173,079.23. The net positive variance for the month was \$41,607.55. Year-to-date revenue was \$2,324,451.30, which includes a State Directed Grant for Bentonville Battlefield for \$700,000. Year-to-date operation Expense was \$1,341,134.81. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$983,316.49. The March County 3% revenue was \$127,523.67, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$38,055.09, Selma's 2% revenue was \$7,790.94, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,765.11, Benson's 2% revenue was \$6,542.70.

III. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

The Special Projects Committee did not meet but received a Matching Marketing Grant application from the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly.

WE Andrews motioned to fund the matching marketing grant for TFLM Ag Camp 2024 for \$1,000 as presented. M Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Committee – M Smith (next meeting Wednesday, May 22nd at 9 am)

V. Sports Council - D Bailey-Taylor (next meeting Wednesday, May 15th at noon)

VI. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor

D Bailey-Taylor stated that in the effort to communicate more with residents, elected officials, and businesses in the county, the bureau has printed a small business card for board members to hand out with a QR code to the JCVB website, About Us section. The card was well received by the board as a helpful advocacy tool.

D Bailey-Taylor shared that the bureau continues to prepare for the FY25 budget, onboarding for CoStar data, Placer.ai first party data platform, and Bandwango, the new passport program for the Beer, Wine, Shine Trail. There is much work to be done in the next 60 days to be ready to launch all these new initiatives and research resources for FY25.

Activities are picking up for the 301 Endless Yard Sale. The bureau is in the process of building out the microsite for the Bentonville Reenactment in March 2025 and the Strawberry season campaign is currently underway. The new Downtown Main Street group in Benson named Elevate Benson, has had several meetings on how the Visitors Bureau works with the Town's 2% to market Benson. A new Kiosk has been installed at the PK Vyas Park and a large format map will be placed there. D Bailey-Taylor presented the new Benson Visitors Map and noted that they are now being distributed.

Critical Mention online and print audience: 40 million (up from 7 million last month), and provided a value \$428,037.

D Bailey-Taylor reported on the top social posts in April: 301 Endless Yard Sale BLOG - 52,196 impressions, 2,910 clicks; Ava Gardner Museum Carousel - 316,999 impressions, 2,421 clicks; JoCo Grows Strawberries Carousel - 122,251 impressions, 2,230 clicks. D Bailey-Taylor informed the board that the Triangle East Chamber Gazebo panels were designed and replaced this month.

D Bailey-Taylor invited any board members interested in a demonstration of Placer.ai data to drop by the office. Many county Points of Interest have been submitted and following major events like the Smithfield Ham & Yam Festival, reports will be run and shared with the organizers of the festival. For example, the report on the Tobacco Farm Life Museum shows that with 5,000 visitors a year, over half of these visits are from the 301 Endless Yard Sale. This information will be helpful for our tourism partners to set strategies, manage resources, and engage in more ways to benefit from events like these.

VII. New Business

J Hamilton had questions about the Selma map and if boutique shops around the county could be included in the Girls Weekend. D Bailey-Taylor noted that the Girls Weekend is a Smithfield 2% promotion.

WE Andrews stated that the Tarheel Traveler visited The Chicken Barn in Smithfield and it should air soon. D Bailey-Taylor reported that Scott Mason is someone A Brame works with closely, as he interviewed Carolina Packers prior to the Ham & Yam Festival, and has a feature on Jonathan Levin and The Clayton Piano Festival's up-coming concert on May 23rd prior to Memorial Day at The Clayton Center..

J Pritchett shared that the Four Oaks Chamber had moved and plans to offer meeting space for small meetings or events.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
James Hoke, Secretary/Treasurer*

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