

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

Present: J Hoke, M Smith, WE Andrews, J Pritchett, J Lassiter, K Pickett, A Whitehurst

Absent: C McLamb, J Jenkins,

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

I. Call to Order – J Hoke, Secretary

J Hoke called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm and stated that a quorum was present. J Hoke asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None were heard.

J Hoke introduced new board member, Alicia Whitehurst, who was appointed to the Tourism Authority by the Johnston County Commissioners.

J Hoke opened the floor for nominations for officers for Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary/Treasurer. Officers' terms are for 2 years.

Following open discussion about the positions, a motion was made.

WE Andrews nominated to vote on a full slate to include J Hoke as Chairperson, J Lassiter as Vice-Chairperson and M Smith as Secretary. J Lassiter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

With the adoption of officers, Chairperson J Hoke proceeded to run the meeting per the adopted agenda. J Hoke asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None were heard.

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

M Smith motioned to accept the October minutes as presented. J Pritchett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Board members were given copies of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy and Johnston County Tourism Authority Board Code of Ethics. Board members were asked to review and returned signed copies to A Phillips.

II. Finances – October Financial Reports – A Mullins

Month-to-date revenue for October was \$175,748.17. Month-to-Date Operation Expenses were \$186,850.43. The net variance for the month was -\$11,042.85. Year-to-date revenue was \$748,127.48. Year-to-date Operation Expense was \$732,157.33. The Year-to-Date net variance was \$16,206.29. September Johnston County 3% revenue was \$107,533.46, Smithfield's 2% revenue was \$29,373.51, Selma's 2% revenue was \$7,491.36, Kenly's 2% revenue was \$2,109.94, Benson's 2% revenue was \$8,982.90, and Clayton's 2% revenue was \$10,694.38. Clayton 2% revenue included August (\$5,391.27) and September (\$5,303.11) revenues.

III. Executive Committee – J Hoke, Chairman

Chairman J Hoke turned the floor over to A Brame, who shared updates about Marketing and Public Relations. It was noted that A Brame and A Mullins recently attended the NCTIA Conference in Wilmington, NC. The Bureau received two awards: Gold for the Leisure Marketing category and Gold for the Tech & Innovation category.

The board welcomed Alicia Davis, Digital Marketing Manager. She shared that she drives all digital marketing programs including social media content, website content, and photography. She is looking forward to working with the staff and board.

K Radford presented an update on The Meetings and Events Strategy for Tourism. The focus for the plan is to strengthen partnerships with hotels, venues, and community organizations while positioning Johnston County as a leading destination for meetings, sports, music, and outdoor events. The goal is to increase booked meetings, events, and overnight stays by 15–20% annually through strategic marketing, sales outreach, and collaborative initiatives. Efforts include leveraging tools like Placer AI and Driven, developing signature annual events, enhancing on-farm experiences with JoCo Grows, and promoting sustainable, outdoor-friendly venues. The plan emphasizes continuous data tracking, partner engagement, and storytelling to grow Johnston County’s reputation and economic impact.

IV. Special Projects Committee - WE Andrews

WE Andrews noted that the bureau had received three matching marketing grants for the following: Kenly’s Christmas on Main, Touch-A-Truck and Classic Antique Power Tractor Show.

K Pickett motioned to approve the three matching grants as presented by the Special Projects Committee. M Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Marketing Committee – M Smith

M Smith noted that the committee had not met but would be scheduling a meeting.

It was noted that with the new board members the Bureau would be reviewing and assigning members to the following committees: Marketing, Special Projects and Sports Council.

VI. Sports Council

Sports Council did meet in October. During this time, WE Andrews suggested that the board hold monthly board meetings “a meet around”. The purpose would be to become familiar with our partners and let them know who we are. We will prepare a list for the December board meeting of possible sites to meet at.

VII. Staff Report - A Mullins

A Mullins stated that the staff report was included in the board packet for today. He also noted that not only was the bureau recognized here in Johnston County but across the country.

VIII. New Business

A Mullins shared that he had three items he would like for the board to consider:

1. Promotion of K Radford, Sales Manager to Sales Director. This would come with an increase in duties as well as a salary increase.
2. New position – Digital Production Specialist. This would be a full-time position. Duties would include producing Podcasts and video in-house, including audio. This position is designed to tell our story of Johnston County and why visitors should come.
3. Public Relations Agency – this would be trained professionals that would reach out to tourism audiences. It would include current outreaches as well as new audiences. This would be national, print, digital, TV and AI.

The board conducted open discussion about all three topics with questions and concerns about needing more information on some of the items.

K Pickett moved to approve the Sales Director promotion and the New Digital Production Specialist as presented. Pickett included that the decision on the Public Relations Agency be tabled until the next board meeting. The motion was seconded by M. Smith and passed unanimously.

IX. Old Business

WE Andrews shared that he would like to see an increase in sports. An example would be more softball tournaments, pickle ball tournaments, and motorcycle/bicycle events.

Andrews also suggested that he would be willing to share a course he had taught before on parliamentary procedures and Roberts Rule of Order.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
Wednesday, December 10, 2025
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**