

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
12 pm, November 8, 2023**

**Present:** J Hoke, B Cook, M McDonnell, J Pritchett, C McLamb  
**Absent:** C Roby, M Smith  
**Guest:** WE Andrews  
**Staff:** D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

**I. Call to Order – B Cook, Vice-Chairperson**

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.

*M McDonnell made a motion to adopt the agenda. J Pritchett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

B Cook asked for a motion to accept the October minutes previously sent to the board.

*M McDonnell motioned to accept the October minutes as presented to the board. J Pritchett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

**II. Executive Committee**

D Bailey-Taylor updated the board on the open appointments for the board which will be voted on at the December 4<sup>th</sup> Commissioners' meeting. Until that time the Tourism Authority will operate with six active members.

**III. Finances – October Financial Report – D Bailey-Taylor**

Month-to-date revenue for October was \$191,281.75. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$158,630.62. The net positive variance for the month was \$32,651.13. Year-to-date revenue was \$697,135.41. Year-to-date operation Expense was \$528,805.48. The Year-to-Date net positive variance was \$168,329.93. The September County 3% revenue was \$98,566.07. Smithfield's 2% Revenue was \$31,229.94. Selma's 2% Revenue was \$7,561.68. Kenly's 2% Revenue was \$2,346.01. Benson's 2% Revenue was \$5,503.31.

**IV. Special Projects Committee – Ben Cook**

B Cook stated that the Special Projects Committee had received one matching marketing grant request for the 2024 Classic Antique Power Farm Heritage Days for \$500.

*J Pritchett motioned to recommend to the full board to fund the matching marketing grant for 2024 Classic Antique Power Farm Heritage Days \$500. M McDonnell seconded. Motion approved.*

**V. Staff Report - D Bailey-Taylor**

D Bailey-Taylor stated that October was an extremely month busy with festivals, working with media, and industry partners' projects. D Bailey-Taylor noted that if anyone would like to see more statistics in the Monthly Staff Report, please let her know.

The Annual Report has been written and designed. E Dean put together the “Tourism Does That” video to continue to share with the community the importance of tourism and the work of the Visitors Bureau. Letting others know who we are and how we market the county. Both the annual report and the video are posted on the website, LinkedIn, and featured in this month’s newsletter.

D Bailey-Taylor shared that the emails sent in the Act-on software have an open rate of over 42% which is higher than the tourism industry average of 39%. The ***You Are Here Smithfield*** map has been printed and K Radford is currently getting it distributed around the county. The bureau has already received positive feedback from Sarah Edwards with Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC) and Hank Daniels, owner of the Sleep Inn Smithfield, on the new map with the improved graphic quality of the map. Also new in video production is the ***Get Outdoors*** video for recreation in Johnston County. It premiered on Tuesday and will be shared with Adrian O’Neal, Parks, Greenways and Open-Space Director with the county to post on his website. The staff will provide the video to other parks and recreation contacts via the Recreation and Sports Council.

D Bailey-Taylor noted the marketing staff has moved on from Fall Festivals to “Celebrate the Holidays” marketing for shopping and holiday events, and there will be several in-county media visits for the month related to holiday promotions. The bureau met with the leadership of the Town of Benson to submit the town as an overnight stop for the CycleNC for 2024. The event brings more than 800 people riding through the county and has been in Clayton and Smithfield in the past few years. Tourism Development projects include writing a new Marketing Plan for JoCo Grows Agriculture and completing the Benson Alley Project.

D Bailey-Taylor let the board know there are 35 children with the Johnston County Social Services Angel Tree project, and K Radford has sent out the sign up sheet to our tourism partners. Presents need to be at the Visitors Bureau by December 4th.

**VI. New Business**

**VII. Old Business**

**VIII. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Mark McDonnell, Secretary/Treasurer*

**Next Meeting  
Johnston County Tourism Authority  
Wednesday, December 13, 2023  
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**