

**JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
12 Noon, September 9, 2020
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices via Zoom**

Present: S Henley, M Mancuso, B Cook, C McLamb, M Worthington, M McDonnell, R Capps,
R Childrey, R Heilmann
Absent: C Lane, P Boucher
Staff: D Bailey-Taylor, A Phillips

I. Call to Order – S Henley, Chairperson

S Henley called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm and stated that a quorum was present.

S Henley stated that the meeting was being held by remote participation with a quorum present.

With no corrections the agenda was adopted. S Henley also asked for any possible Conflict of Interest concerning the agenda. None were heard.

S Henley asked for a motion to accept the August minutes that were previously sent to the board.

M Mancuso motioned to accept the August minutes with corrections noted. M McDonnell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Executive Committee

S Henley asked D Bailey-Taylor to share update board appointment. D Bailey-Taylor stated that the following board members were eligible for reappointment by the county: R Heilmann, R Childrey, P Boucher and C Lane. Each member should have received a letter from the county and have until September 22nd to reapply to continue for another 3-year term.

D Bailey-Taylor also shared that the Johnston County HR Remote Work Agreement was approved by the County Commissioners and she would share that policy with the Authority Board for review and adoption. S Henley stated the bureau was doing a good job and working in a timely manner to share information.

III. Finances – August Financials - D Bailey-Taylor

Month-to-Date Revenue for August was \$103,441.20. Month-to-Date Operation Expense was \$76,717.37. Net gain for the month was \$26,723.83. Year-to-Date Revenue was \$179,771.89. Year-to-Date Operation Expense was \$143,037.57. Year-to-Date gain was \$36,734.32. The July County 3% revenue was \$59,446.47. Smithfield's July Revenue was \$16,411.57. Selma's July Revenue was \$5,424.76. Kenly's July Revenue was \$1,993.00. Benson's July Revenue was \$4,405.61.

D Bailey-Taylor informed the board that the bureau is operating at a 38% reduction in revenues from last year, which seems in line with other NC bureaus.

III. Staff Update during Covid-19

D Bailey-Taylor reported the staff continues working from home with a rotation that has one person in the office at a time.

D Bailey-Taylor is working with *Our State Magazine* on a grant with some email marketing and additional travel directory ads.

D Bailey-Taylor also stated that starting in September, October, and November, ReachLocal would turn on geofencing at the NC Welcome Centers. This will utilize a \$3,000 credit that we currently have with them from campaigns paused back in March. Plans are being made to slowly turn back on Google ad words and Facebook promotions to drive traffic to the website. Focus of marketing is recreation, outdoor spaces, and the Count on Me NC travel safely campaign.

D Bailey-Taylor is working with VisitNC's Marketing Credit Program for digital marketing as well as some print, social, website content campaigns, and digital billboards. All campaigns must run between October 1 and December 30. This is a credit program so no funds will be received or expended by the bureau. There is an additional grant opportunity with NCTIA which will be either \$10,000 or \$15,000 for additional marketing campaigns, which are not currently budgeted. This grant would be remitted to the bureau, as a third-party recipient of CARES act with reporting of expenditures required.

The staff continues to work on the website audit and the new marketing plan creative for website and social messaging. Museums venues are beginning to be open to the public with reduced capacity. Ava Gardner, Heritage Center and Bentonville are back open, M Worthington reported they have several weddings to host and plan to be open in two weeks. Cycle NC has rescheduled for October 2021 and contracts are being signed now with hotels. The Smithfield Selma Map inventory is underway as inventory is low for this brochure and it needs to be reprinted. The Hampton Inn in Selma has changed flags and is now a Ramada by Wyndham. The new Hampton Inn Smithfield is still scheduled to open in October 2020. The board asked about the construction next to Best Western in Smithfield, and D Bailey-Taylor informed the board that would be a Tru Hotel by Hilton, which will open in Fall 2021.

VIII. Old Business

M McDonnell updated the board on the opening date for the Old North State Food Hall, which is planned for 1st quarter 2021 and development of the hotel continues.

IX. New Business

None.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Scotty Henley, Chairperson*

**Next Meeting
Johnston County Tourism Authority
October 14, 2020
Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices - 12 Noon**