

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024
9:00 A.M.
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MANTEO, NC 27954**

ATTENDING: Monica Thibodeau, Chair; David Hines, Vice Chair; Dennis Robinson, Assistant Treasurer; Mark Ballog, Terry Gray, Richard Hess, Tess Judge, Wally Overman, Mike Siers, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Tod Clissold; Treasurer; Tonia Cohen, Secretary; Mark Batenic and John Head.

STAFF:

Lee Nettles, Executive Director
Diane Bognich, Director of Administration
Amy Wood, Clerk to the Board/Administrative Specialist
Lorrie Love, Tourism Sales and Events Manager
Aaron Tuell, Public Relations Manager
Jeff Schwartzberg, Community Engagement Manager

OTHERS ATTENDING: Luke Halton, OBX Way; Jack McCombs Chief Master Sergeant, USAF (Retired), Carol McCombs, and Rita Seelie Ayers, US Air Force Heritage Memorial to Memorial Bicycle Event.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. The Board then recited the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

Vice Chair David Hines led the meeting until the arrival of Chair Thibodeau.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Ms. Judge moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Gray moved to approve the meeting minutes from October 17, 2024 meeting. Second by Mr. Hess. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Jack McCombs made a presentation about the Memorial to Memorial Bicycle Event (on file).

Chair Thibodeau arrived at 9:20 a.m.

STEERING/CHAIR'S REPORT: Lee Nettles and Diane Bognich reviewed the Tourism Impact Grant (TIG) process and the work of the Committee; asking to exclude the recommended award for the Traffic Light in the Town of Nags Head as the Town and North Carolina Department of Transportation were working on another option for the traffic light.

Mr. Siers moved to exclude the Nags Head Traffic Light from the recommended awards. Second by Mr. Hines. Second by Mr. Hess. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

STEERING/CHAIR’S REPORT (continued): The Board reviewed the following recommended TIG awards:

Organization	Project	Project Amount	Recommended Award
Avon Property Owners Assoc.	Boardwalk replacement of public beach accesses on Antillas and Gull Cry Roads	\$94,200.00	\$54,000.00
Chicamacomico Historical Assoc.	1874 Life Saving Station, Phase II	\$169,250.00	\$125,000.00
Dare County Arts Council	50 Years on the Outer Banks, panel printing	\$130,000.00	\$4,000.00
Friends of Jockey’s Ridge	Points of Interest Trail Markers	\$75,000.00	\$50,000.00
Town of Kill Devil Hills	West Martin & Swan Street Sidewalks	\$484,935.00	\$240,000.00
Town of Kitty Hawk	Message Board	\$27,490.00	\$27,490.00
	Crosswalk Lighting on Beach Road	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Town of Manteo	Cartwright Park Improvements	\$500,000.00	\$250,000.00
Town of Nags Head	W. Baymeadow Drive Sidewalk	\$70,850.00	\$53,137.00
	Living Shoreline <i>*award contingent on no impacts to permits and construction of Soundside Boardwalk</i>	\$450,000.00	\$100,000.00*
	W. Windjammer Sidewalk	\$165,450.00	\$124,087.00
Town of Southern Shores	NC 12 Multi Use Path	4185,950.28	\$91,533.67
	<i>Total Recommended Award Amount</i>		<i>\$1,159,247.67</i>

Mr. Hines moved to accept the recommended TIG awards as presented. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2024-2025 were up .34% compared to 2023-2024.

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES:

Lee Nettles noted:

- Printing and distribution of the 2025 Official Outer Banks Travel Guide
- The 2024 Tourism Summit was successful. He thanked Lorrie Love and staff for their hard work in putting together the summit. The Board discussed the summit, particularly the Outer Edge long form videos and plans for those to be shared publicly.
- New features on outerbanks.org include a booking engine and AI assistant for trip planning
- Marketing Dashboard and visitation

Jeff Schwartzberg reviewed the last Long Range Tourism Management Plan Special Committee meeting of 2024. The Committee will resume meeting in January 2025. He also noted the 2024 State of Tourism booklet.

Lorrie Love noted upcoming travel marketplaces and events at the Soundside Event site.

Aaron Tuell noted current and upcoming media coverage for the Outer Banks.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business before the Board.

NEW BUSINESS: Lee Nettles noted the letter of support for the Dare County Housing Task Force’s application to participate in the Carolina Across 100 “Our State, Our Homes” program.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: The Chair gave kudos to the staff for the Tourism Summit, noting the Pioneer Theater and the Town of Manteo were great locations for the summit.

Ms. Judge asked if there was any new information on Western North Carolina. Lee Nettles noted that, at the most recent North Carolina Travel and Tourism Board, counties in the western region were grappling with how to attract visitors to the areas that were open and ready to have visitors without impacting those area that were not.

Mr. Ballog noted the 12 Bars of Christmas and the Misfit Bars of Christmas kick off.

Mr. Hess reviewed the Outer Banks Seafood Festival, which was well attended.

SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Curtis H. Creech Boardroom, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices, One Visitors Center Circle, Manteo, NC.

The Chair asked if there was any further business before the Board. Hearing none, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

ATTESTED:

Amy S. Wood

Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board