

**RECORD OF MINUTES  
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD  
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025  
9:00 A.M.  
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
MANTEO, NC 27954**

**ATTENDING:** Dennis Robinson, Chairman; Tod Clissold, Treasurer; John Head, Assistant Treasurer; Tonia Cohen, Secretary; Mark Ballog, Mark Batic, Brenda Chasen, Terry Gray, Richard Hess, Tess Judge, Wally Overman, Mike Siers, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** David Hines, Vice Chair.

**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

Jeff Schwartzenberg, Community Engagement Manager

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** None.

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. The Board then recited the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Mr. Siers moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Hess moved to approve the meeting minutes from April 17, 2025 meeting. Second by Ms. Chasen. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments made. No written comments were received.

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** The Chair noted that 54 boats were registered and participating in the Hatteras Village Offshore Open.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT:** Mr. Clissold reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2024-2025 were up .87 % compared to 2023-2024. Board members discussed bookings for the late spring and summer and new rules being proposed by the North Carolina Realtors Association regarding licensing operators of Airbnb's.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET:** At 9:15 a.m. Mr. Hess moved to open the Public Hearing for the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget. Second by Mr. Siers. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

The Chair called for comments from the public. No comments were made. No written comments were received.

Mr. Hess moved to close the Public Hearing. Second by Mr. Batic. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (12-0). The Public Hearing closed at 9:16 a.m.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT (continued):** Diane Bognich reviewed the second draft of the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget, which included additional salary adjustment and funds for an additional [new] welcome sign at Aycock Brown Welcome Center.

**OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES:** Lee Nettles reviewed the thinking that led to, and the process for evaluating the StaySense booking engine. This process included meetings, discussions, and a poll of the short term rental companies (results of poll on file in the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices) The Board discussed the pros and cons of the booking engine, noting that there were technological issues that the company currently addressing. The Board reached consensus that it would not pursue the booking engine at this time.

Lee Nettles then reviewed the recent Marketing Committee meeting and planning for Fiscal year 2025-26 marketing and the upcoming Hampton Roads Show week-long focus on the Outer Banks.

Jeff Schwartzenberg noted that the Bureau had adopted a beach along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the first beach clean-up day would be May 28<sup>th</sup> [this was later postponed to June 3 due to weather], and participation in KidsFest at Roanoke Island Festival Park.

Lorrie Love noted the upcoming OBX Tourism Summit on November 6, 2025 at the Hatteras Marlin Club, the Ripe booking widget for hotel/motels soft launch, and the event site calendar.

Aaron Tuell noted “Top Ten” stories in Newsweek and Southern Living, ongoing work with the Hampton Roads show, and upcoming articles.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:** Lee Nettles reviewed the letter opposing tolls on the Hatteras Ocracoke ferry (on file) The Board discussed how other areas are tolled, the previous times a toll was proposed, if a toll would really have an impact on visitor spending, and state statutes on providing free access when alternate routes do not exist.

Mr. Overman moved to approve the letter opposing tolls on the ferry. Second by Mr. Hess. There was no further discussion. The motion carried 11-1 (nay: Mr. Head).

Lee Nettles reviewed that seismic testing and offshore drilling along the East Coast was a being considered once again and that previous resolutions from the Board opposed both offshore exploration/drilling and seismic testing.

Mr. Clissold moved to update Resolution 2018-1, opposing offshore exploration for natural gas and/or oil, and 2018-1, opposing seismic testing. Second by Mr. Overman. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Ballog announced that 36 restaurants were participating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Soft Shell Crab Week, and new billboard on Hwy 64 west promoting the 12 Bars of Christmas.

Ms. Cohen noted that the motels/hotels were preparing for the summer season.

Mr. Wheless noted the YouTube channel for Peter Santenello, and his interviews with people on the Outer Banks.

**SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in Curtis Creech Memorial Boardroom, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Office, Manteo, NC.

The Chair asked if there was any further business before the Board. Hearing none, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

**ATTESTED:**

Amy S. Wood  
Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board