

**RECORD OF MINUTES  
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD  
THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025  
9:00 A.M.  
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
MANTEO, NC 27954**

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

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Richard Hess.

**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  
Shannon Halko, Marketing Intern

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Philip Ruckle, *The Coastland Times*; Brian Burhans, Outer Banks Forever.

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.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Mr. Gray moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Overman. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Head moved to approve the meeting minutes from May 15, 2025 meeting. Second by Ms. Chasen. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

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

**STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT/CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:**

The Chair and Staff reviewed the following Tourism Impact Grant Extension Requests:

- Town of Kitty Hawk, requesting an extension to June 30, 2026 for the Highway 158 Multi Use Path Project, due to construction delays. Mr. Overman moved to award an extension to June 30, 2026. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).
- Outer Banks Forever, requesting an extension to June 30, 2026 for the accessible restroom and shower facility at the old Lighthouse Beach in Buxton, due to a change in the project to add more accessible facilities. Outer Banks Forever previously received an extension to October 31, 2025, and asked to withdraw that extension and asked to extend to June 30, 2026. Ms. Chasen moved to award an extension to June 30, 2026. Second by Mr. Siers. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Ms. Judge arrived at 9:06 a.m. Mr. Hines arrived at 9:07 a.m.

- Everyone's Playground, requesting an extension to June 30, 2026, for Everyone's Playground. Ms. Chasen moved to award an extension to June 30, 2026 due to timing of the construction. Second by Mr. Ballog. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (12-0).

Lee Nettles reviewed the proposed timeline for bidding and construction of the boardwalk at the Soundside Event Site. The timeline calls for bids to be opened in mid-July and work beginning mid-August (after appearing before the Dare County Commissioners in August for their consent on restricted fund expenditures). Work is expected to be completed by the end of January 2026.

The Chair remarked on the beach clean-up held on June 3, 2025. He thanked Jeff Schwartzberg for arranging the clean-up and thanked people who showed up to clean.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT:** Mr. Clissold reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2024-2025 were up 1.64 % compared to 2023-2024.

Diane Bognich reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget and Budget Ordinance. Following review, Mr. Batenic moved to adopt the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (12-0).

**OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES:** Lee Nettles:

- introduced Shannon Halko, current intern in the Marketing Department, with a focus on digital marketing
- noted the 88<sup>th</sup> season of The Lost Colony, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jockey's Ridge, opening of the renovated Sanderling and Theodosia restaurant, and completion of the bike path around the grounds of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse
- noted recent week long run on the Hampton Roads Show, which featured The Outer Edge stories and interviews with industry partners
- reviewed the marketing dashboard and visitation numbers

Jeff Schwartzberg gave a recap of:

- the June 11, 2025 Long Range Tourism Management Plan Special Committee meeting
- appearances/interviews on The Sitting Duck (podcast) and CSI Science on the Sound lecture series
- release of *The Voluntourism Experience* video series

Lorrie Love reported:

- Kill Devil Grill was the winner of Soft-Shell Week 2025. There were 36 participating restaurants in this year's event.
- progress with Ripe, the booking engine for Hotel/Motels and B&B's
- the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual OBX Tourism Summit will be held at the Hatteras Marlin Club on Thursday, November 6, 2025
- work and upcoming events at the Soundside Event Site

Aaron Tuell reported:

- Outer Banks Take Over Week on the Hampton Roads Show June 9-13, 2025. Each day featured one of the Outer Edge Series, followed by interviews with staff and industry partners.
- Media coverage/articles with BBC.co.uk, *Travel & Leisure*, *Southern Living*, and *South Park Magazine*

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

**NEW BUSINESS:** There was no new business before the Board.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Clissold noted his experience with the beach clean-up day. Mr. Head noted people were booking short term rentals later but the numbers looked strong, that some property owners were beginning to turn their properties from Airbnb's to long term rentals, and local opposition to House Bill 442. Lee Nettles noted that staff had received the letter from Dare County stating their opposition to the bill and would write a letter or resolution should the Board so desire. There was no firm indication either way from the Board. Ms. Chasen noted the season was picking up and reminded people to watch for bikes along the roads. Ms. Judge spoke about her recent visit to western North Carolina and the work still needed there.

**SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 25, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in Curtis Creech Memorial Boardroom, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Office, Manteo, NC. [The July meeting was cancelled].

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

**ATTESTED:**

  
Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board