

**RECORD OF MINUTES  
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD  
THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 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, Richard Hess, Tess Judge, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Wally Overman, and Mike Siers.

**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 Schwartzberg, Community Engagement Manager  
Aaron Tuell, Public Relations Manager

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Philip Ruckle, The Coastland Times.

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. Hess moved to approve the agenda. Second by Ms. Chasen. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Ms. Chasen moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 27, 2025 meeting. Second by Mr. Batenic. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

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

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT:** Mr. Clissold reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2024-2025 were up .75% compared to 2023-2024.

The Board discussed the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Amendment. In the General Fund, \$29,700 is coming from the unappropriated surplus over the designated 60% reserve and moving into the Event Grants line item. In the Restricted Fund, \$1,775 is transferred from the unappropriated fund line item to the Fireworks Grant line item.

Mr. Head moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Amendment. Second by Ms. Judge. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

**STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT:** The Chair reviewed the Tourism Impact Grant Extension Requests.

- Town of Nags Head, Whalebone Park Restroom. The Town requested a six month extension due to construction delays and to lessen the impact of construction on park visitors. Mr. Hines moved to approve an extension to December 31, 2025. Second by Mr. Hess. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).
- Outer Banks Community Foundation, Community Terrace at the OB Center for Nonprofits, requested an extension to June 30, 2026 due to construction delays. Mr. Hines moved to approve an extension to June 30, 2026. Second by Mr. Batenic. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).
- Outer Banks Forever, Accessible Restroom and Shower Facility. Outer Banks Forever requested an extension through October 2025 due to construction timeline changes. Mr. Hines moved to approve an extension to October 31, 2025. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

The Chair and Staff then reviewed the following fireworks grants recommendations:

- Avon Property Owners Association \$14,875.00
- Town of Kill Devil Hills \$12,400.00
- Town of Manteo \$19,500.00
- Town of Nags Head \$15,000.00
- Total Recommended Awards Amount \$61, 775.00

Mr. Hines moved to approve the Fireworks Grant Awards as presented. Second by Ms. Judge. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

**GRANTS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Lee Nettles reviewed the work of the Grants Committee and the following recommended Event Grant Awards:

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Recommended Amount</i>
<i>A Pathway Forward</i>	<i>Halloween International Film Festival</i>	\$ 5,000.00
	<i>Live at the Pioneer</i>	\$ 18,500.00
<i>Bluegrass Island Charitable Foundation</i>	<i>Bluegrass Island Nights Concerts</i>	\$ 7,400.00
<i>Chicamacomico Historical Association</i>	<i>2025 Thanksgiving Week</i>	\$ 1,000.00
<i>Dare County Arts Council</i>	<i>2025 Outer Banks Veterans Week</i>	\$ 3,000.00
	<i>2025 Rock the Cape</i>	\$ 2,500.00
	<i>2025 Surfalorus Film Festival</i>	\$ 2,500.00
<i>Eastern Surfing Association OBNC District</i>	<i>2025 Easterns Surfing Championship</i>	\$ 15,000.00
<i>The Elizabethan Gardens</i>	<i>Beer Garden</i>	\$ 4,000.00
<i>First Flight Rotary Foundation</i>	<i>2025 Oink &amp; Oyster Roast</i>	\$ 1,000.00
<i>First Flight Track Club</i>	<i>Duck Turkey Trot 5K</i>	\$ 3,700.00
<i>Garage Band Charities</i>	<i>OBX Rod &amp; Custom Fall Toy Festival</i>	\$ 2,000.00
<i>Hatteras Community Sailing</i>	<i>Lighthouse Maritime Regatta</i>	\$ 2,000.00
<i>Hatteras Island Youth Education Fund</i>	<i>2025 Surfin' Turkey 5K &amp; Puppy Drum Fun Run</i>	\$ 3,700.00
<i>The Halloween Island Fund/OBCF</i>	<i>2025 Halloween Island</i>	\$ 13,000.00

<i>Nags Head Surf Fishing Club</i>	<i>2025 F. Boyden Youth Fishing Tournament</i>	\$ 1,500.00
	<i>2025 NH Surf Fishing Tournament</i>	\$ 3,000.00
<i>North Carolina Beach Buggy Association</i>	<i>2025 Red Drum Tournament</i>	\$ 5,000.00
<i>OBX Go Far</i>	<i>OBX Go Far Turkey Trot</i>	\$ 3,700.00
<i>OBX Pride</i>	<i>2025 OBX Pridefest</i>	\$ 5,000.00
<i>OBX Room in the Inn</i>	<i>The 12 Bars of Christmas</i>	\$ 20,000.00
<i>Outer Banks Conservationists</i>	<i>2025 Island Farm Pumpkin Patch</i>	\$ 4,000.00
<i>Outer Banks Home Builders Association</i>	<i>2025 Parade of Homes</i>	\$ 2,000.00
<i>Outer Banks Relief Foundation</i>	<i>2025 Misfits Christmas</i>	\$ 15,000.00
	<i>The Gobbler 5K &amp; Fun Run</i>	\$ 3,700.00
	<i>The Holiday Hustle 5K</i>	\$ 1,000.00
<i>Outer Banks Sailing Association</i>	<i>2025 OBX Multi-Hull Sailfest</i>	\$ 1,500.00
<i>Outer Banks Seafood Festival</i>	<i>2025 OB Seafood Festival</i>	\$ 30,000.00
<i>Outer Banks Sporting Events</i>	<i>Another Round 25k</i>	\$ 4,000.00
	<i>2025 Outer Banks Marathon</i>	\$ 12,000.00
	<i>2025 Outer Banks Triathlon</i>	\$ 5,000.00
<i>Town of Duck</i>	<i>2025 Duck Jazz Festival</i>	\$ 8,500.00
<i>Town of Manteo</i>	<i>Dare Day 2025</i>	\$ 13,000.00
<i>Vusic Heals</i>	<i>2025 Live from OBX Concert at RIFP</i>	\$ 15,000.00
	<i>2025 Live from OBX Fall Concerts</i>	\$ 15,000.00
<i>Total Recommended Award Amount</i>		\$ 252,200.00

Following discussion about the requests and recommended award amounts, Ms. Chasen moved to approve the awards as presented, except for Room in the Inn (12 Bars of Christmas) and The Halloween Island Fund/OBCF (Halloween Island). Second by Mr. Batenic. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Mr. Hines moved to recuse Mr. Clissold from voting on The Halloween Island Fund award. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Mr. Hines moved to award The Halloween Island Fund/OBCF \$13,000.00 for the 2025 Halloween Island event. Second by Ms. Chasen. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Mr. Gray moved to recuse Mr. Ballog and Mr. Clissold from voting on the Room in the Inn award. Second by Mr. Hines. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Mr. Batenic moved to award Room in the Inn \$20,000.00 for the 12 Bars of Christmas event. Second by Mr. Gray. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

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

- Ongoing work with booking engines for both hotel/motel and rental home agencies on [outerbanks.org](http://outerbanks.org)
- Outer Edge series viewing growth and potential to produce more episodes
- Marketing dashboard and visitation.

Jeff Schwartzenberg noted speaking to the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class and the East Carolina University Purple and Gold Bus Tour about the Long Range Tourism Management Plan and the Outer Banks Promise, and a collaboration with Coastal Studies Institute on a screening of 'The Cigarette Surfboard' at the Pioneer Theater on April 17, 2025.

Lorrie Love reviewed voluntourism efforts and a recent visit from University of Vermont students on an alternative spring break project at Island Farm. She also announced the location for the next Outer Banks Tourism Summit, which will be at the Marlin Club in Hatteras Village.

Aaron Tuell announced at Outer Banks was named "Vacation of the Year" for 2025 by Southern Living and the issue featured several locations (including Duck) throughout. Travel and Leisure and Conde Nast also noted the Outer Banks in their "Best" lists. He also noted work with the Hampton Roads show for a featured week and running the Outer Edge series.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Lee Nettles reviewed a revised letter (on file) in support the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Forest Service that emphasized the economic impact of those agencies and tourism in Dare County. The Board discussed adding how deferred maintenance and lack of personnel would also impact the services. Staff will bring a revised copy back to the Board in April.

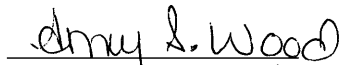
**NEW BUSINESS:** Ms. Cohen noted the economic impact on hotels of foreign tour groups cancelling their reservations.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Hess noted the State of the County and Regional Economic Forecast meetings. Ms. Chasen noted the Town of Duck purchased the Herron properties and would like to use materials from the Herron home to create an art feature for the town.

**SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17, 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 10:40 a.m.

**ATTESTED:**



Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board