

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024
10:00 A.M.
GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC MUSEUM
59200 MUSEUM DRIVE
HATTERAS, NC 27943**

ATTENDING: Monica Thibodeau, Chair; David Hines, Vice Chair; Tod Clissold, Treasurer; Dennis Robinson, Assistant Treasurer; Tonia Cohen, Secretary; Mark Ballog, John Head, Richard Hess, Tess Judge, Wally Overman, and Mike Siers.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Mark Batenic, Terry Gray, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

STAFF:

Lee Nettles, Executive Director
Amy Wood, Clerk to the Board/Administrative Specialist
Lorrie Love, Tourism Sales and Events Manager
Jeff Schwartzenberg, Community Engagement Manager

OTHERS ATTENDING: Maria Vann, Interim Director, Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum; Danny Couch and Natalie Kavanagh, Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum Board of Directors; Mary Helen Goodloe Murphy, and Luke Halton, OBX Way.

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 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 Mr. Siers. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Robinson moved to approve the meeting minutes from April 18, 2024 meeting. Second by Mr. Hess. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Maria Vann welcomed the Board and spoke about the newly redesigned Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum exhibits. Danny Couch and Natalie Kavanagh welcomed the Board and thanked them for all of their help with projects throughout Hatteras Island. Luke Halton noted his intern (from the Careers Beyond the Counter program) recently won a statewide outdoor photography contest.

STEERING COMMITTEE: Lee Nettles reviewed the newest Three Year Strategic Goals and the supporting steps for each goal. The main goals are:

1. Market the Destination in effective and innovative ways
2. Enhance communication [and] interaction with Stakeholder Groups and Community
3. Grow and enhance non-peak season event development
4. Pursue sustainable tourism growth by building community

The board discussed the goals and methods to achieve these goals. The Board reached consensus to adopt the Three Year Strategic Goals.

The Chair updated the Board on the status of the request from the Outer Banks Sailing Association. Following discussions with Staff, the Steering Committee, and the Board, the Sailing Association reconfigured their membership structure. The Steering Committee encouraged the Sailing Association to operate under this new structure for a year and consider bringing their request forward again in one year.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET: At 10:15 a.m., Mr., Hess moved to open the Public Hearing for the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget. Second by Ms. Judge. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

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 Ms. Judge. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0). The Public Hearing closed at 10:16 a.m.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: Mr. Clissold reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2023-2024 were up .69 % compared to 2022-2023 actual receipts, noting that Easter was earlier in the spring this year. The Board discussed how non waterfront Airbnb's were doing with bookings and if they were converting over to long term rentals instead. Some Board members noted that they felt this would be the deciding year on whether the properties would stay Airbnb's or move to long term rentals or sell.

Lee Nettles gave an overview of the second draft of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES: Lee Nettles gave a brief overview of the marketing efforts and results, noting upcoming Marketing Committee and all agency meetings. He reviewed the marketing dashboard. The Board discussed how social media and Google searches were changing how people found information.

Jeff Schwartzberg reviewed the activation plan for the recently approved Outer Banks Promise, the recent Long Range Tourism Management Plan Special Committee meeting, and an upcoming voluntourism day at the Elizabethan Gardens with Our State Magazine.

Lorrie Love noted the 2nd Annual Softshell Crab Week was seemingly a hit. She also noted increased trips from motorcoach groups and reviewed public relations efforts, on behalf of Aaron Tuell.

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

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

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: Mr. Robinson reported on the Hatteras Village Offshore Open and thanked the Board for their support of many projects on Hatteras Island, including funding for the sidewalks and Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum.

Mr. Ballog reported on Softshell Crab Week and how the restaurant industry was faring locally and nationwide.

SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Office, One Visitors Center Circle, Manteo, NC 27954.

The Chair asked if there was any further business before the Board. Hearing none, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

ATTESTED:



Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board