

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021
9:00 A.M.
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MANTEO, NC 27954**

ATTENDING:

In-Person: Jeff Pruitt, Chair; Tim Cafferty, Vice-Chair; Ervin Bateman, Treasurer; Monica Thibodeau, Assistant Treasurer; Doug Brindley, Bambos Charalambous, Jamie Chisholm, Leo Holland, Karen Loopman-Davis, Bobby Owens, Dennis Robinson, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Webb Fuller, Secretary; and Ivy Ingram.

STAFF (in person):

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
Stephanie Hall, Senior Content Coordinator

OTHERS ATTENDING:

In Person: Philip Ruckle, The Coastland Times; and Page Wiencek.

Via GoToMeeting: John DeLucia, Albemarle & Associates; and Ralph Buxton.

Newly appointed member Dennis Robinson was sworn in prior to the meeting.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Charalambous moved to approve the meeting minutes from September 16, 2021. Second by Mr. Holland. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Page Wiencek spoke about an event held at the Soundside Event Site. A vendor at the event was selling merchandise that featured crude language that he felt was not in keeping with the family atmosphere of the Outer Banks and violated the terms of the use permit. He asked the Board to investigate the matter further.

BOARDWALK DESIGN DISCUSSION: John DeLucia reviewed the conceptual drawing for the boardwalk at the Soundside Event Site, highlighting design features, potential permitting issues, and next steps needed.

Mr. Cafferty moved to authorize Albemarle Engineering to move forward with pre-scoping meeting(s) with the Department of Coastal Management and other state or federal agencies to explore permitting of the conceptual design. Second by Mr. Charalambous. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (11-0).

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT: The Chair introduced the following items:

- Tourism Impact Grant Award Recommendations: Lee Nettles reviewed the work of the Steering Committee in recommending the following Tourism Impact Grant Awards:

Organization	Project	Recommended Award
Chicamacomico Historical Association	Exterior Restoration of the 1911 Cookhouse	\$38,760.00
Friends of Jockey’s Ridge	Improve Park Access for Mobility Challenged Visitors	\$20,280.00
Town of Nags Head	Epstein St. Public Beach Access	\$250,000.00
	Bonnett St & Barnes St Sidewalk Extensions	\$37,898.00
North Carolina Coastal Federation	Jockey’s Ridge Shoreline Stabilization & Public Access	\$127,500.00
Outer Banks Forever	Aviation Trail Through Time Education Exhibit	\$21,250.00
Town of Southern Shores	Town of Southern Shores Transportation Data	\$30,260.00
	TOTAL	\$525,948.00

Mr. Cafferty moved to approve the Tourism Impact Grants awards as presented. Second by Mr. Holland. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (11-0). The recommended awards will go before the Dare County Commissioners for their consent as well.

- Long Term Restricted Fund and Tourism Impact Grants Amended Guidelines: Lee Nettles and Jay Wheless reviewed the proposed guidelines for the Long-Term Restricted Fund and the Tourism Impact Grants. Jay Wheless noted that the word “property” had been left off (inadvertently) from the Long-Term Unappropriated Fund Item G and asked to amend the guidelines to include it.

Ms. Thibodeau moved to approve the amended guidelines for the Long-Term Restricted Fund Grant and the Tourism Impact Grant. Second by Mr. Holland. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (11-0).

- Marketing Department Renovations: Lee Nettles reviewed the estimated costs for repairs and renovating the marketing department. If the Board agreed with the concept, the next step would be to get construction bids and return with these to the Board.

Ms. Chisholm moved to allow Staff to pursue the design as presented. Second by Mr. Cafferty. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (11-0).

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: Mr. Bateman reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2020-2021 are up 19.05% compared to 2019-2020 actual receipts. The Board discussed how the rental market was shaping up for 2022.

Diane Bognich reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Amendment. The amendment primarily provides a wage increase for hiring new part time staff and a slight increase for all current part time staff and includes a part time supervisory position at Aycock Brown Welcome Center; covers increased costs associated with masks and cleaning/supplies; and security upgrades to servers.

Mr. Holland moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Amendment. Second by Ms. Loopman-Davis. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (11-0).

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES: Lee Nettles updated the Board on:

- His role as a panelist in an Economic Summit held at Elizabeth City State University.
- His role with the North Carolina Travel Industry Association. He finished his term as President and remains on the Board as Past President.
- Seafood Festival was well attended. He noted that he has served on the Seafood Festival Board for several years, per the Tourism Board's request, and noted that he would like to step back from that role moving forward.
- Reviewed the Marketing Dashboard and Visitation numbers.

Aaron Tuell reviewed the ongoing work with influencers and travel writers, and upcoming and recently released articles about the Outer Banks.

Lorrie Love reported on upcoming events and sales mission shows. She noted that the bus tours were returning to the area, however, these groups were mainly senior since student travel is still limited.

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

NEW BUSINESS: The Chair referred to the statements made at Public Comment and asked Legal Counsel and the Executive Director explore the matter further, and report back to the Board on what could be done.

Lee Nettles noted the US Army Corp of Engineers was seeking public comment for dredging the Hatteras Inlet. After reading the proposed options and speaking with several stakeholders, proposed option C was the preferred option. Following this discussion, Mr. Bateman made a motion authorizing staff to submit [on behalf of the Tourism Board] a public comment in support of option C. Second by Mr. Holland. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: The Chair welcomed Dennis Robinson to the Board.

SET DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. in Curtis Creech Memorial Boardroom, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Office, Manteo, NC (virtual and in-person options available).

The Chair asked if there was any further business before the Board. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

ATTESTED:



Clerk, Dare County Tourism Board