

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

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ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY and CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Noon
Paul E. Fisher Gateway Building

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|-------|---|------------------------------|
| I. | Call to Order & Welcome | Stephen Kidd |
| II. | Board Meeting Minutes | Stephen Kidd |
| III. | Financial Report | James Meacham |
| IV. | Tourism Program of Work Report | Rowan Tourism Staff |
| V. | Trolley System Update | Stephen Kidd & James Meacham |
| VI. | Board Discussion: Dan Nicholas Park Partnership | |
| VII. | Additional Business | |
| VIII. | Adjourn | |



Tourism Development Authority
North Carolina

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**ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
Wednesday, February 18, 12:00 Noon
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Board Members Attending: Craig Pierce, Andy Maben, April Saylor, Therese Henderson, Susan Kluttz, Krista Sullivan, Kimberly Morgan, Annette Privette Keller
Not Attending: Stephen Kidd, Richard Reinholz, Sada Troutman (Maternity Leave)

Staff: James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Brooke Arrowood

Meacham called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the February meeting. It was noted that Board Chair Stephen Kidd was traveling and had asked Meacham to facilitate the meeting in his absence. Meacham reported that Richard Reinholz was also unable to attend due to the passing of his father in Germany. Board members were asked to keep Richard and his family in their thoughts and prayers.

Welcome and Introduction of New Board Member

The board formally welcomed Susan Kluttz, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Salisbury, as the newest RCTDA board member with introductions. Ms. Kluttz shared remarks regarding her background as former Mayor of Salisbury, her service at the state level in cultural and natural resources, and her enthusiasm for supporting tourism, arts, and economic development in Rowan County.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The January 2026 board meeting minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion to approve the January minutes as presented

Second: Krista Sullivan

Motion: Unanimous approval

Financial Report

Meacham presented the financial report stating current assets of approximately \$516,000, including \$310,000 cash on hand and \$201,000 occupancy tax receivables.

Fiscal year to date occupancy tax revenue (through January) was approximately \$876,000, essentially flat to budget (0.22% under). Meacham noted that occupancy tax exemptions related to Livingstone College housing impacted November and December figures; when adjusted, fiscal year to date revenue would be approximately 2.32% ahead of budget.

Meacham said that January 2026 projections indicate approximately 2% growth over January 2025, with early February trending positively. On the accrual basis fiscal year to date, revenue equals \$1.14M and expenses \$1.12M. Fixed assets were approximately \$3.8M. Meacham reported the interlocal agreement related to the Railwalk continues to be reduced by \$12,500 per month.

A discussion followed regarding trolley asset valuation and depreciation, with staff noting that final asset adjustments will be addressed during the annual audit.

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion for approval of the financial report as presented

Second: Krista Sullivan

Motion: Unanimous approval

Destination Marketing Report

Staff presented a revised reporting format organized around three strategic pillars which included building, telling, and engagement. January 2026 was described as a slower travel month due to weather with the focus on maintaining momentum following a record-breaking 2025.

Hotel & Lodging Performance

Sarah Michalec reported that January 2026 finished at 60.4% occupancy, which was ahead of last year by about 4%. Michalec reported multiple levels of disruption from the winter weather, but even with those impacts, ADR, RevPAR and Revenue were all up for the month. Michalec noted that through the first seven days of February, occupancy was 65.6%, which was down 2.9% compared to the same time in 2025. ADR was up over 2025 (\$112), which put revenue up 2.8% for the first 7 days of February.

Development & Capital Projects

Michalec reported that the Railwalk contractor punch list is completed less landscaping and some electrical work. The Archway signage installation is scheduled for late March. The light pole banners and Depot Street signage installation are still pending. Michalec stated that the Pavilion pressure washing, landscaping refresh, and shade installation are underway and will be completed before the dedication event in April.

Michalec reported that the data engine platform is nearing completion to consolidate organizational data. The Wayfinding signage installation is expected on March 19; and the website redesign is in progress with anticipated completion of late summer 2026.

Michalec asked the members to please mark their calendars for April 23 at 10:30 in the morning for a celebration of the Railwalk and the Farmers Market Pavillion.

In addition, Michalec reported that staff have been working on pricing and options for the path forward for the F&M Trolley System which will be discussed further later in the meeting.

Communications & Storytelling

Tara Furr reported that January marketing messaging emphasized emotionally driven winter storytelling, romantic experiences, and seasonal events. The digital influencer program was intentionally paused in January and February to reallocate resources for higher-impact periods.

Digital Performance

Brooke Arrowood reported year-to-date reach of approximately 581,497. Social media followers were approximately 56,000 with engagement of approximately 14,000. Website users and active users exceeded prior-year benchmarks. The E-newsletter subscribers total is 5,466, with an open rate of 34.28%.

Group Travel & Partner Engagement

Furr reported that the Traphill Coon Hunters event in January at the fairgrounds went well and attendance remained strong despite winter weather, and the group plans to return next year. The Rowan-Salisbury School System college student group (for job shadowing) went well, and this is a returning program.

Furr addressed a board question regarding motor coach tours, noting the segment's decline and low ROI compared to digital outreach.

Community & Partner Updates

Furr reported that staff visited Crafty Buffalo Kitchen & Taphouse which is now open in the former Railwalk Brewery location. Staff also attended the Chamber Annual Gala.

Furr reported that preliminary discussions were held regarding a potential revitalization of a Dragway facility in western Rowan County and that she has completed the annual partnership planning with the Kannapolis Cannon Ballers.

Brand Update

Furr was excited to report that the "Being Original" brand will celebrate its 10-year anniversary in November 2026.

Trolley Program Discussion

Staff provided a comprehensive overview of the trolley program following the loss of one trolley due to theft and fire.

Key points included:

- Replacement cost for a new trolley is approximately \$225,000 with a 14–16-month production timeline.
- Insurance proceeds of approximately \$71,000 will be received and they will be placed in capital reserves.
- Used trolley options were reviewed and deemed high-risk due to cost, mileage, and maintenance concerns.
- Staff expressed concern over loss of rental momentum during a lengthy procurement period.
- Recommendation from staff and Chair Stephen Kidd (as conveyed by Meacham) was to continue operating a one-trolley system, avoid purchasing used equipment, and only consider a new trolley if private funding becomes available to cover the remaining cost.

Motion: Therese Henderson made the motion to continue operating a one-trolley system; do not purchase a new or used trolley at this time; reconsider only if private funding becomes available

Second: Kimberly Morgan

Vote: Unanimous approval

Staff will meet with existing trolley sponsors to communicate the board's thought process and ascertain their input and consideration.

Other Business

Staff requested moving the March board meeting to March 25 due to a conflict with the State of North Carolina Tourism & Economic Development Conference.

Consensus: Approved by board members present.

Adjournment

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion

Seconded: Approved by consensus

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Pullium

Rowan County Tourism Development Authority

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis

As of February 28, 2026

Assets

Current Assets

Petty cash	\$	16.83	
First Bank Checking - 0436		33,396.34	
F&M Operating - 9224		3,973.78	
NC Capital Mgmt Trust		177,599.44	
First Bank Money Mkt - 4509		25,120.61	
Accounts Receivable		<u>217,520.00</u>	
Total Current Assets			<u>457,627.00</u>

Fixed Assets

Building		2,176,919.00	
Land		250,604.00	
Construction in Progress		154,684.86	
Railwalk Pavilion		1,093,158.36	
Railwalk		750,000.00	
Computers		21,736.52	
Furniture & fixtures		68,310.00	
Office equipment		23,278.13	
Trolley cars		319,880.00	
Accumulated depreciation		<u>(944,077.81)</u>	
Total Fixed Assets			<u>3,914,493.06</u>

Other Assets

Pension Asset		<u>48,396.00</u>	
Total Other Assets			<u>48,396.00</u>
Total Assets			<u><u>4,420,516.06</u></u>

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Retirement Withholding		1,660.08	
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See Accountant's Letter

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis

As of February 28, 2026

Federal and Fica Withholding	1,934.18	
State Withholding	268.00	
SUTA	32.80	
FUTA	41.41	
FSA Withholding	200.00	
Total Current Liabilities		<u>4,136.47</u>
<u>Long-term Liabilities</u>		
Interlocal Agreement - Rowan Co. (Railwalk)	650,000.00	
Pension Deferrals	85,085.00	
Total Long-term Liabilities		<u>735,085.00</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>739,221.47</u>
<u>Net Assets</u>		
Investment in fixed assets	2,615,032.00	
Restricted Fund Balance	274,236.00	
Retained Earnings	721,285.00	
Change in Net Assets	70,741.59	
Total Net Assets		<u>3,681,294.59</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		<u>\$ 4,420,516.06</u>

See Accountant's Letter

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Statement of Activities Actual vs. Budget - Accrual Basis

	8 Months Ended February 28, 2026 Actual	Current Year June 30, 2026 Budget	Current Year Over/(Under) Budget
<u>Income</u>			
Trolley Income	34,304.45	95,000.00	(60,695.55)
Occupancy Taxes Income	987,860.23	1,590,000.00	(602,139.77)
Partner Services Income	17,949.12	70,000.00	(52,050.88)
Holiday Caravan Parade Income	52,293.15	65,000.00	(12,706.85)
Miscellaneous Income	93,300.85	2,500.00	90,800.85
Investment Income	7,315.90	12,000.00	(4,684.10)
Gateway Building Income	122,443.53	168,500.00	(46,056.47)
	1,315,467.23	2,003,000.00	(687,532.77)
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries - regular	87,063.49	132,000.00	(44,936.51)
Worker's Comp and Liab Ins.	2,920.93	9,000.00	(6,079.07)
Miscellaneous	1,660.74	4,500.00	(2,839.26)
Professional Services	22,561.90	37,000.00	(14,438.10)
CVB Appropriation	867,342.81	1,144,000.00	(276,657.19)
Supplies & Equipment	508.94	4,500.00	(3,991.06)
Trolley	16,293.39	12,000.00	4,293.39
Tourism Development	84,479.48	400,000.00	(315,520.52)
Holiday Caravan Parade	52,708.76	65,000.00	(12,291.24)
Partner Services	8,581.50	26,500.00	(17,918.50)
Gateway Building	100,603.70	168,500.00	(67,896.30)
	1,244,725.64	2,003,000.00	(758,274.36)
Operating Income (Loss)	70,741.59	0.00	70,741.59

See Accountant's Letter

