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NORTH CAROLINA

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

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, Noon

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Stephen Kidd |
| II. | Approval of Meeting Minutes | Stephen Kidd |
| III. | Financial Report | James Meacham |
| | A. Tourism Market Update | |
| | B. Financial Report | |
| IV. | Tourism Program of Work Report | |
| | A. Destination Services, Sales, and Marketing | |
| | 1. Digital Program | Sarah Michalec |
| | 2. Trolley Program | Brooke Arrowood |
| | 3. Sales, Marketing and Communications | Tara Furr |
| | B. Tourism Development | Sarah Michalec |
| | 1. Wayfinding | |
| | 2. Railwalk | |
| | i. Rowan County & Rowan Tourism Interlocal | James Meacham |
| | 3. Agritourism | |
| V. | Additional Business | |
| | 1. FY2024 – 2025 Tourism Board Officers | |
| VI. | Adjourn | |



**ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 12:00 pm

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Krista Sullivan, Craig Pierce, Kimberly Morgan, Stephen Kidd, April Saylor, Sada Troutman, Therese Henderson, Vivian Hopkins, Karen Alexander, Richard Reinholz and Andy Maben

Not Attending: None

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

RCTDA Call to Order

Krista Sullivan called RCTDA to order at 12:03pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion for approval of the February 2024 minutes.

Second: Therese Henderson

Motion: Approved

Financial Report & Tourism Market Update

The Board reviewed and received an update on Rowan County Tourism's finances including reviewing occupancy tax collections, balance sheet and profit and loss statements to date. The Board discussed that the lodging market has improved significantly since the start of the year and the first couple of weeks of March are performing much better than January and most of February.

Motion: Richard Reinholz to approve the financial report as provided.

Second: Craig Pierce

Motion: Approved

Tourism Program of Work

Michalec reported that the email newsletter open rate for February was 35% with 4,921 subscribers. Website has undergone a series of small tweaks based on SEO recommendations. A long list of special offers have been added. Year to date there are 49,325 page views and 21,307 users. 13,400 of the users have come from organic search, showing that SEO is working.

Michalec reported the online package booking platform continues to work well with 29 reservations and 39 room nights year to date with 69% of those being package bookings. RIPE is very busy with all the new package additions for 2024.

Michalec reports that in social media, the top engaged posts for February were wayfinding sign in Cleveland, Black History Month and Wine and Dine on the Rails. Michalec reported that the blog continues to be one of the top visited website pages. In February there were ten new blog posts with 2,271 views. The African American Heritage blog was the top visited blog with 254 views.

Michalec reported that influencers continue to be utilized with good reach and engagement. In February Magnolia Megan covered Wine About Winter in Downtown Salisbury, Jenna Black covered Flynn's Village Grill in Gold Hill, and Jenna Faggart covered Kingpin Bowling in Downtown Kannapolis, as well as Waters Edge Restaurant at High Rock Lake. Year to date influencer impact is 461,288 views and 29,029 engagements. Total digital engagements for year to date are 103,500 engagements and 835,000 reach.

Arrowood reported year to date trolley bookings of 113, and there are 36 bookings occurring in the next 90 days. Revenue year to date is \$13,937. Arrowood briefly reviewed the list of rentals occurring in the next two months. Arrowood noted that staff just finished refurbishing the wooden trim. Arrowood noted that the remainder of 2024 is filling up quickly. Arrowood will also be attending the bridal expo at the Barn at Cedar Hill in hopes to book the remaining wedding weekends in 2024.

Furr reported 26 paid marketing placements were placed for the month of February. The marketing message continues to focus on storytelling to promote the brand, the destination, destination events and booking overnight stays within the county. Stay & play packages continue to be promoted to incentivize booking and increasing room nights. The generic Visa Gift Card package has produced 5 packages and 8 overnight stays and there was a new package offering with the NCTM, the St. Patrick's Day Train package. Furr announced that Day Out with Thomas package will be available again for 2024.

Furr reported that there were 2 event visits, 5 partner relationship visits and 3 PR engagements for the month of February. Furr reminded the attendees that the 3rd annual Hospitality & Tourism Celebration night was on May 9th at the Kannapolis Cannon Ballers and encouraged everyone to register to attend and invite their staff. An email invitation will be sent.

In group sales, Furr continues to work with groups, such as: Dragon Boat Festival, Southeastern Little League, Smokeout, and the Balloon Glow and Laser Show and assists them with their needs during their planning process. Furr reported that two new groups recently reached out and more details will be shared at the next meeting.

Furr reported that 2 tourism support requests were received in February. Partners have been happily working with staff to place the tourism lodging widget on the partner websites. Furr reminded the board that placing the tourism widget on the partner website is now a requirement for partners who are receiving tourism support funds. Furr reported that for the 2024 year ahead, staff will continue to promote upcoming Stay & Play packages, such as: Day Out with Thomas, Jiggy with the Piggy, Earth Day Jam, Cheerwine Festival, continue to promote overnight stays through storytelling, work with social media influencers on spring events, push spring events and Cannon Ballers spring and summer partnership. Staff will attend the Farmers Breakfast and EDC Annual Meeting.

Tourism Development

Michalec said that staff will meet with PGAV in the coming weeks to share first round of work and continuing planning for the launch of new agritourism products in line with the Tourism Development plan approved by the Tourism Board.

Michalec reported that on wayfinding, staff was waiting to hear back from NCDOT on the second round of feedback. In the meantime, staff are working to break the plan into sections to collect bids for completing the work. Bids will go out in April.

Michalec reported that the Railwalk Development Project is continuing. Staff met with the architect to establish updated pricing and next steps and are still working with property owners to finalize property transfers. There are three properties which liens associated with them due to debt obligations. Tourism's attorney is working with the property owners and lending institutions to release the small sections of the respective parcels that are in the Railwalk.

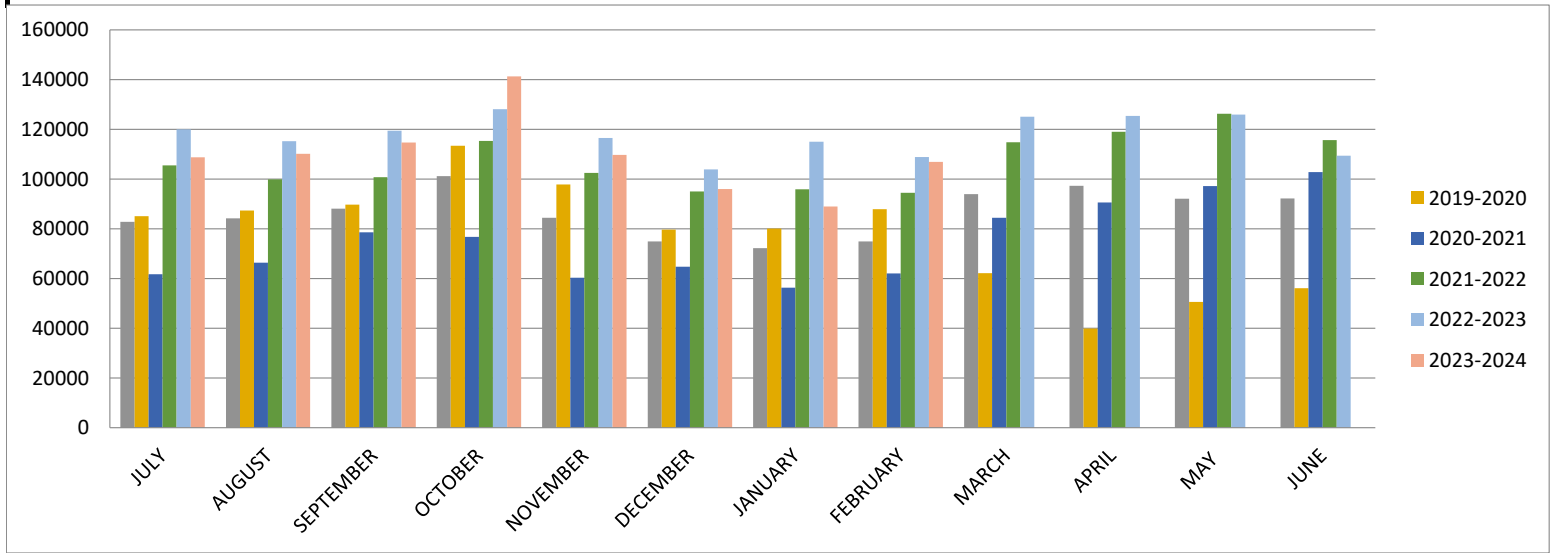
Additional Business

Meacham reported that at the April Meeting a slate of officers for FY2024-25 will be presented to the Board for their consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.
Respectfully submitted,
Lesley Pullium
Rowan County Tourism

Rowan County Occupancy Tax Receipts Collected (GROSS)

MONTH	FY19-20	FY20-21	%CHNG	FY21-22	%CHNG	FY22-23	%CHNG	FY23-24	%CHNG
July	85,062.04	61,737.08	-27.4%	105,514.79	70.9%	120,021.34	12.1%	108,732.65	-9.4%
August	87,388.13	66,399.96	-24.0%	99,851.17	50.4%	115,189.06	13.3%	110,177.63	-4.4%
September	89,694.58	78,562.08	-12.4%	100,792.04	28.3%	119,443.37	15.6%	114,690.69	-4.1%
Quarter Total	262,144.75	206,699.12	-21.2%	306,158.00	48.1%	354,653.77	13.7%	333,600.97	-6.3%
October	113,427.41	76,794.51	-32.3%	115,324.55	50.2%	128,088.16	10.0%	141,296.02	10.3%
November	97,848.24	60,357.00	-38.3%	102,438.16	69.7%	116,523.19	12.1%	109,684.96	-5.9%
December	79,686.64	64,749.41	-18.7%	95,874.73	48.1%	103,834.94	7.7%	95,959.89	-8.2%
Quarter Total	290,962.29	201,900.92	-30.6%	313,637.44	55.3%	348,446.29	10.0%	346,940.87	-0.4%
January	80,100.88	56,291.87	-29.7%	96,918.80	72.2%	115,064.17	15.8%	88,997.47	-22.7%
February	87,894.99	62,049.03	-29.4%	94,530.61	52.3%	108,890.30	13.2%	106,875.73	-1.9%
March	62,149.01	84,372.26	35.8%	114,826.05	36.1%	125,056.96	8.2%		
Quarter Total	230,144.88	202,713.16	-11.9%	306,275.46	51.1%	349,011.43	12.2%		
April	39,870.97	90,628.43	127.3%	119,032.67	31.3%	125,347.11	5.0%		
May	50,585.59	97,167.69	92.1%	126,307.46	30.0%	125,953.79	-0.3%		
June	56,142.85	102,792.30	83.1%	115,684.25	12.5%	109,364.77	-5.8%		
Quarter Total	146,599.41	290,588.42	98.2%	361,024.38	24.2%	360,665.67	-0.1%		
Adjmts Penalties									
Penalties									
Year Total	\$ 929,851.33	\$ 901,901.62	-3.0%	\$ 1,287,095.28	42.7%	\$ 1,412,777.16	8.9%		



Occupancy Tax Monthly Revenues 2019-2021-2022-2023-2024

	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	
January	\$80,100	\$56,292	\$96,919	\$115,064	\$88,997	
February	\$87,894	\$62,049	\$94,531	\$108,890	\$106,875	actual
March	\$93,891	\$84,372	\$114,826	\$125,057	\$115,000	projected
April	\$97,301	\$90,628	\$119,033	\$125,347	\$115,000	trending
May	\$92,105	\$97,168	\$126,307	\$125,954		
June	\$92,255	\$102,792	\$115,684	\$109,365		
July	\$85,062	\$105,515	\$120,021	\$108,732		
August	\$87,388	\$99,851	\$115,189	\$110,177		
September	\$89,695	\$100,792	\$119,443	\$114,690		
October	\$113,427	\$115,325	\$128,088	\$141,296		
November	\$97,848	\$102,438	\$116,523	\$109,684		
December	\$79,687	\$95,875	\$103,835	\$95,960		
Total	\$1,096,653	\$1,113,097	\$1,370,400	\$1,390,216	YTD	\$425,872 YTD

Rowan County Tourism Development Authority
Statement of Financial Position
As of March 31, 2024

Accrual Basis

	Mar 31, 24
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1052 · F&M Bank-Operating 9224	28,431.91
1020 · Petty cash	16.83
1050 · First Bank checking #0436	7,338.09
1065 · NC Capital Mgmt Trust	208,789.98
1070 · First Bank MM account-4509	12,766.55
	257,343.36
Accounts Receivable	
1201 · Accounts Receivable	252,557.46
	252,557.46
Total Current Assets	509,900.82
Fixed Assets	
1503 · RAILWALK PAVILION	506,594.36
1502 · Construction in Progress	23,766.03
1501 · Land	250,604.00
1500 · Building	2,176,919.00
1505 · Computers	21,736.52
1510 · Furniture & fixtures	68,310.00
1515 · Office equipment	23,278.13
1516 · Trolley cars	319,880.00
1990 · Accumulated depreciation	-706,002.81
	2,685,085.23
Other Assets	
1900 · Pension Asset	42,347.00
	42,347.00
TOTAL ASSETS	3,237,333.05

Rowan County Tourism Development Authority
Statement of Financial Position
As of March 31, 2024

Accrual Basis

	<u>Mar 31, 24</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2039 · United Way	-800.00
2035 · Retirement withholding	866.60
2100 · Payroll Liabilities	<u>2,140.91</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>2,207.51</u>
Total Current Liabilities	2,207.51
Long Term Liabilities	
2700 · Pension Deferrals	<u>55,846.00</u>
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>55,846.00</u>
Total Liabilities	58,053.51
Equity	
3050 · Investment in fixed assets	2,685,085.00
3105 · Restricted Fund Balance	239,730.00
3900 · Retained Earnings	234,895.55
Net Income	<u>19,568.99</u>
Total Equity	<u>3,179,279.54</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>3,237,333.05</u></u>

**Rowan County Tourism Development Authority
Statement of Activities Actual vs Budget**

Accrual Basis

March 2024

	<u>Mar 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budg...</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4350 · Tourism ARP Funding	0.00	41,666.66	-41,666.66
4070 · Misc and Ticket Sales	0.00	83.34	-83.34
4060 · Holiday Caravan Parade	0.00	4,708.33	-4,708.33
4100 · Fund Balance Interest	1,010.49	500.00	510.49
4010 · Occupancy taxes	135,156.71	116,666.66	18,490.05
4000 · Trolley Operations	6,607.20	5,000.00	1,607.20
4300 · Gateway Building Revenue	9,610.00	11,166.66	-1,556.66
4025 · Partner Services	9,701.54	5,000.00	4,701.54
Total Income	<u>162,085.94</u>	<u>184,791.65</u>	<u>-22,705.71</u>
Gross Profit	162,085.94	184,791.65	-22,705.71
Expense			
6510 · Holiday Caravan Parade Expen...	4,544.31	7,083.33	-2,539.02
6511 · Partner Service Expense	971.72	1,666.67	-694.95
6500 · Destination Development	7,746.59	62,500.00	-54,753.41
60001 · Marketing & Visitor Services			
6135 · Salisbury-Rowan CVB	110,989.79	87,500.00	23,489.79
6465 · Trolley	1,053.01	875.00	178.01
6070 · Miscellaneous	54.00	333.33	-279.33
Total 60001 · Marketing & Visitor Ser...	<u>112,096.80</u>	<u>88,708.33</u>	<u>23,388.47</u>
60002 · Operations & Administration			
6010 · RCTDA Operations Staff	9,502.85	10,000.00	-497.15
6185 · Supplies-Administration	0.00	333.34	-333.34
6040 · Worker's comp insurance	0.00	666.67	-666.67
6105 · Professional Services	3,642.75	2,666.67	976.08
6600 · Gateway Building Expenses	5,104.40	11,166.66	-6,062.26
Total 60002 · Operations & Administr...	<u>18,250.00</u>	<u>24,833.34</u>	<u>-6,583.34</u>
Total Expense	<u>143,609.42</u>	<u>184,791.67</u>	<u>-41,182.25</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>18,476.52</u>	<u>-0.02</u>	<u>18,476.54</u>
Net Income	<u><u>18,476.52</u></u>	<u><u>-0.02</u></u>	<u><u>18,476.54</u></u>

Rowan County Tourism Development Authority
Statement of Activities Actual vs Budget

Accrual Basis

July 2023 through March 2024

	<u>Jul '23 - Mar...</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budg...</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4350 · Tourism ARP Funding	0.00	375,000.00	-375,000.00
4070 · Misc and Ticket Sales	6,280.34	749.99	5,530.35
4060 · Holiday Caravan Parade	56,246.39	42,375.01	13,871.38
4100 · Fund Balance Interest	8,591.06	4,500.00	4,091.06
4010 · Occupancy taxes	986,651.11	1,050,000.02	-63,348.91
4000 · Trolley Operations	60,634.66	45,000.00	15,634.66
4300 · Gateway Building Revenue	90,073.97	100,500.02	-10,426.05
4025 · Partner Services	38,225.97	45,000.00	-6,774.03
Total Income	<u>1,246,703.50</u>	<u>1,663,125.04</u>	<u>-416,421.54</u>
Gross Profit	1,246,703.50	1,663,125.04	-416,421.54
Expense			
6501 · Tourism Capital Projects	7,234.89	0.00	7,234.89
6510 · Holiday Caravan Parade Expen...	89,376.63	63,750.01	25,626.62
6511 · Partner Service Expense	16,080.72	14,999.99	1,080.73
6500 · Destination Development	92,575.38	562,500.00	-469,924.62
60001 · Marketing & Visitor Services			
6135 · Salisbury-Rowan CVB	790,913.75	787,500.00	3,413.75
6465 · Trolley	10,400.16	7,875.00	2,525.16
6070 · Miscellaneous	4,111.29	3,000.01	1,111.28
Total 60001 · Marketing & Visitor Ser...	<u>805,425.20</u>	<u>798,375.01</u>	<u>7,050.19</u>
60002 · Operations & Administration			
6010 · RCTDA Operations Staff	92,021.77	90,000.00	2,021.77
6185 · Supplies-Administration	1,476.82	2,999.98	-1,523.16
6040 · Worker's comp insurance	7,459.00	5,999.99	1,459.01
6105 · Professional Services	27,412.07	23,999.99	3,412.08
6600 · Gateway Building Expenses	88,072.03	100,500.01	-12,427.98
Total 60002 · Operations & Administr...	<u>216,441.69</u>	<u>223,499.97</u>	<u>-7,058.28</u>
Total Expense	<u>1,227,134.51</u>	<u>1,663,124.98</u>	<u>-435,990.47</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>19,568.99</u>	<u>0.06</u>	<u>19,568.93</u>
Net Income	<u><u>19,568.99</u></u>	<u><u>0.06</u></u>	<u><u>19,568.93</u></u>

**Rowan County Tourism Development Authority
Statement of Activities Actual vs Budget**

Accrual Basis

July 2023 through June 2024

	<u>Jul '23 - Jun...</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budg...</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4350 · Tourism ARP Funding	0.00	500,000.00	-500,000.00
4070 · Misc and Ticket Sales	6,280.34	1,000.00	5,280.34
4060 · Holiday Caravan Parade	56,246.39	56,500.00	-253.61
4100 · Fund Balance Interest	9,546.18	6,000.00	3,546.18
4010 · Occupancy taxes	1,112,151.11	1,400,000.00	-287,848.89
4000 · Trolley Operations	69,306.44	60,000.00	9,306.44
4300 · Gateway Building Revenue	104,252.29	134,000.00	-29,747.71
4025 · Partner Services	51,356.88	60,000.00	-8,643.12
Total Income	<u>1,409,139.63</u>	<u>2,217,500.00</u>	<u>-808,360.37</u>
Gross Profit	1,409,139.63	2,217,500.00	-808,360.37
Expense			
6501 · Tourism Capital Projects	7,234.89	0.00	7,234.89
6510 · Holiday Caravan Parade Expen...	89,411.63	85,000.00	4,411.63
6511 · Partner Service Expense	17,340.63	20,000.00	-2,659.37
6500 · Destination Development	110,293.54	750,000.00	-639,706.46
60001 · Marketing & Visitor Services			
6135 · Salisbury-Rowan CVB	870,301.59	1,050,000.00	-179,698.41
6465 · Trolley	12,005.58	10,500.00	1,505.58
6070 · Miscellaneous	4,315.29	4,000.00	315.29
Total 60001 · Marketing & Visitor Ser...	<u>886,622.46</u>	<u>1,064,500.00</u>	<u>-177,877.54</u>
60002 · Operations & Administration			
6010 · RCTDA Operations Staff	105,786.01	120,000.00	-14,213.99
6185 · Supplies-Administration	1,676.82	4,000.00	-2,323.18
6040 · Worker's comp insurance	7,459.00	8,000.00	-541.00
6105 · Professional Services	30,476.27	32,000.00	-1,523.73
6600 · Gateway Building Expenses	92,868.79	134,000.00	-41,131.21
Total 60002 · Operations & Administr...	<u>238,266.89</u>	<u>298,000.00</u>	<u>-59,733.11</u>
6560 · Payroll Expenses	2,527.28	0.00	2,527.28
Total Expense	<u>1,351,697.32</u>	<u>2,217,500.00</u>	<u>-865,802.68</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>57,442.31</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>57,442.31</u>
Net Income	<u><u>57,442.31</u></u>	<u><u>0.00</u></u>	<u><u>57,442.31</u></u>