



NORTH CAROLINA

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

**Wednesday, August 20, 2025, Noon
Paul E. Fisher Gateway Building**

- | | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| I. | Call to Order | Stephen Kidd |
| II. | Tourism Board Members | Stephen Kidd & James Meacham |
| III. | Financial Report | |
| | A. Financial Report | James Meacham |
| | B. Lodging Market Update | Sarah Michalec |
| IV. | Tourism Program of Work Report | |
| | A. Destination Marketing | |
| | 1. Digital Marketing | Brooke Arrowood |
| | 2. Sales, Packages, Promotions and Trolleys | Tara Furr |
| | B. Tourism Development and Infrastructure | Sarah Michalec |
| VI. | Additional Business | |
| VIII. | Adjourn | |

**ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 11:30 AM
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Board Members Attending: Craig Pierce, Sada Troutman, Andy Mabry, Stephen Kidd, April Saylor, Therese Henderson, Annette Privette-Keller, Krista Sullivan, Kimberly Morgan

Not Attending: Richard Reinholz

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Sarah Michalec, Lesley Pullium

Guests: Representatives from the City of Kannapolis

RCTDA Call to Order

Chair Stephen Kidd called the Rowan County Tourism Development Authority (RCTDA) Board of Directors meeting to order at 11:30 AM.

Kannapolis Presentation

Representatives from the City of Kannapolis provided a comprehensive update on their downtown revitalization efforts and economic development projects, including:

- Over \$116 million invested by the city in infrastructure, with \$122 million in private development generated.
- Key attractions include Atrium Ballpark (500,000 annual visitors), Gem Theater (120,000 annual visitors, +37% from two years ago), and the Swanee Theater (15,000 visitors YTD).
- Innovative use of Placer.ai data to monitor tourism and foot traffic trends; 350,000 visitors to downtown Kannapolis over the last year (+20% YOY).
- The launch of electric shuttles, food halls, Game Show Arena Live, and new public art installations.
- Anticipated 156-room dual-branded hotel development.
- Village Park and other regional attractions are seeing consistent growth with concerts, festivals, and family-friendly activities.

The Board expressed appreciation for the presentation and continued partnership.

Approval of the Minutes

Stephen Kidd noted that all members had received the May 2025 meeting minutes via email.

Motion: Sada Troutman moved to approve the May 2025 meeting minutes.

Second: Craig Pierce

Motion: Approved unanimously.

Financial Report

Meacham presented the financial report as of May 31, 2025, reporting occupancy tax revenues are 11.3% ahead of FY 2023–24, totaling \$1.428 million YTD. April 2025 collections set a record, with May expected to exceed prior year by 3–5%. Meacham reported June occupancy shows signs of softening, but ADR remains strong. The fiscal year is projected to close with around \$1.575 million in occupancy tax collections.

Meacham noted balance sheet highlights reporting total current assets: \$730,000 (up \$135,000 from April). Accounts receivable is \$358,000 (including occupancy taxes, wayfinding, and capital reimbursements). Cash on hand is \$372,000 in unrestricted funds and net operating income is \$116,000 (excluding capital projects).

Meacham confirmed that the organization remains financially strong and ahead of budget for FY 2024–25.

Motion: Sada Troutman moved to approve the financial report as presented.

Second: Craig Pierce

Motion: Approved unanimously.

Public Hearing – FY 2025–26 Budget Adoption

Kidd called for the public hearing for the proposed FY 2025–26 budget.

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to open the public hearing.

Second: Sada Troutman

Motion: Approved unanimously.

Meacham summarized key budget highlights noting the budget is based on actual FY 2024–25 revenues without assuming growth with continued investment in digital marketing, capital projects, and overnight visitation strategies. Meacham reported that reserves are built into marketing and capital lines to accommodate economic shifts or new opportunities. Compensation adjustments for staff were included, updates to retirement contributions along with additional funding for partner support and new group

sponsorships. Meacham stated that a structurally balanced budget will allow for strategic flexibility and sustainability.

There being no public comment, Kidd called for the close of the public hearing.

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to close the public hearing.

Second: Sada Troutman

Motion: Approved unanimously.

Motion: Craig Pierce moved to adopt the FY 2025–26 RCTDA Budget as presented.

Second: Sada Troutman

Motion: Approved unanimously.

Tourism Program of Work Report

Arrowood reported that in May, the website saw 160,032 pageviews from 74,541 users. The main website photos have officially switched our website photos from strawberry season to the summer season, and all the website content is now geared towards summer blog posts, the packages currently being offered and upcoming events in the county. YTD, the eNewsletter has seen a 34.02% open rate and is at a total of 5,190 subscribers. For social media YTD there is a total following of 47,191 across all platforms which is about 10,000 additional followers to where it was this time last year, and a total engagement of 69,961. Top engaged posts in May included In & Around Kannapolis, N.C. blog post, June Cannon Ballers Ticket Giveaway, and Museum Experiences in Rowan County blog post on Facebook and the Fire Truck Festival Reel, Cheerwine Festival Reel, and the June Cannon Ballers Giveaway on Instagram.

As for the social media marketing plan through the summer the focus will be on promoting:

- July 4th Events
- The Farmers Market
- China Grove's Farmers Day Festival
- Summer Fun on the Farm at Patterson
- Day Out with Thomas & Polar Express Packages
- And other packages we're currently offering, including our VISA Rewards Package, Brew & Choo, and Summer Fun in Rowan County

The blog continues to be a top visited page on the website with 53 posts and 27,257 views YTD which is ahead by about 9,000 views in comparison to this time last year. This is largely due to the engagement with the top blog post of May which was the Guide to the 2025 Cheerwine Festival which received 2,208 views in May.

Arrowood reported the influencer program is still going strong and Furr secured partnerships with @_ashley_nez, @magnoliamegan, @triadmomsonmain and @jennaandhergents in the month of May. The YTD influencer impact is at 246,816 views and 9,215 engagements. Total Digital Impact YTD left off at 240,974 engagements across all platforms at the end of May 2025.

Arrowood reported the trolley program is still going strong, and Furr has been doing great with its continued growth. The YTD bookings for trolleys are at 120, with 8 rentals in the next 90 days. The YTD revenue is just shy of \$30,000. The rentals in the upcoming months include an African American Heritage Tour, Historic Tour, Farmers Day Festival, and a handful of others.

Paid Marketing Placements for the month of May were left at 42, which brings us to a YTD total of 165 paid marketing placements.

In May, Arrowood was able to make it out to both The Salisbury-Rowan Farmers Market and PYO Strawberries/Spring Fun on the Farm at Patterson which brings our YTD site/event visits to 10. Furr also has been moving along with her partner relationship visits and PR engagements and left off in May at 17 partner relationship visits and 9 PR engagements YTD.

Tourism Development and Infrastructure

Sarah Michalec reported that staff are still working on a few tweaks to the directional system in Granite Quarry and Spencer, plus 3 additional signs for Granite Quarry. The China Grove welcome signs were put in earlier this week. Staff have not received the go ahead from Landis to put in their last sign. This will finish out the system with 73 signs – 13 welcome and 60 directional.

Michalec stated, as we mentioned last month, work is taking place on eight additional directional signs for Downtown Salisbury for the Railwalk area. As well as 4 Downtown Gateway signs that Sada has been helping with. Between this and the signs for the Railwalk Development project. Rite Lite has been very busy!

For the Gateway Building, mentioned last month, an order has been placed for furniture for the visitors center to create a more engaging space. Some painting has already been completed, and graphics and some other design elements are being completed to finish it out. It is anticipated that most of this work will be completed, and the furniture will arrive this fall. Michalec also reported that some additional painting has been completed throughout the building in necessary areas to keep everything fresh.

Moving on to Railwalk, Michalec reports, it is a period where the underground stuff is complete, and items are being fabricated. There will be more visual changes happening later this summer and into early fall. Staff is working on shades for farmers' market. The proposal is currently with HPC, and those should be ordered and installed soon.

Michalec reported that the team is gearing up for the new website redesign to begin late summer or early fall with Simpleview. Everyone is looking forward to getting started and bringing some new elements to the site.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Pullium

Rowan County Tourism Development Authority

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis
As of July 31, 2025

Assets

Current Assets

Petty cash	\$	16.83	
First Bank Checking - 0436		21,303.05	
F&M Operating - 9224		3,029.21	
NC Capital Mgmt Trust		301,961.79	
First Bank Money Mkt - 4509		50,251.43	
Accounts Receivable		260,102.14	
Total Current Assets			636,664.45

Fixed Assets

Building	2,176,919.00	
Land	250,604.00	
Construction in Progress	611,247.63	
Railwalk Pavilion	506,594.36	
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	(803,083.81)	
Total Fixed Assets		3,925,485.83

Other Assets

Pension Asset	45,079.00	
Total Other Assets		45,079.00
Total Assets		4,607,229.28

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Retirement Withholding	1,643.66
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See Accountant's Letter

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis
As of July 31, 2025

Federal and Fica Withholding	1,923.18	
State Withholding	284.00	
SUTA	<u>14.97</u>	
Total Current Liabilities		<u>3,865.81</u>
<u>Long-term Liabilities</u>		
Interlocal Agreement - Rowan Co. (Railwalk)	737,500.00	
Pension Deferrals	<u>76,977.00</u>	
Total Long-term Liabilities		<u>814,477.00</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>818,342.81</u>
<u>Net Assets</u>		
Investment in fixed assets	2,615,032.00	
Restricted Fund Balance	274,236.00	
Retained Earnings	867,069.99	
Change in Net Assets	<u>32,548.48</u>	
Total Net Assets		<u>3,788,886.47</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		<u>\$ 4,607,229.28</u>

See Accountant's Letter

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

	1 Month Ended July 31, 2025 Actual	1 Month Ended July 31, 2025 Budget	Current Period Over/(Under) Budget
<u>Income</u>			
Trolley Income	1,155.00	7,916.63	(6,761.63)
Occupancy Taxes Income	133,500.00	132,500.00	1,000.00
Partner Services Income	3,066.99	5,833.26	(2,766.27)
Holiday Caravan Parade Income	0.00	5,416.63	(5,416.63)
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	208.26	(208.26)
Investment Income	1,042.84	1,000.00	42.84
Gateway Building Income	21,267.08	14,041.63	7,225.45
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Total Income	160,031.91	166,916.41	(6,884.50)
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries - regular	10,169.15	11,000.00	(830.85)
Worker's Comp and Liab Ins.	628.75	750.00	(121.25)
Miscellaneous	48.95	375.00	(326.05)
Professional Services	1,625.00	3,083.37	(1,458.37)
CVB Appropriation	107,836.32	95,333.37	12,502.95
Supplies & Equipment	0.00	375.00	(375.00)
Trolley	1,759.75	1,000.00	759.75
Tourism Development	472.75	33,333.37	(32,860.62)
Holiday Caravan Parade	1,420.18	5,416.74	(3,996.56)
Partner Services	200.00	2,208.37	(2,008.37)
Gateway Building	3,322.58	14,041.74	(10,719.16)
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Total Operating Expenses	127,483.43	166,916.96	(39,433.53)
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Operating Income (Loss)	32,548.48	(0.55)	32,549.03

See Accountant's Letter

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

	1 Month Ended July 31, 2025 Actual	Current Year June 30, 2026 Budget	Current Year Over/(Under) Budget
<u>Income</u>			
Trolley Income	1,155.00	95,000.00	(93,845.00)
Occupancy Taxes Income	133,500.00	1,590,000.00	(1,456,500.00)
Partner Services Income	3,066.99	70,000.00	(66,933.01)
Holiday Caravan Parade Income	0.00	65,000.00	(65,000.00)
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
Investment Income	1,042.84	12,000.00	(10,957.16)
Gateway Building Income	21,267.08	168,500.00	(147,232.92)
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Total Income	160,031.91	2,003,000.00	(1,842,968.09)
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries - regular	10,169.15	132,000.00	(121,830.85)
Worker's Comp and Liab Ins.	628.75	9,000.00	(8,371.25)
Miscellaneous	48.95	4,500.00	(4,451.05)
Professional Services	1,625.00	37,000.00	(35,375.00)
CVB Appropriation	107,836.32	1,144,000.00	(1,036,163.68)
Supplies & Equipment	0.00	4,500.00	(4,500.00)
Trolley	1,759.75	12,000.00	(10,240.25)
Tourism Development	472.75	400,000.00	(399,527.25)
Holiday Caravan Parade	1,420.18	65,000.00	(63,579.82)
Partner Services	200.00	26,500.00	(26,300.00)
Gateway Building	3,322.58	168,500.00	(165,177.42)
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Total Operating Expenses	127,483.43	2,003,000.00	(1,875,516.57)
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Operating Income (Loss)	32,548.48	0.00	32,548.48

See Accountant's Letter

Rowan County Occupancy Tax Receipts Collected (GROSS)								
MONTH	FY21-22	FY22-23	%CHNG	FY23-24	%CHNG	FY24-25	%CHNG	FY25-26
July	105,514.79	120,021.34	12.1%	108,732.65	-9.4%	133,587.33	22.9%	
August	99,851.17	115,189.06	13.3%	110,177.63	-4.4%	126,464.65	14.8%	
September	100,792.04	119,443.37	15.6%	114,690.69	-4.1%	133,536.09	14.1%	
Quarter Total	306,158.00	354,653.77	13.7%	333,600.97	-6.3%	393,588.07	15.2%	
October	115,324.55	128,088.16	10.0%	141,296.02	10.3%	172,137.56	21.8%	
November	102,438.16	116,523.19	12.1%	109,684.96	-5.9%	130,039.92	18.6%	
December	95,874.73	103,834.94	7.7%	95,959.89	-8.2%	99,625.62	3.7%	
Quarter Total	313,637.44	348,446.29	10.0%	346,940.87	-0.4%	401,803.10	13.7%	
January	96,918.80	115,064.17	15.8%	88,997.47	-22.7%	103,025.92	15.8%	
February	94,530.61	108,890.30	13.2%	106,875.73	-1.9%	106,109.21	-0.7%	
March	114,826.05	125,056.96	8.2%	123,858.60	-1.0%	147,523.28	16.0%	
Quarter Total	306,275.46	349,011.43	12.2%	319,731.80	-9.2%	356,658.41	10.4%	
April	119,032.67	125,347.11	5.0%	137,682.85	9.8%	139,033.06	1.0%	
May	126,307.46	125,953.79	-0.3%	144,974.27	15.1%	147,952.56	2.1%	
June	115,684.25	109,364.77	-5.8%	132,031.99	17.2%	137,619.17	4.1%	
Quarter Total	361,024.38	360,665.67	-0.1%	414,689.11	13.0%	424,604.79	2.3%	
Adjmts Penalties								
Penalties								
Year Total	\$ 1,287,095.28	\$ 1,412,777.16	8.9%	\$ 1,414,962.75	0.2%	\$ 1,576,654.37	10.3%	\$ -

