

# VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

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

Wednesday, August 21, 2024, Noon

- |      |  |                 |
|------|--|-----------------|
| I.   | Call to Order  | Stephen Kidd    |
| II.  | Approval of Meeting Minutes  | Stephen Kidd    |
| III. | Financial Report   | James Meacham   |
|      | A. Financial Report & Tourism Market Update                              |                 |
| IV.  | Tourism Program of Work Report   |                 |
|      | A. Destination Services, Sales, and Marketing                            |                 |
|      | 1. Digital Program   | Brooke Arrowood |
|      | 2. Trolley Program   | Brooke Arrowood |
|      | 3. Sales, Marketing and Communications                                   | Tara Furr       |
|      | B. Tourism Development   | James Meacham   |
|      | 1. Wayfinding  |                 |
|      | i. Award Procurement Wayfinding Sign Contract to lowest qualified bidder |                 |
|      | 2. Railwalk  |                 |
|      | 3. Agri-tourism development  |                 |
| V.   | Recognition of Board Members   |                 |
| VI.  | Additional Business  |                 |
| VII. | Adjourn  |                 |



**ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Wednesday, June 19, 2024, 12:00 pm

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Attending:** Craig Pierce, Kimberly Morgan, Sada Troutman, Therese Henderson, Karen Alexander, Richard Reinholz, Krista Sullivan, April Saylor

**Not Attending:** Vivian Hopkins, Stephen Kidd, Andy Maben

**TDA Staff:** James Meacham, Brooke Arrowood

**RCTDA Call to Order**

Krista Sullivan called RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

**Approval of the Minutes**

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

Second: Therese Henderson

Motion: Approved

**Financial Report & Tourism Market Update**

Meacham reported that occupancy tax revenues as of 05-31-24 for fiscal year 2023-24 on an accrual basis equaled \$1,262,957 and are slightly ahead of revised budget expectations. April 2024 occupancy taxes were 9.8% ahead of behind April 2023. April 2024 occupancy taxes were the highest ever collected for the month of April. April 2024 occupancy taxes were the second highest collection ever and year to date revenues on an accrual basis through April were \$81,629 ahead of expenses. Meacham reported total revenues equaling \$1,585,173 against total expenses of \$1,503,543.

Meacham reported total current assets of \$571,594 and were \$17,001 higher than the month ending 4-30-24 due to an increase in occupancy tax account receivable. Accounts Receivables equaled \$300,706 which predominantly includes April and May outstanding occupancy tax revenues. Cash on hand as of 05-31-24 equaled \$270,887 and was down \$11,455 from 4-30-24.

## **Consideration of the 2024-25 RCTDA & SRCVB Budget**

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to open the public hearing for consideration of the 2024-25 Budgets.

Second: April Saylor

Motion: Approved

Nobody from the public spoke during the hearing; hearing was advertised in local media and on tourism's website.

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to close the public hearing for consideration of the 2024-25 Budgets.

Second: April Saylor

Motion: Approved

Meacham briefly recapped the RCTDA and SRCVB Proposed 2024-25 Budgets that were discussed in detail at the May Tourism Board meeting.

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion to adopt the 2024-25 Budgets as presented.

Second: Sada Troutman

Motion: Approved

## **Tourism Program of Work**

Arrowood reported that the email newsletter open rate for May was 33.17% with 4,986 subscribers. The website statistics year to date reveal 160,094 page views and 72,408 users. Emphasis was on the summer season with website content geared toward the summer blog posts, the packages that are currently available and upcoming events.

Arrowood reported the online package booking platform continues to work well with 131 reservations and 175 room nights year to date with numbers doubling from the previous meeting. 86.3% of the reservations made through the platform are with package bookings, which is almost 10% higher than it was this time last month.

Arrowood reported that across social media total following of almost 37,494 across all platforms and total engagement of 47,665. Since December, the total Facebook following has seen a growth of 3.58%, Twitter a growth of 1.06%, and Instagram a growth of 7.31%. The TikTok account has shown growth of 16.98%. This is total growth across all platforms of 4.08% since December of 2023. Arrowood reported top engagement posts in May were the 2024 Cheerwine Festival Guide, the Old Stone House Tour, and the May Cannon Baller's ticket giveaway.

The social media marketing plan through the summer and until our next meeting in August will be focusing on promoting the following: Faith 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration, Salisbury Farmer's Market, Firetruck Festival, China Grove Farmer's Day, Summer Fun on the Farm (Patterson Farm), Day Out with Thomas and Polar Express Packages and all of the many other stay and play packages offered.

The blog continues to be a top visited page on the website with YTD total of 41 posts and 18,722 views which has gone up by about 8,000 since our last board meeting. Arrowood stated that this is largely due to the engagement with our top blog post of May which was once again, the 2024 Cheerwine Festival Guide which received 3,882 views in May.

Arrowood reported that the influencer program is still going strong. Year to Date influencer impact is 45,929 engagements with a total of 854,523 views. Total year-to-date digital engagements were 274,054 engagements and a reach of 1,750,705 at the end of May.

Arrowood reported that in group sales, the Southeastern Little Lead Tournament will take place July 19-22<sup>nd</sup>. Meacham reviewed 2023-24 and upcoming group business and large event revenues and room night stats.

Arrowood reported that the Trolleys continue to do well with year-to-date bookings of 123, bookings over the next 90 days of 26 and 2024 year to date revenue of \$27,666. Fiscal year 2023-24 year to date revenue totaled \$82,798. Over the next 90 days, the trolleys are rented out for weddings, Historic Downtown Salisbury tours, the NC Transportation Museum’s Fire Truck Festival, China Grove Farmer’s Day Festival and the Dragon Boat Festival.

**Tourism Development**

Meacham provided an update on the welcome and wayfinding signage project. The project was broken into two parts, the first one being an informal construction bid for fabrication and installation all of the welcome signs. Ritelite Signs from Concord NC, which is a historically an under-utilized business, was the lowest bidder at \$141,000.

Part two involves a formal procurement bid (sealed) for the purchase, fabrication and installation of wayfinding directional signs. Three bids were received with all above the remaining amount of ARPA funds left in the budget. With a formal procurement bid there are a couple of options to take on the second part of this project. Meacham reviewed several options available for the board’s consideration and feedback.

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion not to accept the current bids and to have staff rebid part two, the formal procurement bid for the directional signs by altering the project and decreasing the number of directional signs by 15%.

Second: Kimberly Morgan

Motion: Approved.

Meacham reported that the TDA has finalized closing on the RailWalk property as authorized by the board. Ramsey Burgin Smith should have the bid documents ready in August. Once reviewed, the project will go out for bids. Meacham thanked Commissioner Pierce and the County Commission for their assistance with the RailWalk project.

The meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Lesley Pullium

SRCVB

**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%
<b>Quarter Total</b>	<b>262,144.75</b>	<b>206,699.12</b>	<b>-21.2%</b>	<b>306,158.00</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>354,653.77</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>333,600.97</b>	<b>-6.3%</b>
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%
<b>Quarter Total</b>	<b>290,962.29</b>	<b>201,900.92</b>	<b>-30.6%</b>	<b>313,637.44</b>	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>348,446.29</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>346,940.87</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
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%	123,858.60	-1.0%
<b>Quarter Total</b>	<b>230,144.88</b>	<b>202,713.16</b>	<b>-11.9%</b>	<b>306,275.46</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>349,011.43</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>319,731.80</b>	<b>-9.2%</b>
April	39,870.97	90,628.43	127.3%	119,032.67	31.3%	125,347.11	5.0%	137,682.85	9.8%
May	50,585.59	97,167.69	92.1%	126,307.46	30.0%	125,953.79	-0.3%	144,974.27	15.1%
June	56,142.85	102,792.30	83.1%	115,684.25	12.5%	109,364.77	-5.8%	132,031.99	17.2%
<b>Quarter Total</b>	<b>146,599.41</b>	<b>290,588.42</b>	<b>98.2%</b>	<b>361,024.38</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>360,665.67</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>414,689.11</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
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Penalties									
<b>Year Total</b>	<b>\$ 929,851.33</b>	<b>\$ 901,901.62</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	<b>\$ 1,287,095.28</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>\$ 1,412,777.16</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>\$ 1,414,962.75</b>	<b>0.2%</b>

