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

Wednesday, September 18, 2024, Noon

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|------|---|----------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Stephen Kidd |
| | A. Welcome New Board Member | |
| 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 Operations | Sarah Michalec |
| | 2. Trolley Program | Tara Furr |
| | 3. Sales, Marketing and Communications | Tara Furr |
| | B. Tourism Development and Infrastructure | Sarah Michalec |
| | 1. Wayfinding | |
| | 2. Gateway | |
| | 3. Agri-tourism development | |
| | 4. Railwalk | |
| VI. | Additional Business | |
| VII. | Adjourn | |



ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, August 21, 2024, 12:00 pm

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Craig Pierce, Kimberly Morgan, Karen Alexander, Richard Reinholz, Krista Sullivan, April Saylor, Vivian Hopkins, Stephen Kidd,

Not Attending: Sada Troutman, Therese Henderson, Andy Maben

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Brooke Arrowood, Tara Furr

RCTDA Call to Order

Stephen Kidd called RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes

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

Second: Krista Sullivan

Motion: Approved

Financial Report & Tourism Market Update

Meacham reported that the updated financials have not been received from the accountant's office. Meacham gave some key highlights and a brief review of the occupancy tax revenue chart noting a strong April, May and June. Fiscal year revenues for 2023-24 surpassed 2022-23. Meacham reports that June 2024 was the best June ever and July 2024 is up from the previous year. RevPar also continues to be up for the local lodging properties. Meacham stated that when the financials are received, he will pass along the monthly financial summary to the board via email.

Tourism Program of Work

Arrowood reported that the email newsletter open rate for year to date was 28.49% with 4,998 subscribers. The website stats year to date there are 251,200 page views and 110,798 users. Emphasis is on the summer season with website content geared toward the summer blog posts, the packages that are currently available and upcoming events and will be transitioning to the fall season in late August.

Arrowood reported the online package booking platform continues to work well with 257 reservations and 358 room nights year to date with the numbers continuing to increase monthly. 89.9% of the reservations made

through the platform are with package bookings, which is also up from the previous higher than this time last month.

Arrowood reported that across social media total following of almost 39,503 across all platforms and total engagement of 80,690. Arrowood reported that Facebook led the way with the most recent growth. Arrowood reported top engagement posts in June & July included highlight of the 4th annual fireworks at NCTM, Cherry Resorts Charlotte Observer feature article post and the Cannon Ballers giveaway.

The blog continues to be a top visited page on the website with YTD total of 57 posts and 29,301 views which has gone up by about 11,000 since our last board meeting. Arrowood stated that this is largely due to the engagement with our top blog post being the 4th of July in Rowan County blog post which featured the events around the county.

Arrowood reported that the influencer program is still going strong. Jenna covered the new Towel City Tavern in Kannapolis. Arrowood shared that she is seeing more users post about the destination on Instagram reels and TikTok as well and she shared several of those with the board. Year to Date influencer impact is 49,875 engagements with a total of 934,811 views. Total year-to-date digital engagements were 412,490 engagements and a reach of 2,247,172 at the end of July. Arrowood stated that future marketing plans include promoting end of summer and fall events such as Fall Fun on the Farm, German Fest, Rowan County Fair, Autumn Jubilee, OctTour and Halloween events. Upcoming blogs topics will include winter weddings, Family Fun in Rowan, Guide to Bell Tower Brew Fest, Haunted Trails, Autumn Jubilee and more.

Arrowood reported that the Trolleys continue to do well with year-to-date bookings of 134, which is right at the benchmark of 140. Trolley bookings over the next 90 days of 30 and 2024 year to date revenue of \$42,525. Over the next 90 days, the trolleys are rented out for weddings, Historic Downtown Salisbury tours, Novant Health Employee event, German Fest, Leadership Rowan, Art Crawl in Downtown Statesville and multiple other fall events.

Furr reported 71 total paid marketing placements in the first two summer months of June and July. There is a lot of momentum going into the stay and play packages. Furr reported year to date 264 packages and 374 room nights associated with those thus far. Packages in place over the late summer and fall include Balloon Glow, The Polar Express, Visa Package and DOWT, Bell Tower Brewfest, Autumn Jubilee.

Furr reported Arrowood has completed 13 event visits year to date and Furr has completed 26 partner visits. PR engagements year to date were 26 and include press releases, media inquiries and media related communication. Furr said she was very happy about the Airbnb list released in July and the #1 wished for property in North Carolina was the Cherry Treesort.

Furr reported another successful group sales year and thanked the hoteliers for their assistance with the Southeastern Little League Tournament in July. Furr reported 538 trackable room nights associated with the event. The Smoke-out takes place in September and there are 95 direct room nights that will be associated with the group this year. Furr reported the Balloon Glow and Laser Show at the Fairgrounds in its second year coming in November. NC Main Street and State Historic Preservation coming in mid- November. Furr reported that Cherry Treesort is hosting a micro wrestling event on November 3rd.

Furr reported fall marketing will emphasize agri-tourism, the overnight stay packages, and all of the wonderful fall events that will take place across the county.

Tourism Development

Meacham reported that there are three separate capital projects going on at the same time which is exciting. Meacham said that the partnership relationship with Rowan County has allowed for much of this growth in capital related projects.

Regarding wayfinding, Meacham reported that staff rebid part two, the formal procurement bid for wayfinding portion of the directional signs as directed by this board at the June meeting. Two bids were received, and both came within the remaining fund amount available. Sign Connect and Ritelite were the two bidders. Meacham said that staff recommends Ritelite, a historically under-utilized business from Concord, NC that is currently doing the welcome signs, and the lowest bidder at a cost of \$298,185.

Motion: Krista Sullivan made the motion to award the procurement wayfinding sign contract to Ritelite at a cost of \$298,185.

Second: Craig Pierce

Motion: Approved.

Meacham reported that the TDA just completed the last meeting with the engineers on the RailWalk and staff should have certified drawings to go to bid on this project shortly.

Meacham reported that the long-term strategic development plan for argi tourism is moving along well at Patterson Farm. There have been some new investments made at the Farm and new attractions and slides have been added. Meacham encouraged everyone to stop by Patterson Farm and see the additions.

Meacham thanked the board for their support on all the capital projects underway and recognized two RCTDA Board members for their service.

Meacham recognized Vivian Hopkins for her dedicated service to the Rowan County Tourism board and thanked her for her many years of tourism support in Gold Hill over the years.

Meacham also recognized Krista Sullivan for her leadership and service to the RCTDA Board over the last 30 years.

The meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Lesley Pullium

SRCVB

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis
As of August 31, 2024

Assets

Current Assets

Petty cash	\$	16.83	
First Bank Checking - 0436		147,592.83	
F&M Operating - 9224		5,376.03	
NC Capital Mgmt Trust		239,586.47	
First Bank Money Mkt - 4509		12,133.20	
Accounts Receivable		135,000.00	
Prepaid Expenses		2,586.09	
Total Current Assets		542,291.45	542,291.45

Fixed Assets

Building		2,176,919.00	
Land		250,604.00	
Construction in Progress		23,766.03	
Railwalk Pavilion		506,594.36	
Computers		21,736.52	
Furniture & fixtures		68,310.00	
Office equipment		23,278.13	
Trolley cars		319,880.00	
Accumulated depreciation		(706,002.81)	
Total Fixed Assets		2,685,085.23	2,685,085.23

Other Assets

Pension Asset		42,347.00	
Total Other Assets		42,347.00	42,347.00
Total Assets		3,269,723.68	3,269,723.68

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Retirement Withholding		1,443.82
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See accountants' compilation report

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Statement of Financial Position - Accrual Basis
As of August 31, 2024

Federal and Fica Withholding	1,715.04	
State Withholding	175.00	
Total Current Liabilities		<u>3,333.86</u>
<u>Long-term Liabilities</u>		
Pension Deferrals	55,846.00	
Total Long-term Liabilities		<u>55,846.00</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>59,179.86</u>
<u>Net Assets</u>		
Investment in fixed assets	2,685,085.00	
Restricted Fund Balance	215,679.04	
Retained Earnings	316,307.07	
Change in Net Assets	(6,527.29)	
Total Net Assets		<u>3,210,543.82</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		<u>\$ 3,269,723.68</u>

See accountants' compilation report

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

	1 Month Ended August 31, 2024 Actual	1 Month Ended August 31, 2024 Budget	Current Period Over/(Under) Budget
<u>Income</u>			
Trolley Income	2,914.57	6,666.67	(3,752.10)
Occupancy Taxes Income	135,000.00	116,666.67	18,333.33
Partner Services Income	1,489.26	5,541.67	(4,052.41)
Holiday Caravan Parade Income	0.00	4,708.34	(4,708.34)
Miscellaneous Income	1,244.00	83.34	1,160.66
Interest Income	1,165.54	1,000.00	165.54
Gateway Building Income	9,415.00	11,875.00	(2,460.00)
Tourism ARPA Funding	0.00	41,666.67	(41,666.67)
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Total Income	151,228.37	188,208.36	(36,979.99)
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries - regular	9,306.70	10,333.33	(1,026.63)
Insurance - workers comp	0.00	708.33	(708.33)
Miscellaneous	1,187.00	375.00	812.00
Professional Services	4,037.00	3,000.00	1,037.00
CVB Appropriation	125,364.36	91,291.66	34,072.70
Supplies & Equipment	200.00	375.00	(175.00)
Trolley	650.42	958.33	(307.91)
Tourism Development	446.02	62,500.00	(62,053.98)
Holiday Caravan Parade	1,383.85	4,708.33	(3,324.48)
Partner Services	1,964.10	2,083.33	(119.23)
Gateway Building	9,448.06	11,875.00	(2,426.94)
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Total Operating Expenses	153,987.51	188,208.31	(34,220.80)
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Operating Income (Loss)	(2,759.14)	0.05	(2,759.19)

See accountants' compilation report

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

	2 Months August 31, 2024 Actual	Current Year June 30, 2025 Budget	Current Year Over/(Under) Budget
<u>Income</u>			
Trolley Income	6,141.48	80,000.00	(73,858.52)
Occupancy Taxes Income	267,251.46	1,400,000.00	(1,132,748.54)
Partner Services Income	4,785.00	66,500.00	(61,715.00)
Holiday Caravan Parade Income	1,000.00	56,500.00	(55,500.00)
Miscellaneous Income	1,244.00	1,000.00	244.00
Interest Income	2,222.75	12,000.00	(9,777.25)
Gateway Building Income	22,308.00	142,500.00	(120,192.00)
Tourism ARPA Funding	0.00	500,000.00	(500,000.00)
	<u>304,952.69</u>	<u>2,258,500.00</u>	<u>(1,953,547.31)</u>
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries - regular	18,936.86	124,000.00	(105,063.14)
Insurance - workers comp	3,422.00	8,500.00	(5,078.00)
Miscellaneous	1,551.00	4,500.00	(2,949.00)
Professional Services	7,479.00	36,000.00	(28,521.00)
CVB Appropriation	237,688.84	1,095,500.00	(857,811.16)
Supplies & Equipment	200.00	4,500.00	(4,300.00)
Trolley	650.42	11,500.00	(10,849.58)
Tourism Development	20,013.53	750,000.00	(729,986.47)
Holiday Caravan Parade	1,443.85	56,500.00	(55,056.15)
Partner Services	3,329.29	25,000.00	(21,670.71)
Gateway Building	16,765.19	142,500.00	(125,734.81)
	<u>311,479.98</u>	<u>2,258,500.00</u>	<u>(1,947,020.02)</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	<u>(6,527.29)</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>(6,527.29)</u>

See accountants' compilation report

Rowan County Occupancy Tax Receipts Collected (GROSS)									
MONTH	FY20-21	FY21-22	%CHNG	FY22-23	%CHNG	FY23-24	%CHNG	FY24-25	%CHNG
July	61,737.08	105,514.79	70.9%	120,021.34	12.1%	108,732.65	-9.4%	133,587.33	22.9%
August	66,399.96	99,851.17	50.4%	115,189.06	13.3%	110,177.63	-4.4%		
September	78,562.08	100,792.04	28.3%	119,443.37	15.6%	114,690.69	-4.1%		
Quarter Total	206,699.12	306,158.00	48.1%	354,653.77	13.7%	333,600.97	-6.3%		
October	76,794.51	115,324.55	50.2%	128,088.16	10.0%	141,296.02	10.3%		
November	60,357.00	102,438.16	69.7%	116,523.19	12.1%	109,684.96	-5.9%		
December	64,749.41	95,874.73	48.1%	103,834.94	7.7%	95,959.89	-8.2%		
Quarter Total	201,900.92	313,637.44	55.3%	348,446.29	10.0%	346,940.87	-0.4%		
January	56,291.87	96,918.80	72.2%	115,064.17	15.8%	88,997.47	-22.7%		
February	62,049.03	94,530.61	52.3%	108,890.30	13.2%	106,875.73	-1.9%		
March	84,372.26	114,826.05	36.1%	125,056.96	8.2%	123,858.60	-1.0%		
Quarter Total	202,713.16	306,275.46	51.1%	349,011.43	12.2%	319,731.80	-9.2%		
April	90,628.43	119,032.67	31.3%	125,347.11	5.0%	137,682.85	9.8%		
May	97,167.69	126,307.46	30.0%	125,953.79	-0.3%	144,974.27	15.1%		
June	102,792.30	115,684.25	12.5%	109,364.77	-5.8%	132,031.99	17.2%		
Quarter Total	290,588.42	361,024.38	24.2%	360,665.67	-0.1%	414,689.11	13.0%		
Adjmts Penalties									
Penalties									
Year Total	\$ 901,901.62	\$ 1,287,095.28	42.7%	\$ 1,412,777.16	8.9%	\$ 1,414,962.75	0.2%		

