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SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

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ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
204 E Innes Street, Ste. 120, Salisbury, NC 28144
800-332-2343 • 704-638-3100 • FAX 704-642-2011

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 6, 2020: 10:00 am, Gateway Building

DESTINATION MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Attending: Vivian Hopkins, Kelly Alexander, Gretchen Witt, Michelle Patterson, Amie Baudoin, Aaron Kepley, Darrell Blackwelder

Not Attending: Krista Osterweil, Annette Privette Keller

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Mary Scott Norris

DMC Call to Order

Tara Furr called the DMC meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Kelly Alexander made a motion for approval of the September 2019 meeting minutes.

Second: Vivian Hopkins

Motion: Approved

Tara Furr called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the Destination Marketing Committee Meeting for December 2019.

Tourism Support Requests

Downtown Salisbury Inc. has requested an overnight stay package for the 7th annual Wine about Winter event on February 7, 2020. Because this is a ticketed event, the CVB would provide tickets to overnight visitors. It is a \$45 value for every hotel room booked in Rowan County for the event.

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Wine about Winter has grown over the years, with 23 room nights booked last year. Meacham mentioned that 140-150 tickets have already been sold.

Motion: Kelly Alexander made a motion to approve the Downtown Salisbury Inc. Funding request for an overnight package
Second: Michelle Patterson
Motion: Approved

The Chamber of Commerce is requesting support for the Military Talent Attraction event. Originally, this event was scheduled in 2019, but due to limited room nights during Livingstone's homecoming, the Chamber has rescheduled for March 20-21, 2020. The purpose of this event is to attract military members being released from active duty and looking for local jobs, with the intention to relocate to Rowan County upon their release date. The Chamber is requesting for support in room night assistance and/or, depending on the number of room nights covered, additional support in hospitality at the welcome reception, held at the Gateway Building. Hilton has a new program in North Carolina that could help cover the cost of rooms for military families. CVB staff has reached out to NC4ME and the State Commerce to see if this new program would cover the rooms for the Chamber's event. If it is declined, the CVB would cover the cost of the rooms that are not covered through the Hilton discount program. Meacham mentioned the Economic Development Commission and the VA hospital are also co-sponsors of this event.

Motion: Kelly Alexander made a motion to approve the Chamber of Commerce funding request
Second: Aaron Kepley
Motion: Approved

The City of Salisbury submitted request for support in hospitality and lodging needs for the band performing at the Cheerwine Festival and hospitality costs for their volunteers. The CVB suggests the same amount that awarded in the past of \$3,000 be allocated towards lodging and /or hospitality.

Motion: Michelle Patterson made a motion to approve the City of Salisbury funding request for the Cheerwine Festival at the \$3,000 limit.
Second: Gretchen Witt
Motion: Approved

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Furr presented the 2019 December Marketing Report. Furr commended Mary Scott on becoming well versed with the Trolleys and helping grow the trolley program with different groups and tours. November ridership was a little over 2,000 with revenue just shy of \$6,000. The year to date ridership is 9,500 and revenue at \$46,248. Lee St. Theatre (LST) did a theatrical tour that went along with the Rocky Horror Picture Show, named the “Time Warped Trolley Tour”. This new tour was very successful for the first run with a lot of positive feedback. LST has expressed interest in doing more theatrical tours, specifically one in the spring. Right now, LST is in the middle of Scrooge’s Christmas trolley, which is going well so far, with many times sold out.

Visitors Services fulfilled 22 traditional inquires and 70 walk- ins in the Visitors Center in the month of November. The current Destination Incentive Package going on right now is the Polar Express. As of today, there are 385 packages and 660 room nights generated from the Polar Express.

The CVB has been very busy with Group Sales. Cycle NC came out to the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) as an overnight stop on their bike ride from the mountains to the coast. For future group business, the CVB is working with NCTM staff for the Rail Passenger Car Alliance Conference (RPCA) in 2021. There has been a site visit with a RPCA representative to go over event logistics and planning is in full force.

Softball Little League World Series has had several new developments. The Little League World Series pulled out of Oregon as their host city. Rowan County is in the running as a potential new host for the Little League World Series. There are many logistics that need to be worked out and the CVB should be notified if Rowan County is chosen soon. Meacham explained the complications of being awarded the bid and the need for this to be a long term commitment to justify the community spending investment. If Rowan County is not chosen to host the Little League World Series, this will not affect the tournament that Rowan County currently host annually.

Through Tourism Supported Investments there have been 2,900 room nights awarded and the estimated event-visitor related economic impact is at \$4 million.

For the year, the CVB has had 15 media assists and 36 media placement for PR. The Salisbury Post Community Calendar remains a strong partnership with 4,600 for November and 79,688 views year-to-date. The community calendar remains a great resource for community events that are not directly related to visitors and tourism. The community has been very appreciative to have this as another outlet to promote events.

Furr commended Michalec on the great job she does on promoting Rowan County through digital marketing and creating content. Michalec shared the digital report with the group. The website had a great boost in users and page views. Top viewed pages are the Polar Express, specifically the Polar Express blog and the Holiday Parade blog. The email newsletters are being sent out using the new Act-On platform. The open rate is growing using this new platform. The holiday events

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and activities are drawing a lot of engagement from our followers. Top post on Facebook were related to Scrooge and Lighting of the Fall Fires. The top Twitter post were Scrooge and the Holiday events blog. The top post for Instagram featured two great photos. The first showed the Cheerwine Mural and the second a snow photo which was featured on the Holiday events blog. Focusing specifically on the blog, the top post for the last several months was about the Polar Express, followed this month by the Holiday Parades blog which gave information about all the local parades.

Meacham commended Michalec and Pullium on assisting with the Holiday Spectacular parade, which saw another successful and sold- out year.

Furr mentioned the conclusion of the second year of Arts & Ag. Arts & Ag developed from the rebranding process the CVB went through. There was a lot of positive feedback from the first season of Arts & Ag, and the CVB continued supporting this series for a second year. This next year, the technical “Arts & Ag” season of events will be changing. Several events have grown and have become established on their own. The CVB will still support these events; however, through different avenues which are being discussed to continue to keep events fresh, changing and create more community partner connections. Meacham mentioned the importance of bringing different groups of community partners together, for example, Lee St. theatre and the trolleys, to create a dynamic experience, original to Rowan County and to remain competitive as a destination during this time.

Adjourn

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Mary Scott Norris, RCCVB