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

Wednesday, August 16, 2023, Noon

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order Krista Sullivan, Chair

- II. Approval of Meeting Minutes Krista Sullivan, Chair

- 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 James Meacham & Sarah Michalec
 - 1. Wayfinding
 - 2. Tourism Development Plan: Railwalk
 - 3. Agritourism Development

C. Tourism Board

James Meacham

1. Recognition of outgoing board members
2. New board members

V. Additional Business

VI. Adjourn



ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 12:00 pm

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Sada Troutman, Craig Pierce, Therese Henderson (ZOOM), Krista Sullivan, Kimberly Morgan, Michelle Patterson (ZOOM), Richard Reinholz, John Ketner, Vivian Hopkins

Not Attending: Karen Alexander, Cyndi Greenwood,

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

RCTDA Call to Order

Sullivan called RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion for approval of the May 2023 minutes.

Second: Sada Troutman

Motion: Approved

Organizational & Financial Update

Meacham reported that as of 5.31.23, occupancy tax revenues for fiscal year 2022-23 on an accrual basis were \$1,177,628 and are 12.6% ahead of the same period last year. On an accrual basis as of 5-31-23 total fiscal year occupancy taxes were \$1,310,041 and are 11.8% ahead of the previous fiscal year. The April 2023 actuals for occupancy taxes were \$125,347 and 5.3% ahead of April 2022 and were an all-time high for April. Meacham reported May 2023 occupancy taxes are projected to be \$128,000 and approximately 1.5% ahead of May 2022 and will be another all-time high collection for the month of May. The year-to-date revenue on an accrual basis has exceeded expenses by \$96,380.

Meacham reported total current assets of \$496,586 which are up \$22,634 from the month ending April 30th. Accounts Receivables equaled \$267,298 an increase of \$14,422 from the month ending April 30th. The receivables consist primarily of April and May occupancy taxes. Meacham reported cash on hand as of 4-30-23 equaled \$229,287, an increase of \$8,212 from the month ending 4-30-23.

Meacham noted that \$2,615.27 was recorded on the balance sheet for Petty Cash. This was made by error by the accountant's office. Petty Cash on hand is \$16.83. Funds were miss coded to Petty Cash by the

accountant's office, the difference of \$2,598.44 should be in the Balance Sheet account 1050 – First Bank Checking.

Consideration of the 2023-24 RCTDA & SRCVB Budget

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to open the public hearing for consideration of the 2023-24 Budgets.

Second: Richard Reinholz

Motion: Approved

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to close the public hearing for consideration of the 2022-23 Budgets.

Second: Richard Reinholz

Motion: Approved

Meacham recapped the RCTDA and SRCVB Proposed 2023-24 Budgets that were handed out for review in May and discussed in depth at the May meeting.

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion to adopt the 2023-24 Budgets as presented.

Second: Richard Reinholz

Motion: Approved with noted abstentions: John Ketner and Michelle Patterson

Program of Work

Meacham reviewed the lodging marketing information noting that 2023 YTD 8.7% above previous year, RevPAR up 6.7% and revenue 6.7% up through the calendar year. This summer has looked like summer's past with ebbs and flows with the big business travel in the fall months. Meacham reported continued heavy growth in Airbnb and VRBO segments as people look for more personalized lodging properties. Meacham continued to emphasize that the lodging market has been exceeding normal operating levels for the last 14 months and with a slowing economy, rising fuel prices and higher interest rates travel is bound to decrease to normal levels soon.

Michalec reported that the email newsletter open rate year to date is 34%. The visitrowancountync.com website had Year to date 138,000 page views with 51,000 in May 2023 alone. Root Rez online booking platform 107 reservations and 128 room nights with 87% of those being packages generating \$19,000 in revenue.

Michalec reports that the Facebook followers were up 350 in May with Cheerwine, Cannon Ballers and the Farmer's Market being the hot topics generating a lot of traffic to the page. The blog saw almost 9,000 page views in May with 5,900 of those being the Cheerwine Festival guide. Michalec reported that Jenna, our influencer partner has 10 videos on Tic Tok, 8 on Instagram and views of 1.8 million on Tic Tok and 289,000 on Instagram year to date. Michalec shared that this month Jenna will be visiting Village Park Splash Pad and Historic Gold Hill. Michalec reported on an influencer feature in early June with a group called the House of Henson. This was an Instagram reel about the Polar Package. Michalec shared the video with the board as well as Jenna's May videos. Furr noted that these influencers material is coming across as very authentic to viewers. House of Henson will be visiting Dan Nicholas Park in July. Total digital impact year to date is 410,000 with a reach of 3.2 million.

Furr reported that paid marketing placements for May were 52 paid placements most were focused through social media and Cannon Baller partnerships. Furr reported wonderful growth in the Trolley system. Furr stated that Arrowood is continuing to do a great job with trolleys, and they are busy. Furr reports that Lee Street has given a verbal commitment to bring back the Scrooge Trolley Tour and the Time Warp Halloween Tour.

Furr that reported the Stay and play packages DOWT and Polar Express are both available and are both very successful. DOWT was up 27% last week. Polar Express is up 50% and on the first day of ticket sales, the system crashed with sales of 13,000 tickets. Paid promotions for the Polar Express typically start a little later but with the huge growth in sales those promotions have been moved up.

Furr said the Southeastern Little League Tournament group will be here next month and they have added an additional day to the event. Looking forward staff is looking at ways to recruit groups and grow group sales when the market can accommodate. Furr referred the members to the running tourism support chart and noted that three events coming up are being supported including the Pride Festival and the Dragon Boat race.

Furr said that staff is continuing to promote summer over the next couple of months including ways to stay cool, water activities, outdoor activities, parks, the Cannon Ballers, Faith Fourth, Farmer's Day, little league world series and other sports events as well as promoting Polar Express packages.

In September, the CVB will be a sponsor for the Business After Hours Chamber of Commerce event at the NC Transportation Museum. Furr reported that the previous staff position that had been listed has been pulled down and the position description is being reworked to better fit what is most needed in the organization at this time.

Tourism Development

Michalec reported on the countywide wayfinding stating that she is very close to completing the proposal. She is in the final steps with a few municipalities and should have that ready for NCDOT in July.

Michalec reported that staff is working to get a positive consensus with RailWalk property owners, the attorney is working toward that transition of property transfer to the TDA. Once those conversations are completed, staff will present to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Michalec reports that staff is working on putting together an RFP for the development of an Agri-tourism adventure product. Michalec is meeting with Chris Cavanaugh today to work on that RFP and identify the firms that could assist with this project.

Tourism Policy

Meacham reported that the RCTDA By Laws have not been updated since 2016. Meacham asked the board for authorization for he and the attorney, Andrew Abramson to begin updating the By Laws.

Motion: John Ketner made the motion for approval to authorize Meacham and Abramson to update the RCTDA By-Laws.

Second: Craig Pierson seconded the motion.

Motion: Approved

Meacham reported that the Granicus system that identifies the short-term rentals within the county is in place through Rowan County Finance Office. Staff will begin training on the system soon. The County attorney, Jay Dees will distribute notification letters to these short-term properties outlining how to comply with occupancy tax reporting requirements in late summer or early fall.

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Lesley Pullium

SRCVB

Rowan County Occupancy Tax Receipts Collected (GROSS)

MONTH	FY18-19	FY19-20	%CHNG	FY20-21	%CHNG	FY21-22	%CHNG	FY22-23	%CHNG
July	82,827.79	85,062.04	2.7%	61,737.08	-27.4%	105,514.79	70.9%	120,021.34	13.7%
August	84,227.53	87,388.13	3.8%	66,399.96	-24.0%	99,851.17	50.4%	115,189.06	15.4%
September	88,060.74	89,694.58	1.9%	78,562.08	-12.4%	100,792.04	28.3%	119,443.37	18.5%
Quarter Total	255,116.06	262,144.75	2.8%	206,699.12	-21.2%	306,158.00	48.1%	354,653.77	15.8%
October	101,229.40	113,427.41	12.0%	76,794.51	-32.3%	115,324.55	50.2%	128,088.16	11.1%
November	84,418.19	97,848.24	15.9%	60,357.00	-38.3%	102,438.16	69.7%	116,523.19	13.7%
December	74,894.47	79,686.64	6.4%	64,749.41	-18.7%	95,874.73	48.1%	103,834.94	8.3%
Quarter Total	260,542.06	290,962.29	11.7%	201,900.92	-30.6%	313,637.44	55.3%	348,446.29	11.1%
January	72,190.74	80,100.88	11.0%	56,291.87	-29.7%	96,918.80	72.2%	115,064.17	18.7%
February	74,900.88	87,894.99	17.3%	62,049.03	-29.4%	94,530.61	52.3%	108,890.30	15.2%
March	93,890.99	62,149.01	-33.8%	84,372.26	35.8%	114,826.05	36.1%	125,056.96	9%
Quarter Total	240,982.61	230,144.88	-4.5%	202,713.16	-11.9%	306,275.46	51.1%	349,011.43	14.0%
April	97,300.73	39,870.97	-59.0%	90,628.43	127.3%	119,032.67	31.3%	125,347.11	5.3%
May	92,104.89	50,585.59	-45.1%	97,167.69	92.1%	126,307.46	30.0%	125,953.79	-0.3%
June	92,254.88	56,142.85	-39.1%	102,792.30	83.1%	115,684.25	12.5%	109,364.77	-5%
Quarter Total	281,660.50	146,599.41	-48.0%	290,588.42	98.2%	361,024.38	24.2%	360,665.67	-0.1%
Adjmts Penalties									
Penalties									
Year Total	\$ 1,038,301.23	\$ 929,851.33	-10.4%	\$ 901,901.62	-3.0%	\$ 1,287,095.28	42.7%	\$ 1,412,777.16	9.8%

