

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

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ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, November 14, 2018: 12:00 pm, Gateway Building

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Cyndi Greenwood, Craig Pierce, Stephen Kidd, Amie Baudoin, Kelly Alexander, Krista Osterweil, Darrell Blackwelder, Don Bringle

Not Attending: Brian Miller, Whitney Wallace, Tony Shaw

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Lesley Pullium

RCTDA Call to Order

Krista Osterweil called the RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion for approval of the October 2018 meeting minutes.

Second: Kelly Alexander

Motion: Approved

Financial Report

The TDA Board of Directors reviewed the year-to-date financial statements and year-to-date occupancy tax revenues through the end of October. Meacham said there continues to be strong growth in occupancy tax revenues with the first quarter up 14.3% from last year. Overall, collections are running about 4% ahead of the projected budget. Trolleys are performing well with positive net revenue year-to-date. Meacham reviewed the financial summary distributed to the board.

Destination Marketing Report

Tara Furr reported that the Trolley Saturday tour season ended Oct 27th. Trolley year-to-date ridership is approximately 5,500 generating 173 room nights and there are 42 advanced bookings on the calendar.

The Scrooge Christmas Trolley tours start November 23rd. Lee Street Theatre will be performing 66 shows for the Scrooge's Christmas Trolley tours this year. Tickets sales have been great with almost all tours sold out as of Nov. 1. Furr reported that the holiday materials for the kiosks will be distributed next week just in time for the holiday season.

Polar Express starts this weekend, November 17th. As of the Board meeting, package totals were at 579 packages sold with 740 associated room nights.

Group sales are going well with the Senior NC Bar Association in town in November 9-11th. The NC Fine Arts Conference will take place again in February 2019, NC Main Street in March 2019 and the Rail Passenger Car Alliance group is looking to come to town in January 2020. Salisbury/Spencer has hosted this group before and this is a great conference generating a large number of room nights. In addition, Rowan County will be hosting the Little League group again next year.

There were no tourism funds requests submitted to the committee this month.

Sarah Michalec gave the social media and digital marketing report noting that new user views continue to increase. There is continued growth and increases for time on site which is probably due to events and packages.

E-news subscribership is constantly growing and the social platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have all shown growth each month throughout 2018. Michalec said the Tourism blog is witnessing the largest growth to date and has been a great tool for getting folks to the website and other tourism partner sites. The blog is written from a lifestyle perspective. Blog posts will continue throughout the holiday season. The website main page will receive a special holiday look after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Furr gave a quick update on Arts & Ag stating that the Charlotte's Web event at Patterson Farm had ticket sales of 515, which is 85% of capacity and very good for a first time event. The final Arts and Ag event of 2018 took place on Nov 3rd in Kannapolis and went very well except for the chilly weather on the 3rd...

There has been a great deal of positive feedback regarding Arts & Ag. Planning and discussion with major partners from the 2018 Arts & Ag program will begin right after the first of the year on the 2019 Art & Ag program. The TDA focus will be on the marketing and promotion of the events while leaving the partners to do what they do best in putting on the events.

Pullium gave a quick update on the Tis the Season Holiday Parade. Michalec handled all of the digital promotions as well as setting up the parade informational page on the Visitsalisburync.com website. The parade committee secured all of the sponsors and did all of the logistics planning for the event. TDA staff provided administrative support and handled the financial aspects of collecting and tracking revenue and expenses. The committee was very happy as they exceeded their original goal of 100 parade entries. There were 126 parade entries with 21 of those professional floats. They secured all six local high school bands as well as numerous other bands from around the area. There have been 500 seats sold for advanced seating thus far.

Furr reported that staff is very excited about Rowan Hospitality Week which will take place April 8-12, 2019. The event will include familiarization (FAM) tours, educational sessions, and hospitality service awards. The awards event will cap off the week and will take place at the NC Transportation Museum. The April RCTDA Board Meeting will most likely occur at one of the Rowan County tourism partner sites as well. Lots to look forward to in the spring!

Meacham touched on the discussion from the September planning session with Chris Cavanaugh relating to the future strategic partnerships. Meacham reported that something important occurred yesterday in Kannapolis. Commissioner Pierce reported that the County agreed to partner with Kannapolis to run water and sewer to the new interchange in Kannapolis. This has brought in a developer who plans to purchase 318 acres and build \$750 million worth of housing and commercial development. This project will take 10 years to build out but will include residential and commercial investment. Commissioner Pierce stated that he is really excited about this major project for the county.

Tourism Capital Committee Report

Meacham gave the committee report as Wallace is out of town on business. Meacham reminded the group about the Veteran's War Memorial project that the County, City, TDA and a private group were partnering on. The private group has raised the necessary \$60,000 to move forward and the County and TDA will be putting in their \$10,000 contributions that were approved last year.

The Railwalk is on track to complete construction next year as well. In addition, this is the last year for the trolley payment to the City. The trolleys were around \$300,000 to purchase and at the time the TDA/CVB could only spend capital funds within the city limits of Salisbury, so the City paid for them and the TDA/CVB paid the city back over 5-years.

Meacham said that the committee will start to look at a new capital priority list county-wide and will bring that list back to the board for consideration of projects the TDA will engage on over the next five to ten years.

TDA & CVB Structure

Meacham said that when there were two TDA's (Salisbury & Rowan), a 501(c) 6, (the CVB) as called out in the TDA Master Plan was created. The CVB was created to give the organization certain flexibility the TDA did not have. It gave the TDA the capacity to do the branding project as well as manage labor costs by taking employees (minus Pullium) out of the state pension system that was required for the public authority. Pullium was 18-years vested in the state pension plan and the board elected to allow Pullium to remain a TDA employee. Currently, all other employees are officially CVB employees.

When the Salisbury TDA ended, the Rowan TDA is now also the SRCVB Board. There are a few administrative changes to the By-Laws of both the TDA and CVB that staff and the TDA attorney are working on. In February 2019, those changes will be brought to the board for review and consideration. The key point is what the legislation says and within that legislation it gives the TDA the ability to contract with any firm or agency for services, which is currently performed through the CVB.

Starting in January, the meeting will list the TDA and CVB as meeting at the same time for administrative and recording purposes.

Adjourn

Krista Osterweil thanked the members for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Lesley Pullium, RCTDA