

# VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

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

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

### MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Introduction of New Board Members
- III. Organization Update
- IV. Financial Report
- V. Program of Work Report
  - A. Destination Marketing
  - B. Trolley System
  - C. Gateway Building
  - D. Destination Development
- VI. Tourism Industry Update, Forecast and Trends
  - A. Economic Indicators
  - B. Local Tourism Industry
- VII. Adjourn

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## ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, September 23, 2020: 12:00 pm

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Board Members Attending:** Craig Pierce, Michelle Patterson, Krista Osterweil, Don Bringle, Cyndi Greenwood, John Ketner, Whitney Wallace, Stephen Kidd, Karen Alexander, Vivian Hopkins, Sada Stewart

**Tourism Staff:** James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Lesley Pullium

#### Call to Order

Krista Osterweil called the meeting to order at 12:02pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meacham welcomed two new board members Vivian Hopkins with the Historic Gold Hill and Sada Stewart Director of the Historic Salisbury Foundation.

#### Organizational Update

Meacham gave a brief update organizational update and welcomed Sarah Michalec and Tara Furr back. Meacham reported that Mary Scott Norris will be returning part-time next week and then based on trending revenues Norris should be back full-time October 13<sup>th</sup>. Lesley Pullium has retired but is working part-time as well. Meacham said the Gateway Building will return to the regular M-F, 9 am – 5 pm hours next week. New technology has been installed in the building and meeting rooms will be available for rent again following the state meeting guidelines.

Meacham reported that Trolleys are running for group rentals (no tours) with four weddings booked in September and several more in the month of October. Safety precautions are in place on both trolleys and drivers are aware and practicing safety protocols. Hand Sanitizers, masks, and temperature checks have been implemented.

Meacham said that furloughs have been removed from staff as well.

#### Financial Report

Meacham reviewed 5 months of revenue collected during Covid, explaining the projected loss based on how revenue was trending prior to Covid. Revenue was trending to finish at around \$1.3 million prior to Covid but looks to finish at around \$865,000. Meacham stated that staff is retooling the organization to meet today's needs with what looks to be a consistent decrease of around 20%. September of 2020 revenue is looking like September of 2016, prior to the opening of the two newest hotel properties.

Meacham reported that the Rowan County market is still fairly good compared to many others. Meacham reported that revenue is averaging around \$65,000 each month in occupancy taxes. Year-to-date revenue \$149,000 and total expenses of \$147,000 with most expenses relating to staff and marketing.

### **Destination Marketing Report**

Tara Furr welcomed Sarah Michalec back from maternity leave. Sarah Michalec reported the stats on social media. Michalec reported media is still focused on eat, visit, play local campaign. All social media platforms remain strong and the blog is doing very well with 13,000 views. The email newsletter has transitioned back to visitor-related activities. The open rate on the newsletter is up 17% this month. The Covid-19 resource site is still available and receiving a good deal of activity.

Tara Furr reported on the new Visit NC Farms App and encouraged members to download the app. Furr noted that the CVB received a grant that covered the majority of the cost for the app.

Meacham reported on where the lodging marketing is trending noting that the bottom was in April 2020 with occupancy slightly up in June, July and August. Revenue went up 5% in August compared to July. The profitability is slowly returning to the lodging segment but is nowhere near where it was this time a year ago. Meacham reported that with the lack of fall events in October 2020 will probably show the largest decrease percentage wise this fiscal year, but after November and December the market should start see some stabilization.

Furr reported that VisitNC has released a Covid-19 Relief program for counties that have experienced a certain significant amount of loss. Rowan County met those requirements and Furr has completed the requirements to become a certified partner. Rowan County has been selected for a couple of marketing programs that run October through December and staff will be utilizing those grant marketing opportunities in partnership with VisitNC.

### **Destination Development**

Meacham reported that there have been some activity with rentals for the RailWalk Pavilion. The Farmer's Market is utilizing the facility weekly and there will be a fall concert series and the final landscape package for the Railwalk project will be installed next month.

The meeting adjourned at 1 pm

Respectfully submitted