



Swain County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
08-10-2022 Regular Meeting

Present (Voting): Jeremiah Wiggins, Chairman, Andy Bahkta, Shannon Lackey, Afton Roberts, Eugene Shuler, Erin Smith PattiJo Taylor, Cheryl Taylor

Absent (Voting): Janene Lancaster

Present (Ex-Officio) None

Absent (Ex-Officio): Cally Elliott, Swain County Finance Officer, Kevin King, Swain County Manager

TDA Staff: Mary Anne Shea, Rita Jones, Selena Hyde

Attendees: Andrew Stanfield (NOC), Tobin Brogunier (Virtual Storefronts)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wiggins at 12:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was given. Prayer followed by Cheryl Taylor.

Changes to the agenda as follows:

Chair Wiggins asked that Tobin Brogunier (Virtual Storefronts) be placed on the agenda in place of the Board Rules and Procedures Policy. Chair Wiggins put into form of a motion. Andy Bahkta seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eugene Shuler made a motion to approve the minutes of 06/22/2022 the public budget hearing. Cheryl Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eugene Shuler made a motion to approve the minutes of 06/22/2022 regular meeting. Afton Roberts seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eugene Shuler made a motion to approve the minutes of 07/13/2022 regular meeting. Erin Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Tobin Brogunier of Virtual Storefronts made a presentation about a mobile app for local businesses for a fee of \$10,000.

Public Comment: None

Executive Director Report: Mary Anne Shea

Marketing and Public Relations:

- Website
 - Google Analytics reports
- Public Relations



- July report attached
- Instagram influencer plan to be reviewed by Mary Anne and Erin next week.
- Visitor totals for visitor center and aquarium attached.
- Mary Anne met with the marketing and management of the NOC. Data was shared and discussion of opportunities to partner with them on events being held in the Gorge.

Financial

- June occupancy tax is \$203,749.84
- The Chamber has submitted a sponsorship request for \$2,000.00 for the Trick or Treat event in October. Last year the board approved the amount of \$2,000.00. Being that the board has authorized Mary Anne to approve up to \$5,000.00 for marketing grants and sponsorships, Mary Anne will approve the \$2,000 request upon the marketing plan changes she has requested from the Chamber Director.

Administrative & Committees:

- New fly-fishing building will be breaking ground soon. Mary Anne will be checking with the county attorney regarding the MOU on the fly-fishing museum.
- Events: Sales and Operational Planning:
 - Mary has asked Chris Cavanaugh for research on how other NC counties are managing their event centers.
 - We are equipped to handle the marketing of events, but not the sales and operations/staffing portions.
- Beautification committee:
 - Plans for Christmas 2022 are in progress.
 - Order placed for new snowflakes that will go up on the Duke Energy poles in town.
 - The triangle at Exit 67 is on hold pending approval from the DOT and supply chain issues of products this year.
 - We are talking to an electrician to do an electrical hookup box at Mountain Ford for the lower bridge.
- Finance Committee: Nothing to report
- Marketing Committee: Nothing new to report

Shannon Lackey gave an update on the EV charging stations. There are two stations (4 outlets). Still waiting on the low voltage router so that cards can be used. For now, TDA is not going to be charging for use of the charging.

Board Discussion:

- Afton Roberts asked if the board would draft a letter to the county commissioners regarding the sale of alcohol in the county being placed on the ballot. Chairman Wiggins asked Afton to draft a proposal letter for the board to review at the September meeting.



- Chairman Wiggins made a motion to allocate \$10,000 of our event sponsorship program to organizations willing to donate volunteer staffing for events that attract tourists. Cheryl Taylor seconded this motion. All in favor. Motion carried. Mary Anne will add this to the current sponsorship guidelines and bring it to the next meeting for board approval.

Andy Bahkta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Erin Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Board Member Signatures:

Chair Jeremiah Wiggins _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Afton Roberts _____

Shannon Lackey _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Eugene Shuler _____

Erin Smith _____

Cheryl Taylor _____

PattiJo Taylor _____