

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ALAMANCE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Katie Dukeshire
Kavita Patel
Matt Patel

CVB Staff: Grace VandeVisser
Claire Davis
Brian Baker

Guest: Sara Danieleley-Kernodle

Financial Officer: Susan Evans

Moment of Silence

Katie Dukeshire, Chair, called the meeting to order and a moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Minutes

Katie asked if there were any additions or corrections to be made to the minutes of the February 26th meeting. No updates were needed. Board approval was not possible due to lack of a quorum.

Collection Report

Susan Evans presented the Financial Reports for July 1, 2019 through February 28, 2020. Total assets are \$1,465,410. Total revenue reported totals \$366,638. Total expenditures total \$357,484. Occupancy tax collections reported through February 28, 2020 totaled \$556,210, a 4.53% increase over the same period in 2019 with the TDA's share of \$359,701. Sales tax collections reported through February 28, 2020 total \$16,350,385 which is an 5.40% increase over the same period in 2019. Investments total \$584,340.

Visitor Bureau Updates

Grace VandeVisser updated the board on how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting tourism in our community. The CVB has redirected their strategy from attracting travel to our area to supporting local restaurants and shops to help our local economy remain strong during current social distancing. A page has been added to VisitAlamance.com which lists all restaurants offering curbside pick-up and to-go ordering. Another community support page is a resource page for local businesses created on VisitAlamance.com using contributions from community leaders including the Chamber, ACC, the local airport and other community leaders. Ideas for future promotion of local businesses include online classes and live streams for shopping. The CVB's social media presence has adjusted and the CVB Facebook and Instagram are promoting local businesses. An Instagram project was launched called Alamance Local Love on the CVB Instagram page which highlights favorite local restaurants, coffee shops and stores. Users copy and fill in their own answers and then tag others to participate. The CVB is including this messaging in their marketing to support the core of our county in order to ensure it remains strong for future tourism.

Grace commented on the many event cancellations we have seen and asked how the hotels are being impacted. About 30 percent of rooms are currently being occupied and Matt Patel stated they are receiving cancellations every day. Many attractions in Alamance County have closed temporarily including Haw River Kayak, because of the risk of COVID-19 infection. Grace explained how our advertising presence has temporarily changed with Our State Magazine as we had many events in the May magazine advertisement. Our State has cooperated to change the messaging from promoting events to the concept of "We are in this together and look forward to getting back together soon."

Grace informed the board that the Partner's meeting that was scheduled for April 16th, at The Inn at Elon, is not being cancelled but hopefully changed to a virtual meeting. The plan is to keep the Visit NC speaking component. Grace is talking with Visit NC to see if we can have a virtual meeting and update folks on what Visit NC is doing Statewide and Nationally during the current COVID-19 crisis.

Grace shared a report provided by US Travel with a 2020 Travel Analysis. They are expecting, over the next two months, a 78 percent drop in revenue that will last for the next two quarters. But the report states they are also hoping for a 50 percent recovery by June, while keeping in mind that much can change by then with the current crisis.

Katie asked about Elon graduation and whether it had been cancelled. No one was aware of a decision being made, though other schools have postponed May graduations until December. Other postponements and cancellations include the High Point Furniture Market which has moved to June. Conference Carolina has been cancelled and Region X as well. Grace mentioned that we are hoping Senior Softball will still be coming in July.

Brian Baker gave an update on Alamance Parks and Recreation. The Parks have been busy with traffic which has proved an issue with people successfully social distancing. More popular parks will have to close due to the risk of spreading COVID-19 and Brian stated most likely the other parks will need to close as well though no decisions have been made as of now. Half of the Parks and Recreation Staff are providing Child Care for mission critical workers in the community. Brian stated that it is budget season and asked how the hotels are looking from an occupancy tax standpoint? All hoteliers stated that the hotels are suffering cancellations and not at full capacity due to COVID-19.

Grace stated that we may need to address the occupancy tax collection figure estimates in the budget. She stated that it is going to take time for the numbers to go back up once people are allowed to get back out. And that it will be a short summer season however, though many people will most likely be ready to travel and leave their homes. Grace stated we would probably not see better numbers until the beginning of 2021. Katie stated that they have had conferences rescheduled for the Fall but she agreed that we would likely not recover until next year. Grace stated we do have available funding and we need to continue with our messaging as it is more important than ever to continue with our advertising to promote our partners. Grace stated we may need to have another conversation about the budget. Brian stated that the CVB is in good shape because of the fund balance that is available to use if needed, and that adjusting the spending is a wise strategy. Susan agreed. Grace stated that she would be monitoring the budget and re-looking at everything moving forward.

Adjourn

Katie adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am.
Minutes submitted by Claire Davis.