

**Alamance County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

**April 26, 2022
Drury Inn, Burlington**

Present: Anderson Rathbun
Kavita Patel
Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion
Matt Patel

CVB: Grace VandeVisser
Kaitlyn Herbin

Financial: Susan Evans

AGENDA

- I. Welcome **Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion****
Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion called the meeting to order.
- II. Approval of January 2022 Minutes **Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion****
Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January Meeting and Anderson Rathbun seconded. The minutes from the January meeting were put to a vote and passed.
- III. Finance Report **Susan Evans****
Collection Report- Susan Evans presented the financial reports for March. The total assets sit at \$1,762,634.00. Revenues are exceeding expenditures and there has been 93.6% of the budgeting revenues collected while only 49.9% of the budget has been spent. Total collections for the year so far come to \$803,878. February collections came in at \$91,245 opposed to where we were at the same time last year at \$64,571, which is a 41.31% increase.
The investments remain steady at \$581,107 and as of January, the county has collected \$26 million in sales tax this fiscal year. Compared to January 2021, that number is up 19.67%. Susan asked if there were any questions and there were none. Grace did discuss the increases in collections in February 2020, 2021 and 2022 and that we have seen a steady increase in sales tax collections post COVID.
Susan discussed the audit contract for the TDA. An RFP was distributed to different agencies for who would complete the audit this year. The TDA is included in the Alamance County RFP so that it can be done while they're on site and all at one time. There were 4 responses back to the RFP and based on those responses the county decided to renew its contract with Martin Starnes and Associates for 3 more years. The cost of the FY2022 audit is \$6,700. She requested the board's approval to move forward. Anderson made a motion to accept the contract, seconded by Kavita, and unanimously approved. Susan did remind the board that even though the contract is for 3 years it must be reapproved by the board every year. The audit will happen at the end of June 2022.
- IV. New Business **Grace VandeVisser****
Zartico Presentation Kristen Schwartz & Don Jones. Grace introduced the Zartico speakers and explained that Zartico's program has been included in the TDA budget submitted for FY2023. The program helps provide a snapshot of where visitors come from, how they move through our county, while also having the capability to include data on specific

events and points of interest. For example, we will be able to pull specific data on visitors from outside of Alamance County versus locals visiting/attending an event. Zartico also provides credit card data. This information can be shared with our partners for help in planning and promoting future events. Zartico sends daily snapshots of the data. The contract with Zartico is a fixed yearly rate with the option to add additional data collection options at a later date. Adding the “spend component” brought the total contract fees to \$20,000. The distribution of data would begin on July 1st, 2022, and end on June 30th, 2023. This service will allow Visitor Services & the TDA to have concrete data that can also be used during the grant process and to assist in our marketing plan. Katie asked if there was a motion to approve the use of Zartico as a data collection resource (already in the budget for FY2023). Anderson motioned and Kavita seconded, and the motion was put to a vote and passed.

FY2023 Budget Review

Katie asked for a motion to approve the FY2023 budget that the board was given prior to the meeting. Anderson motioned and Matt seconded. The motion was put to a vote and passed.

V. **CVB/Visitor Services Updates**
PR, Marketing and Social Updates
Hotel Data Reporting

Grace VandeVisser
& Kaitlyn Herbin

Marketing & PR-Grace VandeVisser provided updates on these topics and began with an update on the Alamance County Guidebooks. They have been completed and distributed to all the Visit NC Welcome Centers as well as some other community locations. There were 7,500 printed and 3,800 have been distributed specifically to Visitor Center’s and individual requests for books have been filled. The guidebooks will also be delivered to local hotels in the coming weeks.

The BMX tournament is coming this July and there’s a billboard going up on the West-bound side of 40/85 in Graham to promote this event beginning in June. There will also be a microsite on the Visit Alamance website that will be given to USA/BMX for participants and their families. This site will provide event information as well as ways to sign up for an exclusive event for the BMX participants through the Animal Park at the Conservators Center.

Cycle NC is interested in returning to Alamance County in October 2023 for a stop in Mebane or Burlington. The last time here was a stop in Burlington in 2016 and the last time for Mebane was in 2011. Grace met with the City of Mebane’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Aaron Davis of Mebane Parks and Rec asked to get the support of this committee if the event were to happen in Mebane, as they would need their support and volunteers. Cycle NC is aware that both cities are interested and will revisit in early Summer then make a decision after establishing the route.

National Tourism Week is May 1st-6th. There is a sign up outside of the Tourism office in Downtown Burlington. Grace is planning to go to the Norlina Visitor Center on Thursday for their event. The weekend of May 7th (Mother’s Day Weekend) is very busy in Alamance County with multiple events in several Cities/Towns. This includes the Spring Market in Downtown Burlington.

We are winding down with the promotions we have been doing with WCHL for this fiscal year. Some of the partners that have participated in this cooperative with the radio are (Small Surprises highlights infomercials) Main Street Cakes, Carolina Sundries. Alamance Arts, Mebane Dogwood Festival through the MBA. Tanners Wine Bar, Left Bank Butchery and Freehand Market will wrap up this fiscal year.

Grace submitted a story to Reader's Digest regarding the "Nicest Places in America." The story submitted was on a man completing the Mountains to Sea Trail here in NC. His social media handle is @TrailMarshallHiking. When he came through Mebane people had been watching his progress and were waiting for him with things like water, food, etc. He made an entire post about how kind and welcoming everyone in Mebane was and Grace felt like it was a good fit for what Reader's Digest was looking for. She will update everyone if the story gets picked up.

The Our State Magazine digital contest has wrapped up. The contest provides the winner with a 2 night stay at the Inn at Elon with breakfast and dinner, a private pottery class with Curry Wilkinson Pottery and then a trip on the Haw with Haw River Kayak and Canoe Company. The winner's name was sent to Grace and was from Apex. The contest got 4,306 views with just shy of 3,000 entries. All of the contacts from the contest were given to us by Our State and put into Constant Contact for the Newsletter.

Grace then moved onto the Partner Programs developed for the next fiscal year. The program will include Our State Magazine around the holidays as well as a dedicated digital newsletter highlighting Alamance County through Our State, North Carolina Field and Family and Carolina Traveler magazines. In addition, continuation of the Small Surprise Spotlight promotion with WCHL. This sheet will be sent out to partners in early May to gauge interest from partners in participating in any of these. The program identifies the savings partners receive when partnered with our office in comparison to contracting directly with the outlet. This is done on a first come first served basis.

Beer Crawl Bingo is about to wrap up. 3/5 participating breweries requested additional cards to be delivered to them. This campaign may be repeated again in the Fall because October is possibly North Carolina Beer month.

Partner Listing and Clicks- 2 Twelve is the number one (most clicks/popular) listing on the website still. Our parks continue to be popular as well such as Lake Mackintosh & Cedarrock Park.

The SDC meeting is coming up later this month. Grace asked anyone who was planning to attend to RSVP.

Social Updates-Kaitlyn Herbin presented the social media numbers for the last month for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Twitter profile visits and followers are up but the Tweet impressions have gone down. Kaitlyn discussed that she was using engagement techniques like questions, polls, and replies to increase engagement and impressions. Facebook & Instagram had similar statistics with an increase in likes. However, Facebook impressions were down, and Instagram's had increased. The decline in Facebook impressions is likely due to the change in the algorithm.

Kaitlyn also updated the board on the Civil War Trail updating process. She still has two sign locations to visit and get updates on. After that she will begin working on updating the signs and stories that need to be updated.

After those two updates, Kaitlyn discussed the new blog series that she will post for the first time early next week. These series will focus on local restaurants with Gluten Free options and then vegan/vegetarian options later. The first three restaurants highlighted are Pandora's Pies (Elon), Saxapahaw General Store (Saxapahaw) and Press Coffee and Crepes (Graham). The hope is to help visitors with dietary restrictions find restaurants that cater to them easily and efficiently.

VI. Other Business

Grant Updates- City of Mebane & Studio 1

Grace VandeVisser

As a follow up from January's board meeting, Grace updated the board that the City of Mebane chose to accept the board's decision to use the allotted funding this year which

would allow them to apply again in the fall and that Studio 1 will reapply for the grant in the next cycle.

Anderson Rathbun presented to the board an opportunity to partner with the Burlington Sock Puppets and MLB to be the headlining sponsors of the All-Star games for the Appalachian League and the MLB Network. The board was interested in the sponsorship. Anderson will send a formal proposal with sponsorship costs for review. A formal vote will be made during the May 24th meeting.

VII. Adjourn

Katie adjourned the meeting and the upcoming meeting dates are forthcoming.

Minutes submitted by Kaitlyn Herbin.

Next Meeting

May 24, 2022-TBA