

Alamance County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

August 22, 2023

Burlington Historic Depot

Present: Anderson Rathbun
Matt Patel
Chuck Marsh

CVB: Grace VandeVisser
Reed Northcott
Jamie Merchel

Absent: Teena Koury
James Wallace

Financial: Susan Evans

Moment of Silence

Anderson Rathbun called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Chuck made a motion to approve the May minutes and the August 8, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes. Matt seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Collection Report

Susan Evans, Financial Representative, presented the Financial Reports as of July 31, 2023. The total fund balance is \$2,059,109. Occupancy taxes collected in July are not remitted to the County until August, therefore, revenues are not shown for July. Total expenses to date were \$55,365. Investments were \$587,706.

Visitor Bureau Updates

Grace reviewed the marketing grant applications for the City of Graham's Arts Around the Square to be held in 2024, the Balloon Festival which is being held on September 8th, and billboards for the Textile Heritage Museum. The City of Graham and Alcove's were approved to receive \$10,000 each, and the Textile Heritage Museum to receive \$5,000 in grants. Chuck made a motion to approve, and Matt seconded. The Marketing Grants were approved unanimously.

Grace spoke about the upcoming vacant TDA Board positions. Matt Patel and James Wallace's positions end on August 31, 2023. Chuck Marsh's position will also end on August 31, 2023. Chuck stated he plans to submit his application to serve another term. The applications received to fill the vacant TDA Board positions were Kavita Patel, Director of Sales for Fairfield Inn and Hampton Inn in Mebane, and Danielle Claudio from Courtyard Marriott in Burlington. Kavita was recommended by Anderson and Matt. Applicants for the tourism board positions were Erin Nettles with Burlington Downtown Corporation, Tony Laws with the City of Burlington, Steve Krans with Junction on 70, and Tammy Cobb with Alamance Arts. Anderson recommended Tammy Cobb. These applications will be submitted to County Commissioners for final recommendation.

Grace reported DTN (Destination Travel Network) sells advertising on our website. Currently we have 2 hotel partners participating. A small portion of the sales is submitted to the TDA. Grace suggested using these funds for a scholarship to offer to students who will studying hospitality or sports tourism as they are not occupancy taxes. Susan suggested Grace reach out to the Legal Department for permission to consider using the funds for scholarships.

Grace reported that Fishing University Productions which airs shows on CBS Sports, Outdoor Channel, and the World Fishing Network are coming to North Carolina and expressed an interest in doing a fishing show on a lake in Burlington. This production currently airs on CBS Sports, the Outdoor Channel, and the World Fishing Network. The viewership is around 3 ½ million across all channels. The cost is \$7,500 which is not currently in the TDA budget. The TDA would also need to pay for 7 staff rooms over 3 days and 1 meal a day. Their programming runs an estimated 350 to 400 times between all channels. Anderson asks for specific information as to when our episodes will air. Grace will contact Fishing University and email the board once they respond.

Grace reported our new events page from ITI Digital is up and running. The new site is very user friendly and looks very nice in providing information regarding upcoming area events. ITI Digital provides the TDA with suggested events for the area, and we approve all events before they go live on our website.

Grace reported on the convention center update which is currently in the second phase of the study and should be completed soon.

There have been some amendments to the Placer AI contract and Grace hopes this will be finalized soon and up and running within the next couple of weeks. This will be a 12-month contract based on the ratified contract. The City of Burlington did agree to have full access to the information in the program at a fee of \$5,000.

Grace presented the annual report which will be included in the Recreation Department's report for the county. The information in the submitted report did not include expenditures for Alamance County at the time of printing. However, the week prior, the state did release travel expenditures for Alamance County which reflected over \$251,000,000 in travel expenditures, an 11.3% growth over last year.

Recently Garden and Gun and Southern Living developed editorials on Saxapahaw.

Jessalyn Strauss, who previously served on our Board, is currently teaching a writing class at Elon University and Grace is in discussion with her regarding working with some of her students on creating content for our blog on our site.

Grace reported contracting and developing with Our State Magazine a holiday co-op is for the month of November. Participating partners included Persnickety Books, Granddaddy's Antique Mall, Smokehouse at Steve's, Painted Grape, and The Inn at Elon.

Grace reported on digital and print advertising with Raleigh Magazine, Northern Virginia Magazine as well as Our State Magazine. We will be advertising during the month of October for North Carolina Beer Month. We will also promote Sip and Savor during the holidays again this year. The Allie in Alamance account should be expanding on Instagram, which will now include guest and pet friends.

Grace mentioned the 2023 US Women's Disc Golf tournament will be held at Cedarock Park. 400 players have registered to participate during September 20th - 24th. The players will have a dinner at the Mebane Arts Center on the first night along with several events throughout the tournament being held at Cedarock Park.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.