

Alamance County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

October 22, 2024

Fairfield Inn & Suites, Mebane

Board Present:	Kavita Patel	CVB:	Grace VandeVisser
	Anna Rooney		Reed Northcott
	Stephanie Williams		
	Michael Hammond		

Recreation Staff:	Jamie Merchel	Financial:	Susan Evans
Guest	Rebecca Crawford		
	Brent LaFrancis		

Call to Order

Kavita Patel called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Anna motioned to approve the September minutes, and Teena seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Collection Report

Susan presented the Financial Reports as of September 30, 2024. The total fund balance is \$2,238,312. Total revenue received through August due to occupancy tax collected 1 month in the rears was \$195,700 at 21.6. Total expenses to date were \$205,861 and are on target at 25%. Total collections: \$283,950, up for the year at 39.1%. Investments totaled \$1,125,148. Sales tax revenues to date were \$4,021,948 1.11% higher than July 2023.

Audit Information

Martin Starnes & Associates presented a review of our audit. The audit showed an unmodified opinion, with no significant deficiencies or material internal control weaknesses identified, and the staff was cooperative. Revenues increased by \$63,000, or 6%, due to increased travel, and were received from occupancy receipts. Expenses increased by \$106,000 or 14% due to marketing events, partnership increases, hires, and pay raises. The fund balance, 2023 to 2024, increased by \$136,000, or 6%, due to revenues exceeding expenditures year over year. This is consistent with the growth from 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024. The available fund balance increased by \$133,000, or 6%. The TDA has roughly a 31-month supply on hand.

Visitor Bureau Updates

Teena Koury was appointed to continue as TDA Secretary. Anna made a motion to approve this, seconded by Stephanie. The motion passed unanimously.

Grace reported on the Grant applications. The TDA received applications from The City of Burlington, Special Events for the Carousel Festival, and an application from the Animal Park. The TDA has provided grants to both applicants in the past. The Carousel Festival will be held in May 2025, and they requested \$10,000 in the grant application. This grant would be used for digital billboards, TV and radio commercials, and digital display ads. It is required they target outside Alamance County in marketing. Grace mentioned that only 8,000 people were brought in last year, with 6,000 from Alamance County due to the weather. The previous year's festival attendance was 18,000, with 13,000 being from Alamance County. A suggestion was made to request a more detailed marketing strategy from Burlington Recreation, and a review of occupancy numbers for the prior carousel festival event weekends. Grace will contact the City of Burlington Recreation for more marketing information to ensure the marketed areas are within the grant guidelines and resubmit the grant with the more requested detailed information.

The Animal Park grant request was reviewed. Although the request was to begin in November, they asked for \$10,000 for marketing from November through January. There were some concerns regarding media placement and the timing of the grant. It was suggested that Animal Park has a package with an overnight stay, meals, and a ticket to the park entrance. The board decided not to approve this grant because of how the application was submitted and suggested they look at ways to increase their attendance in the future.

Grace reported that Magellan Strategy Group was the only bid received for the strategic plan. Chris Cavanaugh provided a detailed strategic plan for the TDA that included a snapshot of who we are, what we have, where we want to be, and how we can continue working with the new TDAs within the county. Grace provided a copy of this snapshot to the board. Jamie will contact Lisa Wolff with Berry Dunn to see if Berry Dunn has a team interested in submitting a proposal within the next 2 weeks and who the contact person would be.

Grace reported that Fishing University will be filming this week at Lake MacIntosh and visiting Western Alamance to film a school program that will air on networks such as CBS Sports and the Outdoor Network in Spring 2025.

Grace reported on the TDA's continuing print and broadcast. North Carolina's Great State Trails Day occurred throughout North Carolina on Saturday, October 19th. Grace reported that the North Carolina Sports Association will be in Wilkesboro next month. Grace reached out to Burlington Recreation, which stated they would probably join that group next year once they have a full year of occupancy collections. In December, the North Carolina Association Executive Trade Show will be held. Stephanie Williams reported the Community Leaders Retreat will take place in downtown Wilmington from November 19th – November 21st for anyone interested in attending. ROAR is the Chamber Women's Symposium and is coming up in March 2025. Stephanie Williams can be contacted if interested in attending.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.