

**Washington Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, October 8, 2025,  
Washington Police Station Conference Room.  
*Minutes***

**ATTENDEES**

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Andrew Kuhn                          | Fred Watkins                         |
| Anthony Tyre* (City Council Liaison) | John Jesso                           |
| Billie Wilson                        | Jonathan Russell                     |
| Blache Gibbs Tillis* (Secretary)     | Paula McCullough*                    |
| Charlotte Stubbs                     | Shont'e Mason*                       |
| Donald Sadler (Mayor)                | Stacy Jesso* (Chair)                 |
| Erin Ruyle                           | Wanda Geisen* (Vice Chair/Treasurer) |
| Franz Holscher                       | Zach Sette Wongse                    |

\* WTDA Board Members

**Absent:** *None*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

WTDA Chair Stacy Jesso called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

Item 9, Closed Session regarding WTDA Contracts, was opened and moved to Old Business. Tyre motioned to adopt the revised agenda; Shont'e seconded the motion, and the agenda was adopted.

Paula motioned to approve the September meeting minutes; Tyre seconded, and the minutes were approved.

## **GUEST PRESENTATION:**

Billie Wilson and Zach Settewongse presented their New Year's Eve Crab Drop application to the WTDA board. The total budget for the event is \$7,500, and the group requested \$5,000 in their application. The New Year's Eve Crab Drop will take place from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM and will feature a DJ, glow-in-the-dark mini golf, and fireworks at 8:15 PM.

## **Vote:**

City Council Liaison Anthony Tyre recused himself due to his involvement on the NYE Crab Drop committee. Banche moved to discuss the grant application, and Paula seconded the motion. The WTDA unanimously approved the \$5,000 grant request.

## **REPORTS:**

### **Financial Report:**

Tammy Swindell, the Director of Administrative Services for the City of Washington, will attend the November meeting to help train the board to understand the financial report better.

### **Civic Center Report:**

Charlotte Stubbs, the Venue and Event Manager, presented her Civic Center Report to the WTDA Board.

### **Directors Report:**

Erin Ruyle, the WTDA Interim Director, presented her Director's Report to the WTDA Board.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Election of Officers:**

Stacy Jesso nominated Blanche Tillis Gibbs for the WTDA Secretary position. Tyre motioned, and Shont'e seconded. All voted in favor of Blanche as the WTDA Secretary.

The WTDA board will select a Treasurer at the November meeting.

### **Volunteer Coverage for Upcoming Events:**

Erin passed out a sign-up sheet for volunteers to cover the WTDA booth to help with outreach at the Mac Bear Hodges Music Festival and Smoke on the Water.

### **School of Governance Training:**

Erin mentioned that there is a virtual opportunity for Paula McCullough and Shont'e Mason, who missed the School of Governance Training.

### **Tourism Open House:**

WTDA will host an open house on November 2nd from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM as an opportunity for businesses and community members to meet WTDA board members and staff.

### **Attorney & Marketing Contracts Review:**

The WTDA board reviewed contracts and invoices from attorneys Michael Best and Kanipe Creative Marketing. Board members raised concerns about the high amounts from both contracts and mentioned implementing a spending limit for WTDA staff.

Erin will set up a meeting with Kanipe Creative to justify the \$80,000 marketing contract.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Light up the City:**

The WTDA plans to have a presence at the Washington Harbor District Alliance's Light Up the City event on November 25th. The WTDA will offer a free train ride at the event, running from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

#### **250th Celebration:**

Erin and Andrew participated in the 250th meetings for HPOW and other historic groups in Washington. The date for the Washington 250th event has been set for April 11th, with a rain makeup date of April 18th.

## **INFORMAL DISCUSSION & PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **ADJOURN**

Shont'e motioned to adjourn the meeting; Tyre seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

The next board meeting is scheduled for noon on November 19th, 2025, at the Washington Civic Center Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Kuhn

**Marketing & Outreach Coordinator**

Washington Tourism Development Authority