

Rock Hill/York County CVB Board of Commissioners Meeting
York County/Rock Hill Airport
August 28, 2024 | 11:30 am

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

- **Board:** David Angel, Elizabeth Bowers, Amy Gonzalez, Natalie Hoekstra, Chip Hutchison, Lisa Moseley, Brown Simpson, Lamar Thompson, and Mark VanSickle
- **Guest:** Brian Jones
- **Staff:** Allison Cleveland, Andy Clinton, Kaylin Dettman, Cortney Peterson, and Annabel Thomas

CALL TO ORDER

Chip Hutchison called the meeting to order after everyone had a moment to grab their lunch and get settled.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

David Angel made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes (being that there was no July meeting); Brown Simpson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

In reviewing the P&L, Chip Hutchison noted an increase in income from Clover, York, and York County. The expenses seem to be as anticipated, with the only exceptions relating to Esports and Spark, the new PR and marketing agency. Andy elaborated on the expenses and highlighted 8350 which included the first quarter partnership payment to Rock Hill Parks, Recreation & Tourism. As of August 26, 2024, the operating account is at \$198,268.83, savings at \$894,771.25, and a credit card balance of \$11,700.69.

David Angel made a motion to approve the report; Amy Gonzalez seconded the motion. All were in favor.

PREFERRED HOTEL PROGRAM

Cortney Peterson highlighted July being a record-breaking month for the hotels, with an 18% increase YOY for a total of \$147,709.35. The total invoiced for FY25 is \$267,865.12, of which we have collected \$141,272.56. The past due amount is just over \$55,000. YOY occupancy is up 4%, with an average daily rate of \$116. Revenue per available room was up to \$79.43, an increase of 11% YOY.

Brian Jones was introduced as a guest who will officially join the board in January. Due to some position changes within Rock Hill PRT, Brian is now serving as Tourism Supervisor and Laurie Helms will no longer serve on our board. Brian has been with Rock Hill PRT since 2013 and currently oversees sports sales and the operations of the Rock Hill Sports & Event Center.

Cortney continued in mentioning the recently held quarterly hotel meeting that was hosted by Stars & Strikes. Hoteliers, Rock Hill PRT, and an event organizer, Jimmy Peden (Palmetto Volleyball) were in attendance.

CEO REPORT

Andy introduced our recent new hire, Annabel Thomas. Annabel oversees Destination Services, where she will provide connection between events and our marketing resources, better engaging the visitor and supporting partners. Andy continued in providing a glance into events and engagement over the past couple of months. This included Destinations International's Annual Convention and US Travel Association's ESTO Conference. He highlighted the Adidas basketball events and noted representation from across the country, which led to significant hotel impact over a 10-day period.

Andy continued in sharing his upcoming meeting with County manager, Josh Edwards, and building that relationship. He elaborated on initiatives and projects including the cross-country course finish line at Catawba

Bend Preserve through York County Parks & Recreation. The Bob Doster creation is being funded through the Partners in Tourism Foundation. Andy also shared renderings of the digital kiosk design that was recently approved by Fort Mill's Historic Review Board. He is working with Vinyet to get the proper permits for construction and installation of the downtown Fort Mill kiosk. York, Clover, and Rock Hill are interested in the digital kiosk for each of their communities. Andy noted having been approved last year for Fort Mill ATax funds to purchase the kiosk, and we are now asking for the funding for the construction and installation.

An update was given relating to the collaboration between Visit York County, York County Economic Development, and the York County Regional Chamber, highlighting the alignment within each organization and a unified message – *Make it York County*. Examples of the new destination brand were provided.

EVENT RECRUITMENT & SERVICES

Andy continued on Jordan's behalf and provided an update on the Playeasy platform on our website with deals and discounts to promote local businesses and lead to visitation. We have seen engagement following the distribution of discount cards at events. Annabel is working to increase the number of participating locations and will be sharing analytics and real data to encourage participation. Rock Hill PRT is on board with the initiative and plans are underway to utilize this platform across the county.

He continued in highlighting Placer.AI reporting that utilizes mobile location data to determine where visitors are from, where they're going while here, etc., which helps us understand how to market ourselves and provides valuable data to our partners that can lead to funding support. Andy noted a few different leads that Jordan is working on, including a 7-on-7 football event, Esports championship event, college disc golf, and AAU karate.

MARKETING

Kaylin highlighted initiatives with Spark Strategic Ideas relating to PR and marketing that will boost visibility with targeted outreach, build connections with travel writers and influencers, and strengthen our position as a travel destination. She provided examples of ads that she's been working on for Fall and shared the coverage of the YoCo Taste Trail Week. Kaylin also provided an update on behalf of Logan, including the Book Now button on our website that is in place for Preferred Hotels and includes virtual tours that Logan created. Kaylin also referenced AudioEye, a widget that makes the content on our website accessible for everyone.

Kaylin continued in noting 1.4 million website pageviews YTD compared to 1.1 million during the same timeframe last year, equating to a 23.56% increase. She touched on some well-producing social media content including a local's take restaurant guide and a collaboration with Carowinds featuring Gamecock football players. She and Andy touched on the partnership with Winthrop Athletics and working to bring life back to the Coliseum. Advertising within the Coliseum will include panels on the scoreboard and sponsoring a beer garden that will promote the Brew Trail and area attractions and restaurants.

NEW BUSINESS

Andy shared that the staff has been revisiting our 3-year strategic plan with an emphasis on the overarching goals for FY25. Everything falls under one of the following pillars: tourism industry expert, destination marketing leader, organization growth, and increased economic impact. He highlighted the implementation of advocacy efforts and touched on exploring ways to generate additional funding by potentially adding short-term rentals and attractions to the Destination Marketing Fee Program, monetizing the Brew Trail, and partnering with organizations like Piedmont Medical Center. Andy also noted the focus on professional growth of staff through various programs and being engaged throughout the community, as well as exploring new events. There was conversation about reaching locals, as well as discussion relating to a strategic plan focus group and survey for York County Parks & Recreation including cross-county services and branding.

Andy touched on upcoming events. He noted the new meeting schedule being on next week's County Council agenda for final approval, so we will begin meeting every other month.

ADJOURNMENT

David Angel made the motion to adjourn.