

**Rock Hill/York County CVB Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**York County/Rock Hill Airport**  
**June 28, 2023 | 8:00 am**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

- **Board:** Brown Simpson, Amy Gonzalez, Chip Hutchison, David Angel, Natalie Hoekstra, Laurie Helms, Caitlin Rogers, Lisa Mosely, Mark Van Sickle, Shea Maple, Lamar Thompson, Porter Gable
- **Staff:** Andy Clinton, Andrew Vinson, Allison Cleveland, Kaylin Dettman, Cortney Peterson, Jordan McCraw

**CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS:** Amy Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 8:01am and introduced the new board member, Natalie Hoekstra with Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton Inn & Suites Concord, as well as Ben Boyles with Clemson Extension.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:** David Angel moved to approve the May minutes; Brown seconded, and all were in favor.

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT:** Chip Hutchison reported that balances look good with cash on hand. There's \$157,000 in an account at South State that will soon be closed, as well as \$125,000 in operating and \$461,000 in a money market account at First Citizens. He also referenced that we hit the million dollar mark for the destination marketing fee collections and noted that we are waiting on a check to be processed from SCPRT. Andy elaborated to share that while \$200,000 was budgeted, it will come in at \$187,000 after the fiscal year ends. Chip continued to share that we will end up under budget for the fiscal year and applauded staff for being conservative during a year of transition. Andy added that total expenses were budgeted at \$1,662,000 compared to the \$1,624,000 that was spent. We were under budget by \$38,000, which was 97% of budget. Andy also shared that \$21,000 will hit for more destination guides.

David Angel acknowledged Andrew Vinson's efforts to bring clarity and understanding of the finances. He made a motion to approve the financial report that was seconded by Shea Maple; all were in favor.

**DESTINATION MARKETING FEE:** Cortney Peterson provided her first report as a staff member. All 24 hotels have responded for the month of May with a total of \$117,598.11, which was up 16.5% over last May. For the fiscal year, \$1,164,567.39 was invoiced and \$1,107,475.79 collected. Approximately \$57,000 is to be collected. Cortney also acknowledged that Allison Cleveland secured the 25th Preferred Hotel property in June after 9 months of trying to get them to recommit due to a change in ownership and management, so this provided a good learning experience for Cortney.

Chip mentioned July being a good month with Adidas basketball. Cortney referenced how well May did, beating out the prior July when Adidas was here. Laurie contributed in saying that Adidas will be here more days this year than last. Andy added that rate continues to grow, as does revenue due to more properties participating in the program.

**CEO REPORT:** Andy Clinton shared that Visit York County was brought up at the York County Council meeting last week. They had good things to say about the organization as they discussed accommodation tax allotments for projects. Our funding ended up increasing from \$300,000 to \$322,500. The goal is to increase all funding, which we are doing; however, we are still working on Clover funding for this fiscal year. He expressed appreciation to board members who have advocated for us with the council.

Andy referenced the transition from Allison to Cortney being a great one. Mallory and Kaylin have been working on several projects over the past month. The Power House video did extremely well, receiving 56,000

views (the most to date for a video), which was 20,000 more than any other video. Kaylin noted that influencers and marketing companies in Charlotte have reached out about it as well. Charlotte Momma recently completed a segment in an influencer series where all municipalities are featured in a reel and a blog with kid-friendly itineraries. York was the first to be released. Andy also shared that South Carolina PRT came into town in late May. This was the first time in years they have visited to create specific content for York County for their statewide initiatives.

David Angel asked if a relationship with Clemson PRT (staff and students) would be advantageous, believing a course study could be considered given the synergy between Visit York County and Rock Hill PRT. Laurie Helms mentioned the City of Rock Hill having a history of doing that. David will get the conversation started.

Andy continued in referencing the Annual Report being mailed out and Brew Trail passports being amped up with posters and window materials. He also touched on the Football Spring Nationals that Jordan brought in. The youth tackle event (ages 6-14) took place at the Comporium Athletic Park in Fort Mill June 19-24, which provided weekday business for hotels. There were 58 teams from 7 states located along the east coast from Delaware to Florida, and there is talk of them coming back in 2 years.

Andy ended the staff report with Andrew Vinson's resignation. Andrew has spent a lot of time getting the back-end cleaned up and streamlined, and he was able to assess procedures and implement change. Andrew's heart is in the banking field, where he had spent 14 years. Andrew shared that he appreciated his time with Visit York County and believes he's leaving the position in a better spot than he found it. He will always be a supporter from a distance while working for First Citizens. Prior to leaving, he'll be working on the audit to leave us in good shape. Andrew will continue to serve on the ChristmasVille Board and York County Sports Hall of Fame Board. Chip and others expressed gratitude and referenced the new check signing process.

Andy touched on the York County Collaborative Marketing project/opportunity and shared that we are moving forward with plans to work the Chamber and York County Economic Development on an overarching marketing plan for the 3 organizations. All organizations will benefit, and there will be a shared cost.

Andy presented the FY24 budget for approval and noted Andrew's efforts in combining codes. He touched on municipal grants: \$119,000 in Rock Hill A-Tax; \$105,000 in Fort Mill A-Tax; \$22,000 in York A-Tax; \$10,000 from Tega Cay; \$6,000 from Clover; and \$322,000 from York County. All were increases except for Clover, which remained the same. Andy continued in sharing that the Emerging Destination Grant was at \$140,000, which was down from \$200,000 due to them inverting the grant from 3:1 to 1:3. The STAR Grant (new sports tourism grant) is at \$50,000. Andy also referenced the Destination Marketing Fee figure being conservative at 1.1 million.

Moving on to expenses, Andy shared that the line item for salaries went up due to a 4% increase on the employer for retirement and benefits, as well as the new part-time position for office manager (Allison's new role) and a new marketing position that will be added. There were minor increases or decreases across the board, but event expenses are at \$235,000, which is larger than most years due to the BMX World Championships of \$120,000. Chip acknowledged the significance of the BMX impact.

Brown Simpson posed the question to Laurie Helms as to how many total days the event will occur. While the active days of competition will be 7-8 days, some teams and individuals will be in town for 28 days to train and get accustomed to the track. The May event will be the last qualifier before the 2024 Olympics. Andy acknowledged that it takes all tourism entities to make the event happen. Laurie shared that Chip and his wife Sherry are chairing the effort to recruit volunteers. David added that this event will provide the opportunity to collaborate with the chamber and economic development and partner on branding as well as volunteer efforts. More collaboration and engagement is something we are working towards.

Andy continued in sharing that the Rock Hill PRT event expense of \$350,000 will increase to 35% for the following fiscal year. There were no significant changes beyond those previously mentioned. Andy also

referenced the increase in bank interest due to getting a 4% rate on the money market account. The net operating income is at \$0.

Brown Simpson made the motion to approve the FY 23-24 budget; David Angel seconded, and all were in favor.

**COMMISSIONER FEEDBACK:** Brown referenced an article about the SC High School League moving their Football State Championships to SC State University, as well as the SC Basketball Upper and Lower State Basketball Championships going to Florence. He questioned if Winthrop submitted a bid. Andy added that it's challenging for them due to the timing of the Big South Championship and it being a transitional period at Winthrop. Brown continued by sharing that the High School League wants to combine everything into one site. The Sports & Event Center was brought up as a suggestion, but they are booked and they don't have enough seating. Andrew added that it will take a group like the Visit York County board coming together to make something like that happen.

Andy shifted to gather feedback from the board relating to meeting content, location, schedule, staff reports, etc. The consensus was that early meetings work best, and it's nice to have consistency as to a location, especially one that provides the privacy and technology that the airport does.

Brown added that we have 11 meetings during the year and was curious as to the possibility of cutting it back to one meeting between July and August, for a total of 10 meetings a year. David Angel made a motion to move to 10 meetings and leaving attendance up to Andy and staff as to who needs to be present and who needs to make presentations. Brown Simpson seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Chip referenced the amount of people who are in town during Adidas and asked to meet with Jordan, Laurie, and Cortney after the meeting to make sure the visitor is accommodated during Adidas, as well as during BMX next year. Natalie Hoekstra mentioned working together to have a big presence during large events such as those mentioned. Laurie shared that she's working with Cortney to get signage out to the hotels and utilizing distribution lists, including those that are used when Visit York County sends out the partner newsletters since the former version of Partners in Tourism is no longer in existence. It was discussed as to how visitor information is getting in front of the teams.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Andy shared that the next board meeting is the Annual Meeting/VIP Taste Trail Kick-Off on Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-6pm at The Power House. Mingling will take place for the first 30 minutes, followed by a report, and then a burger cook-off between the chefs from FlipSide and Kounter. Invitations will be sent within the next week. The YoCo Taste Trail is scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>. Andy added that the YoCo Beer is being finalized with Legal Remedy through a collaboration with Bush-n-Vine and their blackberries.

It was noted that there will be no August meeting, and that the next regular meeting will be in September.

Kaylin added that there is an event at Slow Play Brewing on July 7<sup>th</sup> to promote Visit York County and the re-release of beer. It's been so well-received that there's been conversations about canning it.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chip Hutchison made the motion to adjourn; Mark Van Sickle seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:02am.