

**Rock Hill/York County CVB Board of Commissioners Meeting
Rock Hill/York County Airport | October 22, 2025 | 11:30 am**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

- **Board:** David Angel, Elizabeth Bowers, Malinda Foster, Porter Gable, Tommy Henry, Natalie Hoekstra, Brian Jones, Shea Maple, Lisa Moseley, Megan Nelson, and Lamar Thompson
- **Staff:** Allison Cleveland, Andy Clinton, Logan Elrod, Chris Harrell, Michelle Manning-Osborn, and Jordan McCraw
- **Guest:** Steve Tolson, Kim Smith, and Jesse Engel

CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

David Angel called the meeting to order at 11:45am. Following prayer, David asked for a motion to approve the August minutes. The motion was made by Elizabeth Bowers and seconded by Porter Gable. All were in favor.

VISIT YORK COUNTY AUDIT

Kim Smith and Jesse Engel (lead auditor) with Burkett CPAs joined the meeting to present their audit findings. Kim commended staff and the board for placing priority on monitoring our financial wellbeing and referenced the independent audit report copies that each person received. Kim noted the importance of their unmodified opinion which is their highest level of assurance relating to the financial statements being materially correct. She continued by highlighting the statement of financial position that is similar to what we refer to as our balance sheet or our statement of assets and liabilities.

Total assets for the year were around 2 million. Things look pretty similar, with the only notable things being a slight increase in prepaid expenses due to the way in which annual subscriptions for software and marketing are paid upfront for the year and then expensed monthly, as well as an increase in property and equipment.

Total liabilities for the year were \$390,000, and when compared to assets, the total net assets were 1.6 million. Of that amount, \$925,000 was board designated for specific purposes and matched the savings account figure at the end of the year.

Kim continued by highlighting the statement of activities/income statement for FY25 and FY24. For 2025, total support and revenue was 2.6 million and total expenses were 2.5 for an increase of \$114,000 in net assets. Interest income was almost \$33,000. The biggest change noted on revenue for the year was an increase in Destination Marketing Fees. She also noted how the compensated hotel rooms are recognized as in-kind revenue as well as an expense in the exact same amount due to it being a benefit rather than a cash transaction - they offset each other. The value is determined by a calculation that incorporates the average nightly rate.

She then noted the statement of cash flows comparative for the two years and referenced a net increase in cash of \$106,000 for the year. Comparatives of our Statement of Functional Expenses were broken down into more detail, with the larger expenses being what would be expected - advertising and marketing, operating lease, printing and design, as well as personnel costs. These were very similar in nature for 2024 with no new footnotes to the financial statements.

Kim referenced the supplementary information that looks at our budget versus actual, noting the Destination Marketing Fees being around \$237,000 more than what was originally budgeted and reiterated it being a wash on our financial statements due to the in-kind revenue of the hotel rooms. Relating to expenses, there were a couple of larger discrepancies that had already been referenced in the minutes. This included \$40,000 in printing and design, as well as some professional development expenses for conferences.

Capital expenses were broken out to include software not yet in service relating to the Make it York County initiative and a new Visit York County website that had not been completed as of June 30th. Property equipment increased about \$50,000 for the kiosk.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Natalie Hoekstra provided current balances of accounts: Operating at \$79,392.93 and Money Market at \$1,099,641.72, with a Credit Card balance of \$15,180.98. Regarding income on the P&L, miscellaneous partnerships included sponsorships with US Foods and Family Trust, and ad sales for the Destination Guide were up over budget. Allison Cleveland added that there was potential for additional income as people have until the end of the year to commit.

Relating to expenses, Natalie pointed out the annual software subscriptions for event impact calculator, Playeasy, Key Data hotel software, and business intelligence software. She also noted website and kiosk construction expenses, stating that there is potential of the construction costs being removed from this year's budget. Larger event expenses include OTB youth football, Field of 68, Cam Newton football, and US Disc Golf. She also noted advertising at the Anne Springs Close Greenway and the partnership with Forest Forms.

Natalie closed by sharing that the negative net operating balance of \$150,810 is very normal around this time of year due to the schedule in which reimbursements are received for grants and accommodation tax. Porter Gable made a motion to approve the report, and Elizabeth Bowers seconded the motion. All were in favor.

CEO REPORT

Andy Clinton asked for support relating to the ability to transfer money between our money market account and operating account. The intention is to keep as much money in the higher interest-earning account as possible, but due to the operating account being board designated funds, the current financial policy does not provide the flexibility needed during times of the year when there is not as much cashflow. David called for a motion to grant staff the ability to move up to \$100,000, with anything above that amount needing to be approved by the Executive Committee. Malinda Foster made the above-mentioned motion, and Porter Gable seconded the motion. All were in favor. Allison Cleveland stated that while we now have the ability to make the transfers, there is no intention of making numerous transactions in an effort to keep documentation clean.

STAFF & BOARD ADDITIONS

Andy welcomed newly sworn-in Megan Nelson who has a tourism background and represents the Tega Cay area as well as the Carolina Show Ski Team. He also recognized Steve Tolson, who is going through the process of joining the board. Steve and his brother operate Amor Artis Brewing and The Print Shop in Fort Mill, and are partners in Off the Tracks Brewing in Rock Hill.

Andy then introduced the newest staff member, Chris Harrell. Chris has been in the Director of Destination Services role for just over a month. He is utilizing his background in sports to expand our footprint at events and bring structure to various aspects of operations.

ORGANIZATION UPDATES

Andy noted various meetings and engagement elements that staff recently participated in. This included regular meetings with the Chamber and York County Economic Development regarding Make It York County initiatives, which has stemmed into synergy relating to our role in business recruitment. He touched on Allison being in a non-profit management certificate program, as well as plans for the ladies in the office to attend a women's leadership event with other women representing tourism in York County – both through the Chamber.

Ongoing conversations continue with municipality and County representatives, and we were awarded \$7,500 of additional ATax from the Town of Fort Mill. We participated in several events/fundraisers that included a hospitality or tourism component and were able to make some good connections. Andy also spoke on the partnership with the Greenway and their Forest Forms, as well as the Family Trust sponsored activity books that will be distributed to area restaurants and at events to engage families.

Andy also showed construction of the kiosk and getting closer to completing that project after delivery was delayed. The digital components are anticipated to last for 6-8 years. Since the kiosk construction and installation costs are capital in nature and were budgeted for the previous cycle, a recommendation was made by the Executive Committee to utilize funds in the Money Market account to cover the invoices. Porter Gable

made the motion to utilize the Money Market funds as part of the budgetary process, and Elizabeth Bowers seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Andy shared that an ownership group (who recently stripped their management company) pulled their 3 hotels from the Preferred Hotel Program – Fairfield Inn & Suites Rock Hill, TownePlace Suites Rock Hill, and Hampton Inn Fort Mill. While we are projecting being \$100,000 under budget on Destination Marketing Fee revenue, hoteliers at the meeting (Melinda and Natalie) spoke on how this does not reflect poorly on the program and the relationships Cortney has built. Hotels in the pipeline were discussed.

Andy made it clear that staff is cognizant of the adjustment but also confident we're in a good place with the additional revenue from partnerships and ad sales, as well as looking into the possibility of incorporating campgrounds and short-term rentals into the program. Allison added that we have gotten Bev Carroll with Morton & Gettys involved from a legal standpoint. The hotels owe around \$12,000 for past-due invoices and are also still collecting the fee.

HOTEL PERFORMANCE

In Cortney's absence, Allison reported on Destination Marketing Fee collections, noting \$435,597.44 invoiced and \$330,204.40 collected. Only 9% of invoices are 30+ days past due, which does include those hotel properties who recently left the program. She noted the hotel performance data looking a bit different due to the recent switch from STR to Key Data which paints a clearer picture for our Preferred Hotels. Occupancy, RevPAR, Supply, Demand, and Revenue were all slightly down, but the Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased by 2.9% to \$119.39. Allison stated that everything we're seeing locally is in line with national trends.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Michelle mentioned having recent communication with the Catawba Nation and plans to promote their Yap Ye Iswa Festival. She's also been working on bridging the gap with the Come-See-Me Festival and joined the Main Street York committee to work towards bringing more business to Main Street. Logan has also been working with community partners through the Downtown Fort Mill Co-Op.

Michelle highlighted the recent launch of our new website and plans to replace the video on the home page with the new tourism video coming out in November. Relating to PR, a travel blogger recently visited from the Raleigh triangle market, and a blogger from the Atlanta market as we attempt to reach various demographics. The most recent focus was on a romantic getaway. Work on the Destination Guide is underway, with a more in-house approach. Content is due November 7th, and ads are due by the end of the year. The guides should be in-hand in March, with the cover featuring a family at the Greenway.

A new trail was launched – YoCo Coffee Trail. Passports are online through a new program, BandWango. While we intend to keep physical passports for the Brew Trail, this allows us to include an online version and incorporate new trails without print costs. After two weeks of launching, there were 512 signups, 205 active passes, and a completion that came with a York County coffee mug prize. There has not been any paid advertising at this point.

Logan Elrod highlighted social media exposure during the US Disc Golf Championship. Compared to last year's championship, we had 73% more views, 130% more organic engagements, and an increase in engagement rate of 32.5%.

EVENTS RECRUITMENT

Jordan McCraw provided an update on events scheduled to occur over the next couple of months; most notably, Field of 68 on Monday, November 3rd with games at 8am, 11am, and 6:30pm for the opening day of college basketball. The board was invited to attend the games and enjoy the hospitality room where we've partnered with US Foods and Chef Rob from Kounter. C1N (Cam Newton's youth tackle football) will have 40 teams out at South Pointe High School on October 24th and 25th. First XI Football has been locked in for January 16 – 20, 2026, and will utilize Winthrop's West Center.

Jordan continued in touching on leads and travel updates, which included representation and lead generation through the South Carolina Sports Alliance at the TEAMS Conference and SPORTS Relationship Conference.

Jordan and Chris attended a learning development conference through the Sports Events & Tourism Association – 4S & Rights Holder Summit.

He also noted a site visit with Spartan Race representatives at the County's Catawba Bend Park. The cross-country finish line structure by Bob Doster will be installed during the spring timeframe, along with a ribbon-cutting. There are numerous events that we will be able to host once the park comes online.

DESTINATION SERVICES

Chris Harrell provided a couple of updates relating to our presence at events and elaborated on our promotions at US Disc Golf Championship during the 4-day event. The Plinko board was onsite to showcase as an example of how attendees were encouraged to engage with us and earn prizes with our branding. There were around 5,500 attendees from as far away as Alaska and various countries. 77% were from out of county, and 60% were out of state. We assisted their ticket office by providing wristbands with QR codes that led back to our website – over 2,500 were distributed.

Chris noted the intention to plan ahead for presence or signage at every event. In addition to the planning going into Field of 68, he highlighted presence at cornhole, table tennis, and a car show. Deals & Discounts numbers were down during the vacancy in the role, but Chris has made good connections by attending events within the community, and is in the process of getting restaurants to join the program. He is also working on promoting the Deals & Discounts through the Playeasy webpage and finding creative ways to redirect people to our website.

BOARD DISCUSSION

David thanked the staff for doing such a commendable job on the accounting side and for having a nice and clean audit. He commended Andy for his leadership and the staff that have brought us to a point where we are able to withstand without any worries.

Andy asked for continued oversight and advocacy to make sure we are doing our jobs effectively and keeping finances in a good position, as well as joining him when meeting with municipalities or the County as we work to make an impact for our community. The December meeting will not be on the 4th Wednesday, but rather, Wednesday, December 10th at the Anne Springs Close Greenway's Canteen. Representatives of County Council, Economic Development, and the Chamber will also be invited.

ADJOURNMENT

Porter Gable made the motion to adjourn at 1pm.