BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**ALAMANCE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 10:30 A.M.**

**Historic Depot**

Present: Anderson Rathbun CVB: Grace VandeVisser

 Jessalynn Strauss

 Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion Financial: Jennifer Blalock via Zoom

 Matt Patel via Zoom Auditors: Martin Starnes & Associates

 **Moment of Silence**

Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion, Chair, called the meeting to order and a moment of silence was observed.

 **Approval of Minutes**

Katie asked if there were any additions or corrections to be made to the August minutes. No updates were needed. Jessalyn motioned to approve the minutes and Anderson seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

## Collection Report

Jennifer Blalock presented the financial reports through September 30, 2021. Total assets are $1,566,000. Revenues reported were $68,128 with expenditures reported at $120,981. Occupancy tax collections reported through August 2021 totaled $217,164, a 76.54% increase over the same period in 2020 (17.8% over the same period in 2019) with the TDA’s share of $140,444. Investment’s total $585,097. Sales tax collections for the month of July 2021 reflects a 21.51% increase over the same period in 2020.

## Audit Presentation

Alamance County’s TDA 2021 Audited Financial Statements. There was a clean opinion of the audit with no significant deficiencies or material internal control weaknesses identified. Martin Starnes had a very cooperative county staff as they reviewed the audit. Revenues increased $30,641 (6%) due to an increase in interest income. And revenues in FY21 were not affected as much due to Covid, compared to FY20. Expenditures decreased $90,293 (18%) due to vacant positions and lower expenses due to Covid. Total fund balance increased by $141,766 (10%) due to decreases in expenses and increases in revenues. There was an increase of $107,949 (7%) in available Fund Balance which is roughly 46 months of supply on hand or 8% - where 8% equaling one month’s supply

### **Visitor Bureau Updates**

As we continue to use 2019 as a baseline year and comparing data against 2021, occupancy levels for July-September averaged 62.1% and 60.6% respectively. However, in these first three months of the fiscal year, we have experienced a 13.14% increase in revenues, compared to 2019.

An update was provided to the board regarding the IMG/Learfield digital program partnership. We were able to include the following schools to market Alamance County through their sports network: Elon, Duke, UNC, and NC State. We were able to negotiate the inclusion of UNCG and Charlotte at the rate of $8,610. As a recap, this would include 100,000 geo-targeted impressions, per school, through the spring sports season. As this was not initially included in the approved advertising budget, a motion was made by Anderson Rathbun to approve proceeding with the opportunity. Katie Geoffrion seconded the motion with the remaining board members unanimously approving. In addition, a cooperative opportunity to offer our partners was also discussed regarding Our State magazine for February, in their Town & County in the NC Piedmont’s special edition. The amount of $3,750 would be supplemented by the CVB with partner engagement at $3,750. A motion was made by Anderson Rathbun to approve proceeding with the opportunity. Katie Geoffrion seconded the motion with the remaining board members unanimously approving.

The annual marketing grant will be released on November 1st. The deadline for the application and related documents is January 3, 2022. The only update to the grant is inclusion of a schedule specifically to those who will be applying relevant to advertising, to assist with planning their advertising schedule.

The Visitor Services Coordinator position should be posted this week.

This month we administered a Partner Marketing Survey which was sent to approximately 147 partners, with approximately 50 partners responding.

We received Visitor Impact reporting from Visit NC/EDPNC for 2020. A press release was sent out regarding our county impact figures on October 22nd. Although county spending decreased by 31.1% compared to 2019, our community remained competitive in the Piedmont. Based on the STR Report, we had higher occupancy and revenues through December 2020 compared to Piedmont region. In addition, our collections are beginning to surpass 2019 collections, and we are using 2019 as our benchmark for comparative purposes moving out of Covid. In addition, reporting provided by Visit NC, for the first time, includes reporting on segments: lodging, recreation, F&B, transportation, and retail.

In regard to the PNC building in Graham which we had toured as a potential site for a future visitor center, that property is under contract. Jason Cox’s understanding is that the contract is firm. We will continue to search for an opportunity.

The 2022 Visitor Guidebook revisions are almost complete. We have only a few items to finalize include photography approvals, the selfie “scavenger hunt” addition and the cover. Discussion was had regarding a few options for the cover.

Since our last meeting there have been 70 brochure requests. We have 2,643 Facebook followers, (an increase of 507 new followers), 14,000 post reach and 1,400 engagements. Our website had 6,000 users and 13,000 pageviews. Our final figures for our Facebook campaign from August-October reached 23,000 and had 2,200 engagements, with 1,900 clicking through to our website. This promotion was a success as the goals were to increase website traffic and engagement. Our Instagram followers are up to 2,467 and 756 engagements this past month. Our top referring pages continue with Facebook, Visit NC, MLB and popular for fall, PumpkinPatchesandMore.org. New and returning visitors to our website were up by 76.89% and 109.59% respectively from last year, however, compared to last month, they were down overall by 22.4%.

Website users this month were from Greensboro, Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta, and DC and again seeing visitors from Myrtle Beach.

Recent ad placements included Our State print and digital, Raleigh Magazine, Featured events on VisitNC.com, Relocation Magazine, IMG/Learfield digital, NC PBS digital, Alamance Crossing and Tanger billboard and panel promotion.

 **Adjourn**

Katie adjourned the meeting at 11:33 am

Minutes submitted by Grace VandeVisser

**Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

January 19, 2022 – SDC Meeting – Best Western

January 25, 2022 - TDA Meeting - Historic Depot