



Swain County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Present (Voting): Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor, Andy Bhakta, Robin Fronrath, Janene Lancaster,
Tanner Lawson, Erin Smith

Absent (Voting) Adrian Litzau

Present (EX-Officio) Cally Elliott, TDA Finance Officer

Absent (Ex-Officio): Lottie Barker, Swain County Manager

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones

Attendees: Dena Ensley and Staff, Yellow Rose Realty, Mark Van Osdal, Shannon Semit,
Carolina Bound, Monica Brown, Frymont Inn, Jay Kirkland, Commissioner Chair Swain County

This meeting was called to order at 12:00p.m. by Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor. The Pledge of Allegiance was given. Prayer by Tanner Lawson

Call for any changes to the agenda: None

Tanner Lawson made a motion to accept Minutes of 12-10-2025. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Andy Bahkta made a motion to go into Executive Session; GS 143-318.11(a)(6). Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. Rita Jones and Sarah Conley were asked not to attend. All in favor. Motion carried. Began at 12:05 p.m.

Janene Lancaster made motion to go back into the Regular TDA meeting. Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting began at 1:08 p.m.

Erin Smith made a motion to put into place an Oversight Committee for Human Resource for the TDA employees. This was seconded by Andy Bhakta. All in favor. Motion carried. Volunteers for this committee are: PattiJo Taylor, Erin Smith and Janene Lancaster.

Executive Director Report presented by Sarah Conley

Marketing and Public Relations:



- Final edits on the 2026 Visitor Guide. Additional 20,000 have been added to go to print for this year.
- A new Media Page has been added to the Website that will feature media information and PR information.
- Marketing focus is on Spring Break and Summer travel.
- There was a content collab at Longview Resort and Spa for girls/getaway or Mother and Daughter getaway with Spa packages available.
- Selena has been attending Chamber meetings and Swain County 250 NC meetings.
- The Chamber of Commerce will be asking for funding sponsorship for the upcoming year within the next month.
- Sarah has a meeting with GSMR to go over the specifics of the Great Smoky Appalachia Music Train which will be taking place in June. This will be multiple music artists on the train with passengers walking through different cars on the train to get to listen to the different artists.
- Sarah is working on permanent signs for the Visitor center to remove old signage.
- Rita will be working with the Heritage Museum Board and Swain County High School to get the old Nabors sign fixed for permanent hanging in the museum.
- Selena has given updated looks for rack cards Road to Nowhere and Waterfall Hikes.
- Dec PR & Social Report: <https://brys.onl/4tsmPhF>
Jan PR & Social Report: <https://brys.onl/45X63xj>

Financial:

- Financial reports sent via email
- November occupancy is up 13% from prior year We are currently 14% over budgeted amount.
- Dec Financial Report: <https://brys.onl/4rJt9jq>
- Jan Financial Report: <https://brys.onl/3O8qUre>

Administration & Committees:

- The Finance and Marketing committees will be meeting in April following the Strategic meeting in March.

Janene Lancaster made a motion to move the April meeting to April 15, 2026, due to Spring Break is the week that our regular meeting would take place and several members will be out of town. Andy seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

HR

- Front desk staff hours have been cut for winter hours at visitor center.
- Reviews of employee handbook and Fair Labor Standards.



- Workers comp audit completed, also hours for sick leave and vacation turned into auditors.

Board Discussion:

PattiJo gave an update on the flowers for spring and summer. The colors will be the colors red, white and purple that is a blue color for America 250. Town of Bryson City gave permission for the TDA to install the hanging flowerpots on the black poles. Therefore, the flowerpots will be on Everett St and Mitchell Street. Craig Smith gave a rendering of the front entrance of the visitor center and museum. Pooh would like to see drawing from different angles before voting on this.

Sarah opened discussion on the TDA purchasing the property at 67 Lakeview Drive, which is the airport property above Bryson City. This property is up for sale, and it would be a great asset to Swain County. Chairman, Jay Kirkland said he has talked to the commission board, and they don't seem to be interested in the purchase of this property. But Mr. Kirkland agreed that it would be an asset to Swain County.

Janene Lancaster made a motion to have attorney Jonathan Mattox to check into the purchase of this property on behalf of the TDA. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Janene Lancaster brought up discussion of the Christmas Light Show. There was much disappointment in the low attendance. The board agreed that there is a need for a "professional marketing company" to handle marketing of the Light Show. No vote taken on this matter.

PattiJo brought up about putting kiosks around town. The board said that they would like signage rather than kiosks that need power and must have updates ever so often. Sarah reached out to the GSMR regarding the painting of the caboose before tourism picks back up for summer. Sarah has also put out RFP regarding the Bryson City entrance sign, waiting to hear from any companies on this.

Robin Fronrath made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at: 1:58 p.m.

Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Tanner Lawson _____

Adrian Litzau _____



Erin Smith_____