



Swain County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors – Regular Meeting

April 15, 2026

Attendance

Present (Voting): Chairwoman Pattijo Taylor, Andy Bhakta, Robin Fronrath, Adrian Litau

Absent (Voting): Janene Lancaster, Tanner Lawson, Erin Smith

Present (Ex-Officio): Cally Elliott, TDA Finance Officer

TDA Staff: Mary Anne Shea, Selena Hyde, Rita Jones

Attendees: Brett Hackshaw (Town of Bryson City), Monica Brown (Chamber Chair), Troy Burns (Singing in the Smokies), Fred Crawford, Rob Hawk (Swain County Agricultural Fair), Sharla Stolfus

Call to Order

Chairwoman Pattijo Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a prayer given by Rita Jones.

Changes to Agenda

None.

Public Comment

Brett Hackshaw – Town of Bryson City Streetscape Improvements

Mr. Hackshaw provided an update on the Main Street Streetscape Project, which will run from the Visitor Center to IGA. Construction is scheduled to begin June 1 and continue through at least November 15.

The TDA has allocated \$75,000 in the 2025–2026 budget for benches, trash receptacles, and brick inlays as needed. Mr. Hackshaw requested an additional \$75,000 be included in the 2026–2027 budget for Phase I of the project.



Sponsorship Requests

Swain County Agricultural Fair – Rob Hawk

- Request: \$15,000
- Dates: August 21–22
- Estimated attendance: 2,100 visitors staying in Bryson City
- Includes return of Battle of the Bands

Singing in the Smokies – Troy Burns

- Request: \$7,500–\$10,000
- Dates: July 2–4
- Attendance: ~3,500 per night
- Visitors typically stay 3–4 nights
- Total event cost: ~\$196,500

SBG Productions Smoky Mountain Train (Presented by Mary Anne Shea)

- Request: \$10,000
- Dates: June 5–6, 2026
- Description: Live music experience aboard the train to Nantahala Gorge featuring six musicians performing throughout the ride
- Company based in Durango, CO

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve March 11, 2026 minutes: **Adrian Litzau**
- Second: **Robin Fronrath**
- **Approved unanimously**
- Motion to approve Executive Session minutes (G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)) for March 11, 2026: **Robin Fronrath**



- Second: **Adrian Litzau**
 - **Approved unanimously**
-

Executive Report – Mary Anne Shea

Mary Anne presented the need to hire a **food photography consultant** to better showcase the growing culinary offerings in Bryson City.

- Proposed vendor: Erin Adams Photography (Asheville)
- Cost: \$46,000
- Scope: One week of photography in early June for immediate marketing use

Motion: Adrian Litzau

Second: Robin Fronrath

Result: Approved unanimously

Budget

- FY 2026–2027 budget review scheduled for May 13
 - Possibility of two meetings in June
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Marketing Updates

- Securing pricing for FY 2026–2027 marketing contracts
 - Review of Google Analytics
 - Christmas Light Show update to be presented at May meeting
 - New Saturday vendor market and children’s activities planned at the Aquarium to increase visitation (including bounce houses, face painting, and yard games)
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Administrative Updates

- Meetings with NOC and Great Smoky Mountains Railroad; presentation at Regional TDA Executive Directors meeting in Cherokee



- Caboose painting scheduled for completion by May 15 (\$6,500 contract)
- Budget preparation underway
- Succession planning for Executive Director position
- Employee development and leadership planning (Years 1–2)
- Asset organization (photos, video, websites, social content, travel writers)
- Development of Policies & Procedures Manual
- Exploration of Community Grant program similar to neighboring counties

Logo Update:

It was identified that the caboose design included an AI-generated logo instead of the official logo.

Motion: Use official logo with correct colors and adjusted sizing

- Motion: Adrian Litzau
- Second: Robin Fronrath
- **Approved unanimously**

Financial Report

- Budget review scheduled for May meeting
- Occupancy tax collections update
- Financial reports reviewed

Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel:

- Motion: Adrian Litzau
 - Rita Jones and Selena Hyde were excused
 - Session began at 1:40 p.m.
-



Adjournment

Upon return from Executive Session:

- Motion to adjourn: Adrian Litzau
- Second: Robin Fronrath
- **Approved unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Tanner Lawson _____

Adrian Litzau _____

Erin Smith _____