



Swain County Tourism Development Authority

Regular Board Meeting

July 15, 2026

Board Members Present (Voting)

- Chairwoman Patti Jo Taylor
- Andy Bhakta
- Dena Ensley
- Robin Fronrath
- Anna Herzog
- Adrian Litzau

Board Members Absent (Voting)

- Commissioner David Loftis

Ex-Officio Members Present

- Cally Elliott, TDA Finance Officer

Ex-Officio Members Absent

- None

TDA Staff Present

- Mary Anne Shea
- Selena Hyde
- Rita Jones
- Kerry Peek

Guests

- Fred Crawford
- Monica Brown

Call to Order



Chairwoman Patti Jo Taylor called the meeting to order at **12:00 p.m.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation led by Rita Jones.

Changes to the Agenda

None.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Robin Fronrath made a motion to approve the **June 24, 2026 Budget Meeting Minutes (2026–2027 Budget)**. Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Adrian Litzau made a motion to approve the **June 24, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Welcome and Board Orientation

Chairwoman Taylor welcomed new board members **Anna Herzog** and **Dena Ensley**. Commissioner David Loftis was absent.

Chairwoman Taylor reviewed the Board Member notebooks and the **TDA Rules and Procedures Policy** for the upcoming fiscal year.

Robin Fronrath made a motion to approve the Rules and Procedures Policy. Adrian Litzau seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Appointments (FY 2026–2027)

Finance & Accountability Committee

- Patti Jo Taylor
- Adrian Litzau
- Andy Bhakta

Community Grants Committee

- Adrian Litzau



- Patti Jo Taylor
- Robin Fronrath

Capital Projects Committee

Airport Property and Two Corners Project

- Anna Herzog
- Dena Ensley
- Robin Fronrath

Staff Spotlight

Kerry Peek, Aquarium Manager, was recognized during the Staff Spotlight and gave an overview of her job and the current status of events and ongoing projects.

Executive Director's Report

Marketing

Mary Anne Shea reported:

- The annual food photography project has been completed, and the new images will be used to update the Explore Bryson City website.
- Google Analytics showed strong website performance.
- Bryson City was selected by **USA TODAY** editors as a nominee for **Best Destination for Fall Colors**. Public voting begins in August and will be promoted through the TDA's social media channels.

Events

- Riverfront Family Fest launched over Memorial Day weekend and experienced strong attendance.
- Singing in the Smokies welcomed more than **5,000 attendees**.
- Staff is currently rebranding the Smoky Mountain Christmas Light Show and exploring new ideas to increase ticket sales.

Financial Report



Mary Anne Shea reviewed the financial reports with the Board and explained the occupancy tax reports and revenue sources to help familiarize new members with the reporting process.

She also informed the Board that the **\$75,000 appropriation to the Town of Bryson City**, approved as part of the FY 2026–2027 budget, had been requested by Mayor Tom Sutton.

Board Discussion

The Board discussed strategies to increase attendance and ticket sales for the Smoky Mountain Christmas Light Show.

Chairwoman Taylor also provided an update on the upcoming **Swain County Agricultural Fair**, scheduled for **August 21–22**.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Adrian Litau made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dena Ensley seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at **1:30 p.m.**

Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Dena Ensley _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Anna Herzog _____

Adrian Litau _____

David Loftis _____