



Swain County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 04-23-2025
Board Meeting

Present (Voting): Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor, Andy Bhakta, Phillip Carson, Sr, Robin Fronrath, Janene Lancaster, Adrian Litzau, and PattiJo Taylor

Absent (Voting): Jeremiah Wiggins, Erin Smith

Present (Ex-Officio) None

Absent (Ex-Officio): Cally Elliott, Tourism Development Authority, Finance Officer

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones

Attendees: Rob Hawke, Swain Co Agriculture Fair, Fred Crawford, Amber Johnston, Mr. Nance
The Swain County TDA meeting was called to order by Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor at 12:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was given, followed by a prayer by Cheryl Taylor.

Changes to Agenda: Chairwoman Taylor added Rob Hawke, of Swain County Agriculture Fair to the agenda. Board approval.

Meeting Minutes:

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to approve the Minutes of 03-12-2025. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Adrian Litzau made a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 03-12-2025. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Rob Hawke of the Swain County Agricultural Fair made a presentation asking the board for \$21,000.00.

Janene Lancaster made a motion to give the Agriculture Fair the sum of \$21,000.00. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. All in favor. PattiJo Taylor recused herself from the vote. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Fred Crawford made an apology to the board for his outburst during the March 2025 meeting. Robin Fronrath thanked Mr Crawford for coming forward with an apology.

Executive Director Report:

Marketing & Public Relations Reports:

- Websites dipped in February but strong gains in March related to train and Kuwohi interest.
- March had a strong PR month with features in Southern Living Online and Travel & Leisure for The Best Weekend Getaway.



- Visitor Guides in house. 100,000 have already been distributed to outreach partners.
- Update Bike Trail and Deep Creek rack card
- All marketing contracts are being reviewed at this time.
- Sarah attended the VisitNC Conference April 6-8th.

Financial Reports:

The occupancy tax report for February was down 16% but we remained up 50% over last year budget.

Budget:

FY 25/26 is at 75% done. Sarah is reviewing the Marketing and Payroll/Insurance cost. Meeting in May and June on budget.

Administrative & Committees:

- Bryson City Signs—A meeting will be held April 29 with Brigham & Maddox attorney office for the drafting of new easement agreement between the new owner of Burger King property, Dwight Winchester. Mr Winchester has agreed to allow an easement for the sign to the TDA.
- Bryson City Caboose—Sarah has reached out to Kim Albrighton about the painting of the caboose. Ms. Albrighton will get back to TDA with the cost.
- Visitor Center Painting—All painting is completed. Windows were added into contract. A 5-year pressure washing contract has been signed for the amount of \$2,064.00 each year in the month of April.
- Downtown Flower Project—Ray's florist picked up the flower boxes in April. Sarah will be ordering the trailer and watering tank that the board has already approved. The cost of bridge basket was approved at \$11,500.00.

Sarah received two FOIA requests. One request has been fulfilled. The second is being taken care of by Cally Elliott, the TDA Finance Officer.

Finance Committee—Sarah will be scheduling a meeting prior to the May 14 meeting.

Marketing Committee---Nothing to report

Beautification Committee—Update from PattiJo Taylor on Christmas Lights

PattiJo Taylor gave synopsis of the meeting regarding the Christmas contract with Gabriel's Christmas. For the contract for 2025 the cost had risen by \$60,000.00. The committee decided this should be brought to the full board for consideration before moving forward with any plans. The board talked about the leasing of equipment and the owning outright of equipment. The cost each year of storage of said equipment by Gabriel.

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to purchase 2 customized frames for photo ops. One to be a visitor center and the other to be at the caboose. Stay with the current Christmas Tree that is at the visitor center. Add a new life size Nativity scene at the visitor center. No one seconded this motion. This motion was not carried.



Adrian Litzau made a motion to purchase 1 customized picture frame for photo op and place it at the caboose with smaller Christmas trees surrounding it. The cost of the frame is \$8,495.00. Also, to purchase a life size Nativity for the visitor center and to put the current one at the Administration building. Nativity is something that the TDA will have to put into storage. Janene Lancaster seconded this motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Duke Energy Poles: Janene Lancaster made a motion to put 2 snowflakes on each of the Duke poles to get more use of the snowflakes and more light downtown. Philip Carson, Sr seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Tree Lighting: Adrian Litzau made a motion to turn the lights on the tree that will be at the visitor center once the tree is up. Also, Gabriel put extra lighting inside the tree and added a new topper to light up especially for the tree lighting event that is the Saturday after Thanksgiving at the visitor center. Robin Fronrath seconded this motion. All in favor. Janene Lancaster recused herself from the vote. Motion carried.

Board Discussion:

Cheryl Taylor was stopped at the elevator by the Swain County School Superintendent asking what the TDA could do to help the schools out with funding that may be missing in the coming year.

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:33 p.m.

Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Philip Carson, Sr _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Adrian Litzau _____

Erin Smith _____

PattiJo Taylor _____

Jeremiah Wiggins _____