



Swain County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
05-14-2025 Board Meeting

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

Absent (Voting): None

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

Absent (Ex-Officio): None

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones

Attendees: Fred Crawford, Jane Maura, Smokies Life Representative

The Swain County TDA meeting was called to order by Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor at 12:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was given, followed by a prayer by Cheryl Taylor.

Changes to Agenda: Chairwoman Taylor added to Board Discussion, to talk about school curriculum for tourism.

Meeting Minutes:

Robin Fronrath made a motion to approve the Minutes of 04-23-2025. Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

**Executive Director Report:**

Marketing & Public Relations Reports:

- Full launch mode for Summer in Our Smokies campaign.
- Opening of The Hemlocks in Nantahala Gorge.
- Sarah spoke at the Smoky Mountain Host meeting with Sen. Corbin and Witt Tuttle.

Financial Report:

- Sarah met with the Finance and Marketing Committees to finalize the final budget draft to present to the full board.

Administrative & Committees:

- The Easement papers from the Chamber were taken to Jonathan Mattox. Jonathan contacted Lottie Barker, Swain County Manager. Mr Mattox informed her that the easement would need to be put under Swain County. Then Swain County would need to make a lease agreement with the TDA for maintenance



of the signs. Lottie has spoken with Sarah about fixing the paperwork that way since the TDA cannot have the lease easement under TDA name.

- A review of HR via ADP to make sure the Employee Handbook is up to date.
- Sarah met with Craig Smith with Assured Property Agency of NC to discuss landscaping at the Visitor Center. Also, talked to Craig regarding the watering contract for flower boxes.
- Sarah is coordinating the ticket sales for the 2025 Light Show. The dates for the show were presented to the board along with a schedule of costs.

Andy Bhakta made a motion to charge locals and pre-sale tickets \$15.00. Gate Purchase tickets for \$20.00. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Finance Committee**—Met with Sarah on May 14

**Marketing Committee**---Met with Sarah on May 14

**Beautification Committee**— Janene Lancaster gave an update on the placing of the flower boxes with Ray's Florist on Sunday, Mother's Day. Ray will also remove all the brackets from the bridges to install his flower boxes that he has this year's flowers in. If there are any concerns, please let Janene know.

Chairwoman Taylor notified the board, that board member Jeremiah Wiggins has presented to her his resignation due to other responsibilities right now.

**Budget:**

Sarah presented to the board the Budget Fiscal Year 2025/2026. The total budget amount is **\$2,258,313.00**. The increase is 6% from last year.

Janene Lancaster asked that the Christmas Light Show & Downtown expenses be broken down as line items for better understanding of the cost of each of these items each year. The board was in full agreement on this for the budget.

PattiJo Taylor made a motion pending the changes of the Christmas line items being more broken down to put the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year Budget on public inspection for 10 days prior to the next board meeting. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. Robin Fronrath left at 1:00p.m.

**Board Discussion:**

Chairwoman Taylor spoke about helping Swain County High School work on a curriculum for students on Hospitality for Tourism. Talk with the TDA Attorney to see what avenues that TDA can actually work with the school on regarding this. Also, talk with Barbara Sneed to see the needs of getting this trade in the school curriculum.

Janene Lancaster made a motion that whomever the TDA sponsors monetarily, that the organization come back to the TDA Board and give a review of what the organization did with the money that they received from



the TDA. This goes back to the funding the TDA gave to the Rec Park Pool project 4 years ago and it still isn't up and running. Andy Bhakta seconded this motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor \_\_\_\_\_

Andy Bhakta \_\_\_\_\_

Philip Carson, Sr \_\_\_\_\_

Robin Fronrath \_\_\_\_\_

Janene Lancaster \_\_\_\_\_

Adrian Litzau \_\_\_\_\_

Erin Smith \_\_\_\_\_

PattiJo Taylor \_\_\_\_\_