



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,  
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

## MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
April 19, 2017 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.  
Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143, WCU  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

### **Public comment- none**

### **Call to order/Roll Call**

Meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

Members in attendance: Ann Self, Bob Williams, Mark Jones, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Mary Lamb, Robert Jumper, Ron Mau, Sarah Jennings, Stephanie Edwards, Kathy Korb, Laura Bowers, Gareth Daley, Megan Orr, Vick Patel.

Members absent: Henry Hoche, Joel Sowers, Kelly Custer.

**Others in attendance:** Heather Baker (Jackson County Attorney) and Danielle Wittekind (Jackson County Human Resources Director).

### **New Board Member Introduction – Mark Jones**

Chairman Jumper introduced the board's newest member, Mark Jones.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were presented and approved for the March 15, 2017 meeting. Chairman Jumper presented the March 15, 2017 meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Sarah Jennings moved to approve minutes as presented. Mary Lanning seconded. Motion passed.

### **Review and approval of year-to-date financial report**

The Financial Report was presented by Darlene Fox. YTD collections for March: \$ 33,583.67 with \$20 in penalties. The YTD collection total is \$ 732,771.23 – 81.42% of budget. 86 units reported for March rentals. In March 2016, we had 84 units. Collections are up 15.42% from the same period in 2016, with a total increase for the fiscal year at 13.56%.

March expenses were \$ 127,554.82. YTD expenses totaled \$ 743,808.61 with encumbrances of \$ 1,819.07, for a combined total of \$ 745,627.68, or 75.49% of budget. The Cash balance on March 31, 2017 was \$ 538,653.92.

Jumper and Breedlove both noted the positive aspects of growth in the budget numbers.

**MOTION:** Sarah Jennings moved to accept the financial report. Mary Lanning seconded. Motion passed.

### **Committee reports: Personnel & Governance, Marketing**

Personnel issues to be discussed were moved to the closed session.

### **Personnel – Closed session, G.A. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel**

At 1:11 p.m. a motion was made by Sarah Jennings to go into closed session for Personnel. Motion was seconded by Mary Lanning. Motion passed.

**MOTION:** *Sarah Jennings moved to adjourn the closed session. Mark Jones seconded. Motion passed.*

The closed session was adjourned at 1:46 pm.

### **Personnel Committee**

Following closed session, Ann Self made a motion that the TDA request the Jackson County Board of Commissioners create the position of Jackson County TDA Executive Director to be a county employee pursuant to Resolution R12-34, which states that the position would report to the Jackson County TDA Board. No second is required. No other motions or discussions followed.

**MOTION:** *A vote was taken. The motion was unanimously supported with one abstention: Vick Patel. The motion carried.*

### **Marketing Committee**

At the VisitNC conference, Executive Director Breedlove with Rawle Murdy were able to book about \$63,000 worth of co-op specials for Jackson County. Last year they were not able to book at the conference and missed money-saving opportunities. They were able to book ¼ pages in 8-10 magazines at a substantial discount. They will have a quarter page in Outside magazine in May 2018 in addition to other advertising. Jackson County is participating in a new media program utilizing second screen retargeting. Breedlove reported on various avenues of marketing exposure and his work with Pineapple PR. We have a new contact, Jessica Ennis, with Pineapple, he said. He is working with Pineapple to provide customized itineraries for visitors to our website. We are still having great success utilizing user-generated content.

### **Jackson County Chamber of Commerce activity report**

Julie Spiro presented Chamber updates. They are going to host business after hours soon. The “Just the Girls” event was successful with 176 females attending, with 156 of them old enough to complete forms. 100% of businesses who participated want to do the event again. Most vendors made \$200 or more. They will meet with the Dillsboro Merchants Association to discuss potentially doing a similar event in Dillsboro.

May 20<sup>th</sup> is the “Hook, Line and Drinker” event. 17 fly fishing / clean water vendors will participate along with food vendors and farmers’ market vendors. The Chamber launched a newly revamped fly fishing website and they are working on an online booking platform. The Easter Hat Parade was the largest ever. 203 participants signed up. Upcoming events: Greening Up the Mountains; and Camp out May 5<sup>th</sup> at Bridge Park.

Bills are moving forward in the NC House and Senate regarding the N.C. Trout Capital designation.

### **Cashiers Chamber of Commerce activity report**

Stephanie Edwards was unable to stay to present a report, so Executive Director Breedlove presented highlights of her report. The Tour de Cashiers is coming up April 25<sup>th</sup>, which goes through Jackson, Macon and Transylvania counties. A community forum was held about the solar eclipse which yielded a lot of great questions from the community. Another forum will take place in Cashiers July 25. Sylva will have a forum at WCU next Tuesday, led by Enrique Gomez. The Cashiers Chamber has created a job fair to address difficulty in recruiting and retention in the Cashiers area. The event will be Saturday, May 6.

### **Director Report Highlights**

Executive Director Breedlove provided the board with updates on the 2017-2018 Visitor Guide (mass distributed to accommodations and pdfs being provided as well); the budget (he is working with Darlene on a draft budget this week to be proposed at the May meeting); and the office move (he has moved to 116 Central Street in Sylva and received two donated desks from Board Member Patel). Chairman Jumper asked Mau to let the Commissioners know how appreciative the TDA is for the office space.

TDA's partnership with Pineapple has yielded great dividends, including a mention in "Country Living" which spread to other outlets. We have already surpassed last year's numbers in earned media using Pineapple.

Breedlove addressed vacation rentals in Jackson County using Air BnB, VRBO and other rental firms. He's had discussions with STR Helper who estimate there are approximately 450-500 listings are renting and some may not be remitting. Breedlove is having ongoing discussions with the company about performing a study to determine the viability of pursuing non-remitting renters. The Board would make any decisions about how to proceed on achieving enrollment of all renters. Bob Williams suggested that an educational campaign might be helpful for homeowners as well.

Breedlove further noted that solar eclipse accommodations in Cashiers are about 95% sold out at the major hotels/resorts.

### **2017-18 Advertising Grants**

Executive Director Breedlove provided the board a list of all grant requests for FY 17-18: 12 complete applications with requests totaling \$17,000. Most events are standing events, and are not within the 4-year requirement which started in FY 2016/17. A few applications, despite reminders in local media and e-mails to last year's applicants, were received a few days past deadline. Breedlove recommended the board consider all of them, as denying grant funding would impact their ability to draw tourists to the events and may have a negative impact on overnight stays.

Grant requests were received from Baldaroo Music Fest (a new event – huge draw for boys & girls club; it is a fundraiser featuring various genres of music with anticipated attendance of 1500-2000 overnight visitors during the post-visitor season); Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival; ColorFest; Front Street Arts + Crafts; Greening Up the Mountains; Lights and Luminaries (applied through the Town of Dillsboro this year, making them eligible for the increased funding amount); Mountain Heritage Day; Mountain Wildlife Days; Plein Air; Pots on the Green (a new event – about 15 potters at the Village Green for a small pottery festival hoping to grow as the Dillsboro Pottery Festival has); Summer Arts + Crafts; and the WCN Pottery Festival. All requests were for \$1,200. Executive Director Breedlove said that he would work with the grantees on their media buys.

**MOTION:** Sarah Jennings made a motion to approve all grant requests. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion passed.

### **New Business - none**

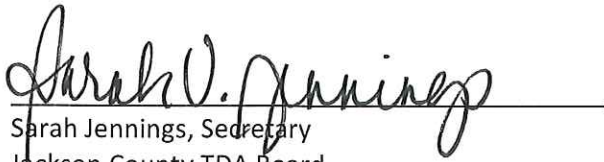
### **Announcements**

Chairman Jumper advised the board that Jim Hartbarger tendered his resignation from the board. Hartbarger expressed his appreciation for the work of the board and his hopes for their continued success. The board will miss Jim's participation and his wisdom.

### **Reminder – May meeting has been moved to May 24**

NOTE: There was no motion. Jumper said "without objection, we are adjourned."

Meeting adjourned at 2:18 pm.

  
Sarah Jennings, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: May 24, 2017