

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

Albert-Carlton Library, Cashiers

June 26, 2013

Present: Mary Lanning, Darlene Fox, Vick Patel, Clifford Meads, Alex Bell, Ken Fernandez, Stephanie Edwards, Mickey Luker, Debby Hattler, Brien Peterkin, Jim Hartbarger, John Woods, Bob Dews, Robert Jumper, Vicky Greene, Julie Spiro.

Absent: Julie Stockton, Cherie Bowers, Merrily Teasley.

Clifford Meads announced Russ Seagle's resignation. He stated the seat was a Jackson County Chamber Board appointed seat and the Chamber had appointed Robert Jumper to fulfill that unexpired term. Mr. Meads said that Robert Jumper had previously served 2 terms on the TTA Board.

Minutes and Agenda: Minutes and agenda, motion to approve by Jim Hartbarger, second by Mickey Luker, motion carried unanimously.

Governance Committee Report: Chairman Meads requested that the Governance Committee review the Resolution regarding Proxy votes. At the last meeting, two proxy votes were presented. Alex Bell reported that the TDA Board follows the Resolution and uses the Resolution as the By-Laws for the TDA. Mr. Bell stated there is no provision for proxy voting in the Resolution therefore the finding is that you must be present to vote. Mr. Meads asked if there were any questions from the board regarding the finding on proxy voting. No board comments were made.

Financial/Budget Report: At this time, Mr. Meads asked Darlene Fox to update the board on information about the budget. Darlene Fox stated there was a technicality on the public hearing. She spoke with the Local Government Commission before the meeting today. She stated that there needed to be quorum of the TDA Board at the public hearing for the budget to be adopted; because a quorum was not present, there now had to be a public hearing. Darlene presented an interim budget for 30 days for the month of July per G.S 159.16. She stated that as soon as public hearing has been held, the board can take a vote on that same day. Ms. Fox said the TDA will need to schedule a public hearing the week of July 15th, and that she checked and the commissioner's board room is vacant.

Debby Hattler asked if this budget contained the original budget the finance committee submitted, or if this is the one Clifford Meads changed.

Darlene responded that this is the recommended budget that the board voted on. Debby questioned why we cannot change the budget. Darlene said the recommended budget would be the one that

would be voted on. Ms Fox stated that for clarification she was asked by the committee for a bullet list of every line item detail. Ms. Fox stated that while she was preparing and breaking out contracted services, it did not come up to what had been discussed at the finance meeting, and that is when the change was made. Ms. Fox stated she did not know that there was an increase built into contracted services after that meeting. The numbers were questioned by Russ Seagle – Chair of the Finance Committee and by Clifford Meads. Mr. Meads made the change, as Chairperson of the Authority.

Debby Hattler stated she wanted everyone to understand this is not the original budget that the finance committee voted on and that Clifford Meads changed it. She did not think the full board had a chance to discuss the budget before it was presented to Commissioners. She said the board did not have any input to the budget before it was sent to commissioners and before being made public.

Mr. Meads stated that this budget was the budget the TDA Board voted for in May, with the line item detail, with the vote being 12 to 1.

Mickey Luker made the motion to approve the interim one month budget, seconded by Jim Hartbarger.

Stephanie Edwards stated that this board had not looked at the budget in any detail. She felt the appropriate thing to do was to have a discussion about these things in front of the full board.

Mr. Meads disagreed stating that the board had seen the budget two or three times since the finance committee originally met and that the board was given a line item detail and it was discussed, and subsequently voted on.

Vicky Greene stated that the motion on the table is to vote for an interim 30-day budget and that the other things could be heard at the public hearing.

Stephanie stated that this is a thinly veiled attempt to not let the issue of the budget amendment be heard and that this sounds like a technicality to avoid having a discussion in a larger audience.

Darlene responded that it is not, it is a technicality that we have to comply with, that the TDA has to comply with the General Statutes.

John Wood questioned where the numbers in this budget came from. Mr. Meads responded that this was the budget that was presented and voted on by the board on May 22ⁿ.

Stephanie stated that she wanted the record to show that there is some misunderstanding in the Minutes as to what happened in that meeting.

Stephanie questioned if Robert Jumper has been appointed by the Commissioners. Julie stated he is a Chamber of Commerce appointment and is fulfilling Russ Seagle's unexpired term. Stephanie stated that since this is his first meeting and he has not attended previous meetings that it would be more appropriate for him to abstain from voting. Mr. Meads responded that Mr. Jumper had been

given the Minutes from the last four meetings. Mr. Jumper stated he felt comfortable voting for the interim budget.

In favor of interim budget: Jim Hartbarger, Vick Patel, Clifford Meads, Alex Bell, Robert Jumper, Brien Peterkin.

Opposed: Bob Dews, Ken Fernandez, Mary Lanning, John Woods, Debby Hattler.

Stephanie asked for point of clarification; questioned that if the Chairman should participate in a vote other than when the vote is tied. Some board members thought the Chairman is a voting member of the board and can vote at any time.

The motion to approve an interim 30-day budget passed, 6-5.

Debby Hattler – **Marketing Committee:** updated the group on several marketing things that have been happening since the last meeting., including ads in Garden and Gun, ads for the Mountain Challenge Tennis Tournament. Vince and Merrily have created a county wide database containing the accommodations in Jackson County. Mary Lanning has created a spreadsheet that shows all the different ads that we have and various publications that have contacted us. Cherie is creating a scrapbook with all the articles. Ms. Hattler has spoken with two photographers and we will be increasing the photo library for the county and Julie has created a dropbox of some photos now. The new database will be used to communicate with accommodation owners, offer co-op advertising, creation of a quarterly newsletter. Ms. Hattler stated that proposals will be going out next week to companies that we might contract with to handle all of our advertising and that the marketing committee will be meeting with them. She also encouraged everyone to contact her with any publications that they felt would be good for us to advertise in, to send them to her. Also if there are any events that need to be photographed, to contact Ms. Hattler and she will arrange for the photographer to come out and take photos.

At this time, four (4) versions of the Play On by BCF were disbursed. Several board members made comments, and voted on each one. Stephanie Edwards stated she does not like any of them and does not think they are good fit for Cashiers, that they do not have the right character or image. She also said that BCF was supposed to supply the board with the demographics of the target market and test the Play On image with that target market and they have not done that, therefore she thinks it is not sound and not a good fit for Cashiers or the area.

The Play On image with the most votes, (six) was option #1.

John Woods would like to see other options. Debby Hattler said that BCF did not contact or consult with her or the marketing committee. She wants more options. Brien asked if we could see other variations of Play On. Robert Jumper commented that you can tailor your marketing strategy to fit in a variety of ways, that there are many things you can do with the Play On slogan. Alex stated that he thought as a board we voted on and decided on the Play On slogan, and that board members present voted on this slogan. Debby Hattler said it has not been tested on a target market and we

need more options. Clifford Meads told the board he would go back to BCF and ask them to prepare several more looks for the group and he wants everyone to be comfortable with the choice. Stephanie questioned the BCF methodology and restated that they have not provided any research validating the Play On slogan.

Stephanie Edwards disbursed the new Cashiers Visitor Guide and Membership Directory, stating there were 20,000 copies printed and it is available online. There is a new Cashiers dining guide rack card in development as well and it should be ready very soon. Stephanie reminded the audience of all the recent TDA grants that had been funded. She spoke about upcoming July events, including the Mountain Challenge, Cashiers Designer Showhouse, Cashiers Trail Mix. Stephanie disbursed written reports for the board. She stated that new visitor center signage is coming very soon and that 9,000 cars per day drive by their location, and that it is her belief that is a gross underestimate during the season.

Julie Spiro disbursed copies of reports to the board containing visitor inquiry info, website page views and visits, and other monthly reports. She stated that Concerts on the Creek has been very well attended and she encouraged people to drive up or down the mountain to hear great music every Friday night throughout Jackson County. Julie stated there are three different facebook pages that are maintained by the Chamber – Concerts on the Creek, WNC Fly Fishing Trail, and Jackson County Chamber & Visitor Center facebook page.

Mr. Meads reminded everyone that the next meeting would be announced and that a date would be set for the public hearing very soon.

Audience comments were heard. Various board members responded and commented on these public comments. Regarding the interim budget, Vicky stated that an interim budget is a tool that is used when an entity fails to have a quorum at a public hearing and that there is no grand conspiracy, and that Darlene Fox wanted to get it correct for the county and the TDA.

Ken Fernandez asked when the budget amendment can be discussed. Darlene stated that any amendments to the budget can occur after the budget is adopted, at the public hearing, where a quorum of the TDA board is present. Then the TDA Board will either vote to adopt or not. Debby Hattler inquired if there could be two public hearings. Darlene did not know the answer to this question, but stated the law requires one public hearing. Stephanie questioned if it was predetermined that the public hearing would be in Sylva or could it be in Cashiers. Vick stated that we typically take turns regarding meetings and that we have been in Cashiers the last two meetings.

There were more comments from the audience at this point, some were addressed by various members of the board. After about 15-20 minutes of more comments from the audience, more discussion from the board members regarding the audience comments, Mickey made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim Hartbarger, and the board adjourned.

