

**Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
March 16, 2016**

MINUTES – PENDING APPROVAL

Present: Ashley Iglesias, Cherie Bowers, Darlene Fox, Joey Laughridge, Julie Spiro, Ken Taft, Mary Lanning, Nick Breedlove, Noah Bell, Robert Jumper, Sarah Jennings, Vick Patel, Vicki Greene

Absent: Alex Bell, Ann Self, Clifford Meads, Henry Hoche, Jim Hartbarger, Kelly Custer, Stephanie Edwards

Chairman Robert Jumper called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

February Minutes were approved with a motion by Sarah Jennings and a second by Mary Lanning.

Finance Officer Darlene Fox presented the TDA's financial report for the month of February. Highlights include: January room occupancy tax collections of \$26,566 with \$130 collected for penalties. Year-to-date collections total \$618,039.43, which is 74.62-percent of the budget. 94 units reported for January. Collections are up nine-percent from the same period in 2015. The fiscal year to date increase is 7.82-percent. The cash balance as of February 29, 2016 is \$527,760. Expenditures for February were \$65,498. Year-to-date expenses totaled \$517,308, which is 68.3-percent of the budget.

Chairman Jumper remarked that the only month showing a decrease for this fiscal year is September 2015.

The Financial report was approved with Lanning making a motion with Sarah Jennings seconding.

There was no report from the Marketing or Governance Committees.

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director Julie Spiro presented her chamber's report to the board and also distributed copies of the new dining guide. "We are working toward Greening up the Mountains on April 23, the upcoming Easter Hat Parade this weekend and a brewery event," Spiro said. Spiro then detailed the Chamber's efforts with the TDA, Brandon, Pineapple PR including time spent with three representatives from State Welcome Centers (I95 and I85) along with mentioning 916 visitors through the Sylva and Dillsboro visitor centers.

There was no report from the Cashiers Area Chamber and Visitor Center as Director Stephanie Edwards was absent.

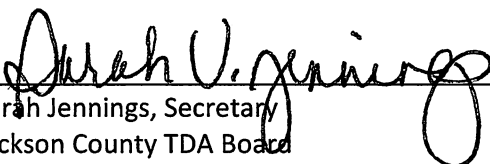
In his Director's report, Breedlove provided an agenda packet. He then detailed the following:

- Improved Visitor Guide cover visually enhancing the upper portion for brochure display racks
- Delivered all items to Smoky Mountain Living publisher Scott McLeod for the 16-17 Visitor Guide
- Emailed and mailed the Finance Office accommodation database the Visitor Guide Survey, updated that list with changed or new information and then distributed the updated list to both Visitor Centers and the Finance Office

- In conjunction with the Brandon Agency, all the accommodations and restaurant listings on the website have been updated and two new tabs for Hiking and Waterfalls containing more in-depth descriptions have been added
- Sent a press release to all area newspapers reminding them of the April 1st deadline for grant applications and have been working closely with all applicants to ensure they have complete, detailed grant applications to present to the board for consideration
- Presented a request for proposal for web responses. Director recommends reissuing to allow for one additional response and to incorporate a more flexible timeline. No board members opposed. Instructed to proceed by Chairman Jumper
- Finalized beer month mini-Fam with Pineapple PR and confirmed itinerary
- In conjunction with Pineapple PR, assembled press release for Assault on Blackrock and distributed to local, regional and national media
- Stated that with increasing Pineapple PR's hours, an increase in the budget for their services may be possible
- Prepared Tour de Cashiers press release, provided with quotes from veteran rider and sent to Pineapple PR.
- Distributed special group rate request to all Jackson County accommodations for Tour de Cashiers and sent results to Cashier Area Chamber to publish on the Tour's website
- Attended the Henderson County Tourism Conference on February 25, 2016
- Attended the Winter Chautauqua in Hiawassee, Ga. On March 6-7 focusing on Sports Tourism
- Attended VisitNC with Julie Spiro March 13-15. Jackson County received many mentions including that the Tuckasegee River is listed as 1 of 20 featured on www.project543.com
- Coordinated assistance with the film crews for both 'Dirty Dancing' and 'Three Billboards', while sending Pineapple PR final touches of film background for the media
- Reached out to Western Carolina University to obtain footage of outdoor recreation that can be used for marketing/tourism promotion and will work with the marketing committee to determine how to best utilize this footage
- Will attend Blue Ridge National Heritage Training on April 4th to be held at Southwestern Community College and upon their request will display marketing play on guides and maps at an information table
- Held a conference call with David Zelski to discuss finalizing the itinerary for Anglers and Appetites episodes. Filming will take place in Jackson County from May 3-6
- Working jointly with Mary Ann Baker to align the posting strategy to develop a standardized set of social media hashtags for Jackson County. The county's Facebook page has surpassed 100,000 likes
- Working on crafting an NC Beer Month release for local newspapers detailing all offerings in Jackson County from local breweries
- Included recent media highlights by providing many Dirty Dancing articles and links contained in the agenda packet
- Commented on STR's report of peaks and room occupancy with New Year's Eve and Valentine's Day showing as popular travel dates
- Mentioned that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park had more visitors than any other of the 59 National Parks
- Mentioned "Leave No Trace" campaign and interest in promoting that

Chairman Jumper thanked all directors and staff for their time and effort.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.



Sarah Jennings, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: