



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

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
April 18, 2018 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.
Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143, WCU
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Call to order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Chairman Vick Patel; Vice Chairman Kathy Korb; Secretary Laura Bowers; Board Members Tom Garcia, Megan Orr, Bob Williams, Ann Self, Dale Collins, Stephanie Edwards, Julie Spiro, Ron Mau, and Andrew Harlfinger; Finance Officer Darlene Fox
- **Members absent:** None
- **Others in attendance:** Robert Jumper; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Kathy Korb moved to approve the agenda; Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Recognize Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Chairman Patel recognized Vice-Chairman Kathy Korb and Secretary Laura Bowers. Ms. Korb thanked Stephanie Edwards for her work in spearheading the promotion of the Brunch Bill in Jackson County. She also thanked Commissioner Mau and Tom Garcia for speaking in favor of the bill during Monday night's commissioner's meet, although the bill was not passed.

Introduction of New Board Member

Chairman Patel welcomed Andrew Harlfinger to the board, filling the position vacated by Gareth Daley. Mr. Harlfinger is Resort Manager for Bluegreen Resorts in Cashiers. Mr. Harlfinger has been in the vacation ownership business for approximately ten years, moving to Bluegreen Resorts following the 2016 wildfires in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Bluegreen has 30 units in the Club Lodges at Trillium, with 38 units under development now, and plans to expand to 90 units by 2020. The units have an average annual occupancy rate of over 80%.

Review and Approval of March Minutes

Minutes of the March 28, 2018, TDA meeting were emailed prior the meeting for review.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the March minutes. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of March Financial Report

The March Financial Report was presented by Darlene Fox. Highlights include March Occupancy Tax collections of \$35,009.92, penalties of \$20.00, and YTD collection totals of \$775,288.54, which is 71.79% of the budget. Collections were up 4.24% from the same period in 2017, and up 4.89% for the fiscal year. The Airbnb collections total was \$5,795.18.

March cash balance was \$122,844.11, and investments totaled \$400,000.00. March expenses were \$144,666.59, and YTD total expenses were \$832,546.94. Encumbrances of \$4,895.10 make a combine total of \$837,442.04, equaling 72.52% of the budget. 90 Units reported rentals for January. Ms. Fox noted that the budget was on target for March.

MOTION: Laura Bowers moved to approve the financial report as presented. Dale Collins seconded. Motion carried.

2018-2019 Grants

Mr. Breedlove highlighted the Grants Committee report provided prior to the meeting. The committee proposes funding eight grants at \$1,750 each, for a total of \$14,000. Individual recommendations were provided for each grant, and included diversifying media plans and shifting funding to more digital placements along with utilizing paid social media advertising through the TDA. The Committee recommendations are to fund the following grant requests:

- WNC Pottery Festival - Dillsboro 11/2/18
- Greening Up the Mountains - Sylva 4/28/19
- Cashiers Plein Air Fest - Cashiers 7/17/18
- Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival - Cashiers 10/5/18
- Pots on the Green - Cashiers 6/30/18
- Colorfest - Dillsboro 10/6/18
- Dillsboro Lights and Luminaries - Dillsboro 12/7/18
- Front Street Arts - Dillsboro 6/15/19

Applications not recommended for funding were:

- Farmers Market - Sylva No date
- Airing of Quilts - Monteith Farm 4/20/19
- Art in the Park - Monteith Farm 8/18/18

MOTION: Bob Williams moved to fund the grants as presented. Megan Orr seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Breedlove recommended forming a separate Grant Review Committee to review the grant application process for the TDA. Ann Self, Ms. Orr, and Dale Collins agreed to serve in this capacity. Tom Garcia recommended the Review Committee bring any proposed changes before the Grants Committee prior to presenting it to the full board.

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber: Julie Spiro provided the board with a written report prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

Ms. Spiro stated that the Three Billboards Tour has been very popular with visitors, and that the Dillsboro Easter Hat parade was a huge success. Updates to the Dillsboro Visitor's Center and Town Hall are completed and have created a fresh, welcoming look for the town. Ms. Spiro also thanked each board member who visited the Chamber Office following last month's meeting. Volunteers are needed with the Hook, Line and Drinker Festival. Concerts On The Creek will start for the 2018 season on May 25. Upcoming events include:

- April 25th: Chamber Golf Tournament, Sequoyah National Golf Course
- May 8th: Spring Open House, 11:00 am - 4 pm, Chamber of Commerce Office
- May 18th: Tuck Trout Trot, 8:30, Jackson County Greenway
- May 19th: Hook, Line and Drinker Festival, 12:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Bridge Park

- May 24th: Grand Opening and STIR Event, Foragers Canteen, Dillsboro

Cashiers Area Chamber: Stephanie Edwards provided the following highlights from the Cashiers Chamber:

- Groovin' On The Green will begin on May 26th.
- Sewer lines are being relocated prior to the official ground breaking for the new Village Green Cultural Events and Community Activities Center. This facility will include a main hall and two smaller gallery rooms for concerts, job and health fairs, school, and other events.
- The Tour De Cashiers Mountain Cycling Experience will take place on September 15th, with Peak Racing partnering to expand the event to include a 5K race and other activities to increase attendance.
- The Chamber hosted a very successful job fair on Saturday, May 14th.
- The Cashier's Visitors' Guide is in the final approval stage and will be available soon.
- The Whiteside Brewery should be opening soon.
- The painting project is completed at the Chamber building, with new landscaping underway, and should be finished soon.

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove provided the board with a written report prior to the meeting which included the following highlights:

- Mr. Breedlove encouraged board members to direct all media requests for statements about TDA-related matters to him and that he would work with Pineapple and the Executive Board on replies as needed.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway will have a resurfacing project underway from April until September, which could particularly impact bicyclists.
- Mr. Breedlove will meet with Ms. Fox this week to finalize the 2018-2019 budget, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee at their May 9th meeting, which will be approved by the full board at next month's meeting.
- The Executive Committee should plan on the May 9th meeting lasting approximately one and one half hours as they review the Chamber Visitors Study, budget, and several additional items.
- This Saturday will be the first annual "Cleaning Up The Mountains" litter sweep. Norma and Mike Clayton are organizing this event to help bring awareness to the litter problem in Jackson County.
- Board members should plan on the May 16th meeting taking three hours. Light refreshments will be available.
- The June 20th meeting will be held at the Jackson County Public Library.
- March STR reports show positive increases in demand and revenue.
- Mr. Breedlove will be on vacation from May 17th – 30th.
- National Travel and Tourism Week is celebrated with a Proclamation of the County Commissioners, an Open House at the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Office, and editorials in several local newspapers.
- Everyone is encouraged to read the "Changing Tourism 2020" Study by Paramore and Shannon Gray Research, as it has many valuable insights into how tourism is evolving and changing.
- Information about becoming a NC Green Travel Partner has been provided to restaurant and lodging establishments. Several partners have already applied for designation, and approval is simple to obtain.

Announcements/Adjournment:

- Bob Williams thanked the tourism-related businesses for stepping up to sponsor the Smoky Mountain Robotics Team.
- Mr. Mau noted that although the current developer of the Dillsboro River Park failed to secure the needed funding, the project would continue when other developers were secured.

Dale Collins moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 1:00 pm in the WCU Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Bowers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Laura Bowers, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: May 16, 2018