

**TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
ANNUAL RETREAT – December 1, 2020**

The Tourism Development Authority (TDA) held their annual retreat on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 beginning at 9:00 a.m. The retreat was held at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock. Present were Chairman Dean Bullis, Vice-Chair Kevin Walker, Members Virginia Powell and Tim Gupton. Others present were TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes. Present via Zoom were Member Greg Tarbutton, Assistant Director Amanda Lugenbell, Ex-officio Members Nicole Norman and Shane Fox.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bullis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Powell made a motion to approve the September 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes as written, seconded by Member Gupton. Unanimously approved.

Member Gupton made a motion to approve the October 14, 2020 special meeting minutes as written, seconded by Vice-Chair Walker. Unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT/BUDGET REVIEW

• **FY 2019 Audit Report**

Ex-officio Member Nicole Norman advised the audit had been completed later than normal and was done so virtually this year due to the pandemic. She further advised that the audit had been submitted to the LGC and the auditors were awaiting approval. Ms. Norman explained once the audit had been received back, she would forward out to the board for review and Mr. Carpenter from Combs, Tennant and Carpenter would be available to review at the next meeting if the board wanted them to.

• **FY 2020 Audit Contract**

The Board briefly discussed the audit contract. Member Tarbutton made a motion to accept the FY 20-21 audit contract from Combs, Tennant and Carpenter in the amount of \$3,375, seconded by Member Gupton. Unanimously approved. **FY 20-21 - Attachment A**

FY 2019 REVIEW & FUTURE PLANNING

• **Occupancy Tax Collections & Financial Statement Review**

Ex-officio Member Nicole Norman stated occupancy tax collections July through October were up 7% or \$36,000. She noted for October itself Occupancy tax collections were up \$39,000 or 26% from the previous year. Ms. Norman further reviewed expenditures to date with the Board.

• **Budget Amendment**

Budget Amendment – amendment is to increase Occupancy Tax Revenue by \$15,000, with an allocation of \$10,000 to the Creative line item in the Direct Tourism and Promotion category as well as \$5,000 towards Street Lighting in the Infrastructure category, typically contributed towards in the TDA’s annual budget but deferred this year due to unknown COVID impacts on revenue. Member Gupton made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Vice-Chair Walker. Unanimously approved. **Budget Amendment – Attachment B**

- **Budget Needs - Digital Kiosks**

Executive Director Tracy Brown advised he would like to ask the board to consider putting in the next budget around \$6,000 to \$10,000 to remove both digital kiosks and go back to the “old fashioned/static” kiosks. Mr. Brown explained there are constant technical issues with the digital kiosks and the units are coming to the end of their life cycles and will need replacement. Now that the world has become a “touchless” society, eliminating them is the best option. He further advised it will save on yearly maintenance costs and internet costs.

- **Roger Brooks**

Roger Brooks met with the board via zoom to discuss and answer questions regarding the upcoming Tourism Management study that will begin in 2021.

- **Marketing Efforts**

Executive Director Tracy Brown reviewed the second quarter operations report via PowerPoint. **Second Quarter – Attachment C**

- **Update from Chamber of Commerce**

Executive Director Charles Hardin reviewed the Chamber sponsored events; Winterfest, Art and the Park, Farmers Market as well as the impact of not being able to have the Symphony in July due to COVID. Mr. Hardin further reviewed some of the Chamber’s projects including a partnership with the TDA to market a “Living the Dream” video which would promote teleworkers to relocate to Blowing Rock. **Chamber Update – Attachment D**

- **Infrastructure Support Review**

Ex-officio Officer Shane Fox reviewed with the Board the following infrastructure related items: the new playground completion as well as the huge success it’s been. Council approved crosswalks on Main Street at Sunset/Main, Hwy 221/Main and Chestnut/Main and will be moving forward. Currently working with DOT on the final specs for those crosswalks. Update on the Bass Lake sidewalk which is anticipated to approximately be complete by May 1st, 2021. Mr. Fox advised the Council had several items relating to Tourism to begin discussions for the upcoming year during their Retreat in January.

The two thirds, one thirds ordinance was briefly discussed.

Other

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 2:00 p.m. Member Tarbutton made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (6), seconded by Member Powell. At 2:40 p.m. Member Tarbutton made a motion to return to open session, seconded by Member Gupton. Unanimously approved. Member Powell made a motion to give Mr. Brown a 13% bonus and made the recommendation for Mr. Brown to give Amanda Lugenbell an 8% bonus as well as a 2.5% raise in pay for their annual salary, seconded by Member Tarbutton. Unanimously approved.

Member Gupton advised he would like to also ask it be on record the board requests a report from Mr. Brown on the strategic plan and the metrics for the March meeting and time be allocated during that meeting to look at the strategic plan going forward.

The board also asked Ms. Norman to bring a budget amendment back before the board at the March meeting covering the funding for the bonus/salary changes.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss Member Tarbutton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:40 p.m., seconded by Vice-Chair Walker. Unanimously approved.

TDA Chairman, Dean Bullis

Town Clerk, Hilari Hubner

Attachments

FY 20-21 Audit Contract - Attachment A

Budget Amendment - Attachment B

Second Quarter Update – Attachment C

Chamber of Commerce Report – Attachment D