

**Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
Minutes – May 20, 2010**

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Thursday, May 20, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in a special meeting at Town Hall. Present were Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, Vice-Chair Lynn Drury, Authority members Dean Bullis, Phil Pickett and Rob Dyer, Ex-officio members Nicole Norman and Scott Hildebran and Executive Director Tracy Brown.

Call to Order

Chairperson Tarbutton called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to review the current FY 2009-10 TDA Budget and discuss the proposed FY 2010-11 TDA Budget (**Attachment #1**). He also advised that a public hearing on the proposed FY 2010-11 Budget would be held at the June 1, 2010 TDA meeting.

Current Budget - Review

Chair Tarbutton opened discussions on the current budget. Ex-officio Members Norman and Hildebran began by reviewing the current year budget revenue and projected year-end estimates. Mr. Hildebran advised that occupancy tax revenues for April 2010 were 9% higher than April 2009, and that occupancy tax revenues from the period of December 2009 through April 2010 was only approximately \$4,000 down from the same period of December 2008 through April 2009.

Ex-officio Member Norman then reviewed current expenditures. She stated that based on current worst-case projections, the FY 2009-10 revenues could end up approximately \$83,930 below expenditures (TDA portion only).

After some discussion, motion by Vice-Chair Drury and second by Member Pickett to appropriate up to \$83,930 of fund balance to cover the projected shortfall. Motion unanimously approved. The Authority expressed hope that the final budget closeout would require less than the \$83,930 of fund balance appropriated. (**Attachment #1**)

Proposed Budget - Review

Chair Tarbutton opened discussions on the proposed FY 2010-11 Budget. Ex-officio Member Hildebran began by reviewing the projected revenue. (**Attachment #2**). He advised that revenue was projected to be approximately \$90,000 less than the current budget (from \$750,025 to \$660,000). He stated that the uncertain tourism economy made revenue projections difficult. Further, he mentioned that the Town had identified budget holdbacks to cover any unexpected shortfall in the new budget. Executive Director Brown also agreed to holdback expenses for the TDA as well to allow for a shortfall. The Board expressed belief that the summer/fall season would provide a strong indication of budget revenues.

Ex-officio Member Norman then outlined expenditures for the proposed FY 2010-11 TDA Budget.

With no further questions, the Authority thanked Ex-officio Members Hildebran and Norman and Mr. Brown for their efforts on the proposed FY 2010-11 Budget. Chair Tarbutton once again reminded the Authority that a public hearing on the proposed FY 2010-11 Budget would be held at the June 1, 2010 TDA meeting.

Other

Next, the Authority discussed marketing. Executive Director Brown informed the Board of upcoming meetings with Marketing Consultant Heidi Ellis and Tourism Research Consultant Gary Smith. Once a proposed FY 2010-11 ad placement schedule is developed, it will be shared with the Board for concurrence. Mr. Brown commented that the schedule will more than likely include greater on-line marketing and more specific marketing area saturation.

The Board discussed the use of Facebook as a new medium for marketing. Members Bullis and Dyer agreed that social network marketing is becoming more popular. Chair Tarbutton concurred.

Chair Tarbutton stated that in future meetings the Authority will review suggested marketing and public relations plans for FY 2010-11.

Member Pickett suggested more attention to Christmas decorations along Main Street further from the downtown area. Vice-Chair Drury agreed to follow-up on the issue as TDA funding allows.

Member Dyer suggested that the TDA consider a transition away from the print Town calendar and more toward an on-time version. After some discussion, the Authority agreed to initially reduce the number of print copies and place the calendar on-line as well. The Board will track the on-line use and if warranted, transition to an electronic medium. Also, Executive Director Brown will work to negotiate more favorable pricing of the calendar.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion of Member Bullis and second by Member Dyer, the Authority adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m. Motion unanimously approved.

Kent Tarbutton, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

Attachment

#1 – FY 2009-10 Budget Amendment

#2 – FY 2010-11 Proposed Budget