

**Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
Minutes – May 19, 2011**

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Thursday, May 19, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in a special meeting at Town Hall. Present were Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, Vice-Chair Rob Dyer, Authority members Dean Bullis, Phil Pickett and Lianne Mattar, 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 began the meeting by thanking Executive Director Brown for his efforts in coordinating the recent visit of Knoxville, Tennessee based WBIR 10 to Blowing Rock. Their Live @ Five @ Four program broadcasted live from Memorial Park. Many positive comments and inquiries have developed based on the visit.

Chair Tarbutton then stated the purpose of the meeting was to review the current FY 2010-11 TDA Budget and discuss the proposed FY 2011-12 TDA Budget (**Attachment #1**). He also advised that a public hearing on the proposed FY 2011-12 Budget would be held at the June 7, 2011 TDA meeting.

Current Budget - Review

Chair Tarbutton opened discussions on the current budget. Ex-officio Members Norman and Hildebran and Executive Director Brown began by reviewing the current year budget. They noted two expense line-items that exceed appropriations – 1) Tourism Marketing Survey, which the TDA approved for Focus Group surveys and 2) Events Support, which the TDA approved to cover one half the expenses for an Events Coordinator in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. Otherwise, the budget is in line with expectations.

Ms. Norman advised that a year-end clean up budget amendment would be presented prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Brown informed the Authority that he was made aware that the shared Event Coordinator was being utilized to sell advertisements for a Chamber of Commerce publication. The Authority expressed some concern and requested further clarification. Chair Tarbutton agreed to follow-up with Chamber regarding same.

The Authority also briefly discussed the need (per the Shared Funding Agreement with the Chamber for the Events Planner) to receive budgets and profit/loss statements for the events. Mr. Brown agreed to follow-up with the Chamber on the matter.

Chair Tarbutton reminded the Authority that due to event funding requests exceeding available funds that the TDA based decisions on several factors – 1) the event meets the TDA mission of “putting heads in beds”, 2) the impact of the event on occupancy and 3)

how the proposed event fit into the overall community event calendar. Mr. Brown discussed the timeline needed to prepare the creative for an event and acquire appropriate media placement, advocating a minimum lead time of at least 6 months.

Proposed Budget - Review

Chair Tarbutton opened discussions on the proposed FY 2011-12 Budget. Ex-officio Member Hildebran began by reviewing the projected revenue. He advised that occupancy tax revenue was projected to be approximately \$24,980 more than the current budget (from \$660,000 to \$684,980). He stated that the revenue projections were based on the previous 12 month's tax collections.

The Authority then reviewed the proposed FY 2010-11 expenditures. Highlights in the following categories were:

- Administration – includes funding for health insurance increases and some funding for salary increases.
- Central Services – mainly fixed costs.
- Visitor Center Operations – shows a reduction due to October 1 relocation to BRAHM building and lower lease payments.
- Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations – similar to the FY 2010-11 Budget, but includes funding for ½ of the Events Coordinator salary and \$5,000 for a Blowing Rock Historical Society survey for the National Historical Register.
- Support for Events – similar to previous years.
- Tourism Infrastructure – largest expenses is debt service for the American Legion Parking Facility.

The Board agreed if actual occupancy revenues exceed projections in FY 2011-12 that additional funds could be allocated to other TDA priorities.

With no further questions, the Authority thanked Ex-officio Members Hildebran and Norman and Mr. Brown for their efforts on the proposed FY 2011-12 Budget. Chair Tarbutton once again reminded the Authority that a public hearing on the proposed FY 2011-12 Budget would be held at the June 7, 2011 TDA meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Other

Chair Tarbutton and Executive Director Brown agreed to follow-up with the Chamber of Commerce on the outstanding issues discussed earlier in the meeting.

Member Dyer suggested that the Town consider raising the bollards adjacent to the kiosk at the Maple Street Parking Lot to improve their visibility. Mr. Hildebran agreed to check on the matter.

Ex-officio Member Hildebran then shared that the Watauga County Board of Commissioners was considering a request from the Watauga County TDA to reallocate some NCDOT grant funds received to assist in the culvert engineering study for the Middle Fork Greenway. The Authority expressed support.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion of Member Bullis and second by Member Pickett, the Authority adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

Kent Tarbutton, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

Attachment

#1 – FY 2011-12 Proposed Budget