

**Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
Minutes – October 1, 2013**

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in a regular meeting held at Town Hall. Present were Vice-Chair Rob Dyer, Authority members Dean Bullis, Lianne Mattar and Doug Matheson, Ex-officio members Scott Fogleman and Nicole Norman, Executive Director Tracy Brown and Assistant Director Amanda Lugenbell.

Chairperson Kent Tarbutton was unable to attend.

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Dyer called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes – July 2, 2013

Vice-Chair Dyer entertained the approval of the July 2, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion by Member Matheson and second by Member Bullis to approve the July 2, 2013 meeting minutes as presented. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Ex-Officio Member Norman reviewed FY 2014 occupancy tax collections through August 2013. She advised the board occupancy tax revenues were up approximately 4.36% (or \$8,778) compared to the same two-month period of FY 2013. For the month of August 2013, occupancy tax revenue was up 7.25% (or \$6,793) compared to August 2012.

Ms. Norman then reviewed the financial statements, stating revenues were running slightly above budget with occupancy tax revenues showing through July collections with the August check not yet included in the statements. Ms. Norman further stated expenditures as a whole were in line with budget expectations at this time, however there were several line items that were running above budget. Line items noted were as follows:

Employee Insurance Benefit- Due to a payment made one month ahead.

Property, Workers' Comp., Liability- Due to the annual payment structure of the insurance.

Executive Director Brown also reviewed the following line items:

Postage- Due to the bulk mailing of the Visitor Guides.

Collateral- Printed Visitor Guides in FY 2014, due to stock remaining at end of FY 2013.

Creative Costs- Ad designs were scheduled early in the year, but will level off as the year progresses.

(Attachment #1)

With no further questions/comments, Vice-Chair Dyer moved to the Operations Activity Report.

Operations Activity Report

Executive Director Brown provided an update on Operations and Visitor Center activities for the Authority for the quarter via Power Point presentation outlining the following.

Highlights included for Quarter 1:

- Walk-in Traffic 8,636 +11%
- Telephone Inquiries 930 +13%
- Email Inquiries 1,129 +62%
- Brochures Mailed 9,013 -39% (mass distribution sent out in 2012)
- Web Visits 112,012
- Weather Days 18 vs. 16 last year
- The new computer is up and running in the Visitor Center and operating smoothly.
- Various recent ads were reviewed.
- Social Media statistics for informational purposes with plans to continue to market in this area.
- Current marketing program through June review.
- Recent press releases.
- Public relations & earned media review.
- National mention on CNN Travel as one of 8 *Great Leaf-Peeping Compromises*.
- One of USA Today's *Great Stops Along the Blue Ridge Parkway*.
- New Stock Photography review.
- Ad examples review.
- Updated Map and visitor Guides are out.
- Ad co-op review.
- US Airway coverage.
- Partnerships reviewed.
- ECU study update- Public Surveys continue via survey give-away kiosks.

(Attachment #2)

High Country Host Update

Executive Director Brown informed the Board that the Authority is continuing its participation in the High Country cooperative effort.

Downtown Retail Strategy - Update

A brief overview of the Retail Strategy Committee meetings including meeting frequency was discussed and there was a consensus for the next meeting to be scheduled for early November. Ex-Officio Member Fogleman agreed to co-ordinate the meeting.

Other

The TDA discussed the status of the Main Street webcam and concluded that discussions are ongoing with the camera owner and the current location owner to determine future operability scenarios. Executive Director Brown and Ex-officio Member Fogleman agreed to continue dialogue with those involved in an effort to make progress on the issue.

Planning Retreat

The Authority consensus was to hold the 2013 Planning Retreat in the week of November 11, 2013. Executive Director Brown agreed to gather availability and co-ordinate the meeting at the Visitor Center (at BRAHM).

Adjournment

With no further business, Vice-Chair Dyer adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Rob Dyer, Vice-Chairperson

Scott Fogleman, Secretary

Attachments

#1 – Occupancy Tax Report

#2 – Preliminary Media Schedule