

**Board of Commissioners/Tourism Development Authority**  
**Joint Meeting**  
**Minutes – March 5, 2014**

A joint meeting of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners and the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 6:10 p.m. at Town Hall. Attending were Mayor JB Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Doug Matheson, Ray Pickett and Sue Sweeting. TDA members included Vice-Chairperson Rob Dyer and Doug Matheson. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Director Nicole Norman, TDA Director Tracy Brown, Assistant Director Amanda Lugenbell, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and introduced TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown.

Mr. Brown began the meeting with a power point presentation. (**Attachment #1**) He reviewed 2013 Highlights:

Mr. Brown introduced P.R. Consultant Dave Tomsy to everyone. Mr. Tomsy stated that in 1990 he had moved to the Asheville area and since 2006 he had been a media consultant for the TDA spreading the word about Blowing Rock through press releases, media relations, etc. He advised that he also worked with the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show and the Blowing Rock Art & History Museum, etc. Mr. Tomsy mentioned that he worked with approximately 180 media sources and there was a growing awareness of Blowing Rock in many areas.

Next, a power point presentation was given by Mr. Brown that reviewed information regarding the TDA's collaboration relationships with the Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Ski Mountain, Grandfather Mountain, etc. Also reviewed were items such as the media budget and earned media. Mr. Brown advised that Charlotte was the area's number one market.

Mr. Brown mentioned that he and 32 other AAA travel counselors along with the Blue Ridge Parkway Association had gone on a 10-day tour staying at a different gateway town each night.

Mr. Brown stated though Commissioner Phillips was unable to be in attendance at this meeting, Commissioner Phillips previously had questions pertaining to the public relations agency that the TDA was using. Commissioner Phillips had expressed the TDA should bid that service out. Mr. Brown stated that the TDA didn't feel the need to bid the service out because the agency being used was doing a great job. Mr. Brown continued to state that he had spoken with approximately 12 hoteliers in town regarding their occupancy rate and found only two (2) to be slightly lower, one (1) to be the same as the previous year, and nine (9) to have had increased occupancy. Mr. Brown stated more

people were coming to the area, but they were getting a cheaper room rate due to using a middleman service such as Expedia, Groupon, etc.

Commissioner Pickett questioned advertising efforts for the Wine Festival held in April of each year. Mr. Brown advised that the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce handled the advertising for that event.

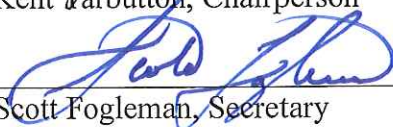
Audience member John Aldridge inquired if the TDA was advertising in major markets and the potential for advertising out-of-state. Mr. Tomsy stated press releases were going out to all metro newspapers in areas such as Atlanta, GA., Tampa, FL. etc., and to national travel magazines as well.

Mayor Lawrence thanked Mr. Brown and the entire Authority for their work on behalf of the Town.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the joint meeting between Council and the TDA adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

  
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Kent Tarbutton, Chairperson

  
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Scott Fogleman, Secretary

**Attachment #1 – 2013 TDA Annual Report Presentation**