

**Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
Minutes–October 28, 2014**

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Tuesday, October 28, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. in a regular meeting held at Town Hall. Present were Authority Chairman Kent Tarbutton, members Dean Bullis, Lianne Mattar and Doug Matheson, Ex-officio member Nicole Norman, and Executive Director Tracy Brown.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kent Tarbutton called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 1, 2014

The minutes were motioned for approval with changes to the second to the last sentence of the last paragraph under Other to read "The Authority agreed they did not want to set a precedent." by member Bullis and seconded by member Mattar and unanimously approved.

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. Financial Report - Occupancy Tax Proceeds (Attachment #1)

Attachment #1 was reviewed by Finance Officer Nicole Norman who pointed out that September 2014 collections are down less than 1% or \$645 compared to September 2013 collections and Fiscal Year to date collection are up 4.61% or \$12,867. The Authority discussed that this accurately reflected indicators from individual businesses as well. Ms. Norman explained the financial statements were printed approximately 31% into the fiscal year and noted several areas that were running above budget, but were not cause for concern due to their seasonality or payment structure. The following items were noted: Employee Insurance Benefit, Audit Expense and Property Liability/Workers Comp. Insurance. Executive Director Brown also spoke in reference to several items running above budget in the Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations section of the budget, stating Website and Creative Cost were running above at this time due to the current website redesign and new video/commercial production. Postage is also running above budget expectations due to higher than anticipated visitor guide mailings. Mr. Brown further noted this line item may need additional allocations at year end should the trend continue. Ms. Norman also stated a correction was needed to the revenue statement that she noticed directly prior to the meeting and that Room Occupancy Tax revenue should total \$283,296 or 36% of budget, as a note, this is slightly below prior years revenue to budget comparison of 39%. There being no further questions the Authority moved on to the BRAHM Lease Renewal Item on the agenda.

2. BRAHM Lease Agreement Renewal (Attachment #2)

The Authority reviewed the one year lease renewal document with the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum and approved it as written. Attached as attachment #2.

3. Operations Report - Executive Director (Attachment #3)

Executive Director Brown then reviewed in detail a power point presentation reviewing the fiscal year's first quarter activities attached as attachment #3. Mr. Brown also outlined the Fall Classic bicycle ride that would take place on Saturday, September 26, 2015.

4. Appalachian Ski Mountain Entrance and Signage: Welcome Center Discussion (Attachment #4)

Chairman Kent Tarbutton reviewed this item with the board stating that Appalachian Ski Mountain co-owner Brad Moretz had approached him in regard to a new signage need in preparation for the approaching loss of his current billboard sign due to the new entrance to Chestnut Ridge. Due to its location and proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, the sign would have to comply with Scenic Byway Laws. The owners have decided they would like to build a welcome center on the property in order to comply with the Town Code instead. A rendering with plans of the current location and proposed building and sign were shown to the Authority (Attachment #4). While the building itself meets all applicable Town Code requirements, the signage as presented would require a variance for the decorative stone structure the sign would be mounted to. It was mentioned that the property involved is located in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction and that the current sign was required to be removed in March.

Mr. Moretz was seeking TDA and Chamber support of a variance request to the Town to allow more freedom in signage background or artwork. Mr. Tarbutton stated that currently there are sign standards that restrict the size of a business' signage and the actual sign met those standards. However, the structure the proposed sign would be attached to exceeded the standards. Mr. Moretz was requesting more latitude in regard to the structure on which a

business sign is attached to allow for his current proposed design. The Authority also discussed the "Welcome Center" building proposed to be located on the property at Hwy. 321. The group agreed Appalachian Ski Mountain was a viable tourism draw and that it was important to help Blowing Rock visitors navigate once they are here. It was the consensus of the authority that Chairman Tarbutton speak once again with Mr. Moretz to request that the center be manned by staff that is knowledgeable of the entire area and ask that they allow brochures from Blowing Rock be placed in the center. Mr. Tarbutton agreed to speak with Mr. Moretz about the requests.

Adjournment

With no further business, a motion to close the meeting was made by Doug Matheson and seconded by member Dean Bullis and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Kent Tarbutton, Chairman

Scott Fogleman, Secretary

Attachment #1 – Financial Report including monthly Occupancy Tax Proceeds

Attachment #2 – BRAHM Lease Agreement Renewal

Attachment #3 – Power Point Materials compiled and reviewed by Executive Director Tracy Brown

Attachment #4 – Appalachian Ski Mountain Entrance Signage and Welcome Center Renderings and Plans