

DRAFT
MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
April 5, 2016

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority (TDA) met on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock N.C. Present were Chairperson Dean Bullis, Authority Members Rob Dyer, Doug Matheson, Lianne Mattar and Lorry Mulhern. Others present were Ex-officio Members Scott Fogleman and Nicole Norman, TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown and Interim Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes as written for the November 3, 2015 meeting was made by Member Dyer, seconded by Member Mattar. Unanimously approved.

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. FY 2014-2015 Audited Financial Statement Presentation

Authority Auditors Combs, Tennant and Carpenter representative Jason Carpenter gave an overview of the audited financial statement highlighting several areas of the statements including an unqualified opinion stating the financial statements met all the reporting standards required by the United States of America. The Auditors further reported the Authority's Occupancy Tax revenue was up approximately \$66,000 over the prior year. The Management Discussion and Analysis was also highlighted as an integral part of the financial statements. Fund Balance was highlighted stating \$438,983 being the total Fund Balance and of that \$202,398 unassigned, \$65,461 was added to the balance this year.

FY 2014-2015 Audited Financial Statements- Attachment A

2. Financial Report- Occupancy Tax Proceeds

Ex-officio Member Nicole Norman began by reviewing occupancy tax collections for February 2016. Ms. Norman stated gross collections for February totaled \$50,565.75, with February collections up \$7,889 or 18.48% and fiscal year to date collections up \$61,930 or 9.85%, compared to fiscal year 2015.

Ms. Norman reviewed the Revenue and Expenditure Statements noting the financial statements were printed approximately 75% into the fiscal year. Ms. Norman also noted that occupancy tax revenue is currently at 75.51% of budget. Ms. Norman stated that

the current year's expenditures are in line with budget, with the exception of employee development and travel being slightly up. Executive Director Tracy Brown explained the increase was due to the South East Tourism Conference changing from August to May, which changed the Fiscal Year in which the conference fell in. Mr. Brown requested an amendment be made due to this issue. Ms. Norman also noted the Property, Workers Comp and Liability insurance line was at 97.57% due to the premium being paid annually. This line item should need no additional funding.

3. Budget Amendment Ordinance

As discussed during the November 3, 2015 annual retreat, Ms. Norman reviewed the following amendment allocating funds from additional anticipated occupancy tax receipts towards full-time salaries and related payroll accounts due to the market adjustment made to the Assistant Director salary. In compliance with NC General Statutes governing occupancy tax revenue one-third has also been allocated towards Tourism Infrastructure. **Budget Amendment Ordinance- Attachment B**

Member Matheson made a motion to accept the Budget Amendment Ordinance, seconded by Member Dyer.

4. Operations Report- Executive Director

Executive Director Brown reviewed the previous quarter's (Jan.-March) operation activities via Power Point presentation:

- Walk-in traffic- up 9%
- Phone inquiries- down 35% (due to staffing changes at the Visitor's Center)
- Web Visits- up 23.11%
- Winterfest- up 37.44%
- Facebook "Likes" up to 30,862
- Visitor Guides- down 18%
- Weather issues- 26.37%
- Average web session duration- up 14.26%
- 2016 Winterfest Marketing Recap
- Added Value Media- I Heart Radio, WNC Magazine, Charlotte Magazine, WLNK, Visitnc.com, Featured Event on Visitnc.com
- Continued Co-ops. with NC Travel Guide
- Promoting: Trout Derby, Beer Month, Savor/Wine Festival
- Blue Ridge Parkway AAA FAM Tour- April 8-17
- Looking ahead: Visitor Guide, STS Marketing College, Event Surveys & Evaluation,
Digital Kiosks, Parking Lot Counters

Operations Report Power Point- Attachment C

5. TDA Lease Update

Ex-officio member Scott Fogleman stated he, Mr. Brown and Chamber Executive Director Charles Hardin have been meeting periodically over the past few months to review operations and during their meetings have also discussed the Visitor Center moving in with the Blowing Rock Chamber, with the current lease with BRAHM expiring

at the end of April 2016. After that date the lease will be a month to month basis, with a 60 day notice requirement by either party wishing to terminate the current lease. Mr. Fogleman stated the Chamber Board would be discussing the issue as well at their meeting this week. The lease amount discussed at this time was \$1,672 per month, which would result in approximate savings of \$1,578 per month over the current lease, with some of the funds saved to go towards front desk support needs. Member Mattar made a motion to initiate starting a lease with the Chamber in their building, seconded by Member Dyer. Unanimously approved.

6. Other

Ann Browning with the Middle Fork Greenway was present to give an update on the project. Ms. Browning stated currently the Middle Fork Greenway is working with the Town to try and get a TIGER grant to help fund Blowing Rock section of the Middle Fork Greenway trail. Ms. Browning explained if the Town and the Middle Fork Greenway do not receive the TIGER grant, the focus will be building the trail at the Chestnut Ridge area with current funds already collected.

TDA Chair Dean Bullis informed the board the current audit contract is up for renewal and asked the board if they wanted to proceed with renewing the contract with the current audit firm Combs, Tennant and Carpenter, P.C. It was noted the new contract for Fiscal Year 2016 reflected an increase of \$750, due to new GASB pronouncement requirements, with a total contract price of \$4,500. Member Matheson made a motion to proceed with the contract renewal, seconded by Member Mattar. Unanimously approved. **Fiscal Year 2016 Audit Contract- Attachment D**

Executive Director Tracy Brown presented a proposal from Maurice Ewing requesting help funding a live online streaming of the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show. Following board discussion it was the consensus not to proceed in funding the streaming.

Blowing Rock Charity Horseshow 2016 Streaming Funding Request-Attachment E

Budget Worksession

The FY 2017 Budget Worksession meeting was scheduled for May 2nd at 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Dean Bullis, TDA Chairperson

Hilari Hubner, Interim Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

FY 2014-2015 Audited Financial Statements-Attachment A

Budget Amendment Ordinance-Attachment B

Operations Report Power Point-Attachment C

Fiscal Year 2016 Audit Contract-Attachment D
Blowing Rock Charity Horseshow 2016 Streaming Funding Request-Attachment E