

Town of Blowing Rock

Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – May 9, 2005

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Monday, May 9, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. in a special meeting. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-Chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Lynn Drury, Phil Pickett and Keith Tester, and Ex-officio members Scott Hildebran and Margaret Pierce. TDA Executive Director Susan Freshcorn was also present.

Call to Order

Chairperson Keele called the meeting to order and welcomed the Authority members. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed FY 2005-06 TDA Budget.

Budget Requests

Chairperson Keele stated that the TDA had received three funding requests for the FY 2005-06 Budget. Requests have been received from:

Winterfest - \$10,000

Blowing Rock Stage Company - \$11,500

BR Art and History Museum - \$11,000

The Authority agreed to review these requests once the advertising and event budget categories are established.

Advertising Co-op Program – Grant Review Deadlines

The Authority discussed modifying the review dates for the Advertising Partnerships Grant Program.

Current guidelines -

Program Guidelines for Special Events and Tourism Related Activities Grants Program

Financial grants are made twice during the fiscal year, in July and January. Applications are accepted for review at any time by the Special Events and Tourism Related Activities Grant Program Review Committee.

Program Guidelines for Matching Funds for Advertising Partnerships

Grants are made twice during the fiscal year, in July and December. Deadline for submission of applications is June 1 and November 1.

After a brief discussion on the merits of allowing adequate review and budget planning, motion by Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Pickett to establish funding request deadlines on March 31 and September 30 of the year and make Advertising Partnerships grant awards effective July 1 and January 1.

Proposed Budget - Review

Ex-officio Member Hildebran reviewed the proposed revenue for the FY 2005-06 TDA Budget and outlined the Town of Blowing Rock budget request (**Attachment #1 & 2**). Ex-officio Member Margaret Pierce reviewed the proposed Overhead Operating Line Items expenditures (**Attachment #3**).

Executive Director Freshcorn presented a proposed budget for the various TDA line-items, a Suggested Advertising Schedule and a Strategic Marketing Plan (**Attachment #4-#6**). Ms. Freshcorn reviewed each document in detail with the Authority.

After some deliberation, it was the consensus of the Authority to reduce the Executive Director's budget request back to the previously allocated total of \$140,825. The following breakdowns were established.

Dues/Subscriptions \$3,580

Employee Development \$5,300

PR Campaign/Media Relations \$13,580

Advertising \$53,035

Creative \$5,000

Advertising Contingency \$9,405

Web Site \$10,000

Collateral \$13,525

Client Entertainment \$1,500

Purchased Services \$5,900

Events \$20,000

Chamber Executive Director Charles Hardin distributed an Events Budget Funding Request totaling \$25,000 to the TDA for consideration (**Attachment #7**).

The Authority agreed to consider all funding requests in the context of both the co-op advertising and event program categories. A final determination on funding requests would be made once the Marketing Committee conducts a formal review and forwards a recommendation to the full Board.

Winterfest Committee Member Earl Horne stated that the TDA was in a better position to maximize advertising dollars and that Winterfest would like to know as soon as possible about the Winterfest funding request in order to be able to plan advertisement in non-TDA areas.

Member Tester encouraged Winterfest and the Chamber not to get discouraged if full funding is not allocated on their funding request. Member Drury suggested that all Event funding not be fully committed at this time in order to insure that funds are available for new events that may come along during the year.

The Authority suggested that the TDA and Town work together to produce a joint TDA/Town Calendar that could meet the needs of both parties and produce cost savings.

Member Tester requested that staff revised the FY 2005-06 TDA Budget to reflect the changes made during the meeting and provide a copy to the Authority for their review. Ex-officio Member Hildebran replied that they should receive the update by the end of the week.

Ex-officio Member Hildebran requested that the Authority take formal action on the Town portion of the FY 2005-06 TDA Budget in order to finalize the Town's budget.

Motion by Member Tester and seconded by Vice-Chair Tarbutton to support the Town FY 2005-06 TDA Budget request in the amount of \$243,375 (excluding collection costs). Motion unanimously approved.

BRAHM Request – Office Space

Chairperson Keele advised that the TDA had just received a request from the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum to sub-lease office space in the new Visitor Center (**Attachment #8**). BRAHM is in the process of hiring an executive director with employment expected on June 1, 2005 and is in need of an office. The rental amount that had been suggested is \$200 per month for one office.

Member Tester stated that it was important for the various community groups to work together in the promotion of Blowing Rock and this proposal seems to fit that concept. Member Drury concurred and asked Executive Director Freshcorn about any opportunities and challenges.

Ms. Freshcorn expressed concern that space is limited in the building. The Authority discussed various issues related to common space, meeting space, and parking.

After a short discussion, motion by Member Tester and seconded by Vice-Chair Tarbutton to authorize Chairperson Keele and Member Drury to explore a sub-lease of office space to the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum. The sub-lease being subject to the following conditions: (1) that beyond the office space - all other facilities are shared, (2) due to limited parking - meetings are limited to after Visitor Center hours and (3) BRAHM consider providing insurance for all artwork. Motion unanimously approved.

Other Business

Chairperson Keele advised that he had a productive meeting with Chamber of Commerce President Pam Vines. He stated both agreed that the part-time employee (shared by both the TDA and Chamber) would be supervised by TDA Executive Director Freshcorn. He also mentioned that the new TDA Assistant Director would serve on the Chamber of Commerce Event Committee.

Member Tester commented that the advertisement in the *Charlotte Observer* - Road Trip looked good and had better copy.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion by Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Pickett to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimously approved. Chairperson Keele adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Bernard Keele, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

Attachment

#1 – FY 2005-06 Budget Revenue

#2 – FY 2005-06 TDA Budget - Town Request

#3 – FY 2005-06 Proposed Budget

#4 – Executive Director Proposed Budget Line-items

#5 – Suggested Advertising Schedule

#6 – Strategic Marketing Plan

#7 – Chamber of Commerce Events Budget Request

#8 – BRAHM Sub-lease of Office Space Request