

Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
Minutes – November 7, 2006

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Tuesday, November 7, 2006 at 8:35 a.m. in a regularly scheduled meeting. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Lynn Drury, Phil Pickett and Keith Tester, and Ex-officio member Margaret Pierce. Ex-officio member Scott Hildebran was delayed due to a prior commitment and joined at 9:30 a.m.

Also present were Dave Tomsy of WCT and Jeff Clark of the Hayes Performing Arts Center.

Call to Order

Chairperson Keele called the meeting to order and entertained a motion that the minutes presented be approved. Vice-Chair Tarbutton motioned and Member Pickett seconded that the minutes from September 5 and 29, October 11, 20, 23, 26, and November 1, 2006 and the closed session minutes from September 5, October 26, and November 1, 2006 all be approved with a few corrections. Motion approved with corrections.

Financial Report

Chairperson Keele introduced Finance Officer Margaret Pierce to review the FY 2006-07 budget to date and the audit for FY 2005-06.

Finance Officer Margaret Pierce then reviewed the monthly financial statement and the FY 2006-07 Occupancy Tax collections year-to-date through September 2006. Ms. Pierce advised that revenue has been up for the past seventeen months and that expenditures for the year were in line with projections.

FY 2005-06 Annual Audit Report

Finance Officer Pierce stated that the report came with a clean opinion and that the audit complies with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board 34 requirements. Finance Officer Pierce stated that the TDA ended the fiscal year with \$275,749 in net assets, of which \$180,648 was unrestricted (or 30% of total expenditures).

After a brief discussion, the Authority by consensus accepted the FY 2005-06 Annual Audit Report as presented. **(Attachment #1)**

Operations Report

WC&T Agency

Chairperson Keele asked Mr. Tomsy for a report on his promotional activities on behalf of the Authority. Mr. Tomsy shared copies of *Southern Living* November issue that included two mentions of Blowing Rock and one paid advertisement, *Charlotte Taste* October issue that included an article on the Hayes Performing Arts Center, the Blowing Rock Stage Company, and area businesses, *Tampa Bay Magazine* will have an article in its next issue, and a winter press release sent out on area events for the next few months.

Mr. Tomsy relayed that the two leads from the NC Tourism Board had not been productive for Blowing Rock in that one never did an article and the other did not include anything on the Blowing Rock area in their article. He has sent an email to the state regarding these concerns.

Web Site

Member Tester stated that he has several pages of notes on corrections or concerns on the website and that it would need to be a priority for a new director to review the process for updating items and making corrections.

Marketing

Member Drury reported that multiple ads have been placed and are planned for the coming months. Some discussion was held on which publications we use and why they were chosen and that fulfillment compared to inquiries was untraceable at this time.

Visitor Center

Finance Officer Pierce relayed a request from the staff that the hours of operation of the Visitor Center be reviewed in the near future. After discussion, the board agreed that this was an issue for the new director to address once a director has been hired.

Master Sign Plan

Kevin Rothrock, Town Planning Director, reported on progress to install new directional signs throughout town and on the planned kiosk for visitor information. We are waiting to hear back from our consultant, Mr. Sam Erby, on how to address DOT concerns regarding the new designs. The kiosks are being designed for spring installation in Memorial Park, the parking on Maple Street and at the American Legion, and Tanger Outlet Shoppes.

Authority members encouraged completion of the kiosks at the earliest convenience since this will be tremendous resources for visitors.

Planning Retreat

Chairperson Keele stated that due to scheduling conflicts, the planning retreat would be postponed until January 11, 2007. The retreat will be held at Chetola Resort beginning at 9:00 a.m. If there were any scheduling conflicts at Chetola, Jeff Clark offered to schedule a meeting room at the Hayes Performing Arts Center. Authority members are to forward any topics they would like on the agenda to Chairperson Keele by Thanksgiving.

Closed Session

Upon motion of Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Pickett, the Authority convened at 9:25 a.m. in closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143.318.11 (a)(6) for discussion of personnel issues. Motion unanimously approved.

At the conclusion of the discussions, the closed session was adjourned at 9:40 a.m. and the Authority reconvened in open session at 9:40 a.m.

Executive Director

Member Drury motioned and Vice-Chair Tarbutton seconded to offer the position of Executive Director of the TDA to Tracy Brown at a salary of \$60,000 per year with a start date of December 1, 2006. Unanimously approved.

Other Business

Tracy Brown joined the meeting during this discussion. Three letters received from the Chamber of Commerce were reviewed and discussed. The procedure for addressing visitor concerns will be evaluated once Mr. Brown is in place as Director.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion by Member Pickett and seconded by Member Drury to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m. Motion unanimously approved. Chairperson Keele adjourned the meeting.

Bernard Keele, Chairperson

Margaret Pierce, Finance Officer

Attachment

#1- FY 2005-06 Audited Financial Statements