



## MINUTES

### Jackson County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors Meeting

January 17, 2017 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.

North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

### Call to order/Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Robert Jumper.

Members in attendance

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nick Breedlove    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Jennings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ann Self     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelly Custer      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Jumper  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joel Sowers  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Edwards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mary Lanning   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Spiro  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darlene Fox       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ron Mau        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Williams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Hartbarger               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clifford Meads |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Hoche       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vick Patel     |  |

### Others in Attendance

Danell Moses (minutes); Rich Price, Mary Ann Baker, Chris Cavanaugh

### Approval of Minutes

Minutes were presented and approved for November 2016.

**MOTION:** Meads moved to approve minutes as presented. Custer seconded. Motion passed.

### Review & approval of year-to-date financial report

Financial Report was presented by Darlene Fox.

YTD collections of \$ 614,258.55

YTD expenses of \$ 470,907.78

Cash balance on December 31, 2016 was \$ 692,255.45

**MOTION:** Lanning moved to accept the financial report. Meads seconded. Motion passed.

### Introductions – new board members

New board members were introduced: Ron Mau, Joel Sowers, and Bob Williams

### Appoint Vice Chair, Secretary

Vick Patel asked if Mary Lanning and Sarah Jennings could remain as vice-chair and secretary.

Lanning said she thought those who would be ending their terms should probably not be appointed again: she is in that category. Jumper added that that was a valid point.

Breedlove added that Jumper and Meads were also rotating off in the future.

**MOTION:** Custer motioned that the board continue with the same leadership. Hoche seconded. Motion passed.

### Committee reports: Governance, Marketing

No reports were presented.



### **Jackson County Chamber activity report**

Julie Spiro provided the group with a highlight summary of Chamber activities and news:

- Harrah's will build convention center and another hotel
- Dining guide is complete: copies were provided
- Provided stories for monthly Angler magazine
- Provided weekly fly-fishing report to various venues
- Hosted STIR events
- New event called Just the Girls to be hosted as a girls night out for cocktails, spa treats, restaurants in Jackson County; door prizes will be provided. First event will be March 31.
- Planning golf tournament at High Hampton Inn in April.
- Planning new event celebrating trout on May 20.

### **Cashiers Chamber activity report**

Stephanie Edwards provided the group with a highlight summary of Cashiers Chamber activities and news:

- New business The Library just reopened New Year's Eve and is wildly successful
- Planning Outhouse races
- Working on Solar Eclipse plans: have put up crossroads banner
- Terrapin Mountain discussions continue regarding the declassification of Terrapin Mountain by the United States Forest Service

Hoche asked if the Library was still for members only: Edwards reported it was not.

Jennings mentioned that the addition of the Library will lend to culinary destination marketing for the Cashiers area.

Jumper said he would like to start a public relations committee. He asked for members to let him know if interested.

### **Director's Report**

Nick Breedlove provided some highlights of his full report provided with the agenda.

- Welcomed new board members again. Indicated that four vacancies remain. The TDA is still awaiting decision by Jackson County Commissioners for approval of new policy which will allow a greater selection of candidates for those vacancies.
- The marketing committee spent a great deal of time reviewing recommendations from the Director for projects for consideration in implementing in early FY 16-17, in an effort to get marketing efforts off the ground at the beginning of January. A number of these are being





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proposed to the full board as budget amendments from fund balance later in the meeting. Items include: promotional items for media trips, creative updates to our waterfall/hiking trail map, visitor guide creative work, and additional website projects to be completed in FY 16-17 to enhance the tourist experience. Marketing vetted these projects thoroughly.

- In addition to the Marketing Items (promo, creative and website projects) and the Solar Eclipse funding program, the Executive Board has also unanimously endorsed a project to install iPad visitor log kiosks in both chambers to gather visitor demographics and better understand our tourists. Over the last 5 months, we've gathered 1200 records of visitors between the two chambers on paper logs. The data is incredibly valuable, but sometimes illegible, and in as much, could skew our data.

The cost of the iPad installations and setup, inclusive of both Chambers, is \$1,267. Both Chamber Directors have expressed interest in working with us on training their staff to help visitors fill these out.

Jennings asked if the iPads would gather the same information that is being collected now.

Breedlove said they will consult with Rawle Murdy to find the best questions to ask.

- A delivery date of March 30 is expected for the 2017 Jackson County Visitor Guide.
- Has recommended additions to website:
  - hiking directions from site to mobile phone
  - work on templates to break out Solar Eclipse information and other ancillary pages.
- Received a request from American Rivers, who has a new coordinator based in Sylva to endorse an application they're submitting to the Tennessee Valley Authority for \$90,000+ in funding for eco-tourism planning for the Tuckasegee River in Jackson, and Swain Counties and the Qualla Boundary. The availability of this funding would be great to study how we can be better stewards of this precious resource. A match from the JCTDA is not required, but an in-kind match of services would be helpful. Breedlove has offered involvement in the project should the board concur.

Jumper asked if there are any questions regarding this issue. No opposition was expressed.

- Working on the hiking and waterfall map to refresh the design for easier readability. Rawle Murdy will work with SM News to generate cover image and provide them with the style guide
- At the request of Southeast Tourism Society President Bill Hardman and Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Director Angie Chandler, Breedlove gave a presentation in Atlanta Jan. 12. The presentation was about tourism product development and aligning tourism goals with those of National Heritage Areas, 13 of which were in attendance from all over the southeast. The presentation was very well received.
- Website traffic is significantly up from 2,000 to 30,000 from last December to this December.

### **Proposed changes to TDA grant program (discussion, approval)**

Copies of the policy were distributed. Changes include:

Eligibility: make note in the document when the change took place

Timetable: July 2017-June 2018



Restrictions: change create chart of media buys with total of grant total

Jennings asked when this would be released if approved. Breedlove said it would be released tomorrow.

No objections were made. Motion passed to approve all changes made to the document.

### **Solar Eclipse TDA funding, one time policy draft**

The Jackson County Tourism Development Authority is making up to \$9,000 in funding available to help offset programming, entertainment and event-related fees for the Aug. 18-21 Solar Eclipse weekend. The funding will be distributed up to \$4,500 per location to two public event locations in Jackson County – for the Cashiers public event held at The Village Green 12-acre Park and for Sylva's public event held at Bridge Park.

No objections were made. Motion passed to approve all changes made to the document.

### **Discussion and approvals of budget amendments**

Fox explained that to amend the TDA fund expenditures line increase of \$27,460.00, the same will be increased in revenue in Fund Balance.

**MOTION:** Meads motioned to approve transfer of funds to cover items.

### **New Business**

Sarah Jennings stated she is on board of Boys and Girls Club which recently approved the second Baldaroo Concert for 2017 on Saturday, September 16. She asked if anyone knows of conflicts for that date, please let her know.

Rich Price announced that new construction projects will be massive over the next three years on HWY 107 as well as at WCU, SCC, and Harrah's. The totality of all these projects will provide lodging needs in the county. Transportation projects will start this year; both involve improving NC 107.

### **Update on Magellan Strategy**

Chris Cavanaugh, Magellan Strategy Group, presented information regarding the review of the Jackson County TDA relationship with its chambers of Commerce partners. He stressed this is not a financial audit nor a legal review.

TDA has a fiduciary duty to the hoteliers and the public to ensure that tax dollars are expended appropriately in accordance with its legislative mandate. In most places in NC, local chambers act as the official destination marketing organization. No one interviewed expressed desire to take any services in-house.

Four areas of focus resulted from the study with recommendations from the group for each area to





improve communication, representation, and understanding of the two markets:

- The North and South Divide
- Recognizing Chambers' Roles as Destination Management Organizations
- Improving and Enhancing Contracts and Leases
- Improving the Measurement and Value of What the Chambers do for the JCTDA

Nick Breedlove said that the goal of the project is to get clearer vision of chamber working with the TDA. Robert Jumper said that there are some items in the document the board should consider. He also stated it is a good idea to be able to explain the relationships between the entities to outsiders like the Commissioners.

**Public comment (per sign in sheet)**

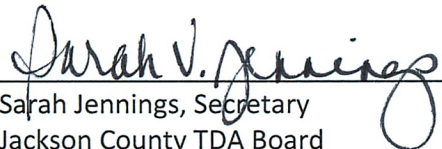
No comments were made.

**Announcements**

No announcements were made

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

  
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Sarah Jennings, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board  
Approved: