



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

April 17, 2019 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.

Holt Library Conference Room 112, SCC

447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Ann Self, Chair, Laura Bowers, Vice-Chair; Kathy Korb, Secretary; Board Members Bob Williams, Megan Orr, Brad Herman, Jay Grissom, Ron Mau, and Julie Spiro
- **Members absent:** Dale Collins, Andrew Harlfinger, Stephanie Edwards, and Darlene Fox
- **Others in attendance:** John Kautz, Rawle Murdy; Berkeley Young, McKenzie Graham, and Madelyn Matlock with Young Strategies; Debbie Coffey, Minutes Clerk

Approval of Agenda

A copy of the Agenda was emailed prior to the meeting.

MOTION: *Laura Bowers moved to approve the agenda as amended; Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Public Comment

None.

Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Ms. Bowers and Ms. Korb did not have comments at this time.

Review and Approval of March Minutes

Minutes of the March 13, 2019 TDA meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review. Mrs. Self noted that she was in attendance at the last meeting but was inadvertently left off the roll call for members present and requested the minutes be amended.

MOTION: *Bob Williams moved to approve the March 13th minutes as amended to show Mrs. Self as present. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Review and Approval of March Financial Report

Director Breedlove presented the March Financial Report which was emailed prior to the meeting. March highlights include Occupancy Tax collections of \$45,065.03, penalties of \$119.97, and YTD collection totals of \$831,019.02, which is 74.71% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$10,565.92. Collections were up 28.99% from the same period in 2018, and up 8.15% for the fiscal year. 106 accounts reported rentals for February. The March 31st cash balance was \$52,574.48 with investments totaling \$400,000.00. March expenses were \$120,021.41 with YTD expenses totaling \$922,809.70. Encumbrances of \$2,615.09 make a combined total of \$925,424.79, equaling 77.04% of the budget.

MOTION: *Megan Orr moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Kathy Korb seconded. Motion carried.*

Directors' Reports

Jackson County Chamber Director's Report: Julie Spiro presented the following highlights from the Jackson Chamber:

- 1,785 visitors have been served in the Sylva Visitor Center, with 126 being served in Dillsboro.
- Brochures Mailed: 2,250 Visitors Guides were mailed to interested guests, 3,747 to Welcome Centers, and 1,526 fly fishing maps have been distributed.

- \$7,000 in merchandise has been sold this fiscal year, with new Hook Line & Drinker, WNC Fly Fishing Trail®, and NC Trout Capital® shirts in stock or on the way.
- Two part-time employees have been added to assist with guest services and chamber projects.
- Upcoming events include the Dillsboro Easter Hat Parade, Greening Up the Mountains, Hook Line & Drinker, and the Concerts on the Creek kick off event.

Cashiers Area Chamber: Highlights of the Cashiers Area Chamber report that was emailed prior to the meeting include:

- Construction has begun on the Village Green Arts and Culture Center, with a target completion date of November.
- The Retailer and Restaurant Roundtable ad hoc committee is continuing efforts to enhance the visitor experience.
- ‘Nosh Mobs’ are being organized to promote local restaurants that remain open year-round.
- Ms. Edwards is serving as Chair of the Program and Grants Committee for the newly formed Dogwood Health Trust.

Executive Director: Mr. Breedlove presented the following highlights from his director’s report:

- The Forestry Service is seeking public input on a proposed controlled burn scheduled for this fall, with May 9th being the deadline for comment. The burn may have a direct impact on the visitor experience. The Executive Committee will discuss the matter at a later meeting.
- Mr. Breedlove was able to have a brief meeting with a writer for *Airbnb Magazine* last week.
- The TDA has received the Southeast Tourism Society Destination Marketing Organization of the Year award from a twelve state region of DMO’s with less than a \$2 million budget. Breedlove received the award on behalf of the TDA in at the STS Connections Conference in Daytona Beach, Fla.
- Last weekends Brew Hop and Valley of the Lilies Race were both up in attendance, due in part to cross-marketing the events to encourage visitors to stay longer.
- Baxley’s Chocolates and Dillsboro Chocolate Factory are working with Innovation Brewery and Innovation Station to create unique chocolate and beer pairings that will be available year-round.
- Mr. Breedlove attended his final Destinations International Certified Destination Management Executive conference and will be eligible for graduation this summer following completion of the required exams.
- The STS Congressional Summit on Tourism will be held in Washington DC June 11-13, and Mr. Breedlove has been selected to serve as state chair for the event.
- Jackson County Commissioners approved both capital improvement requests for the Visitor Centers yesterday.
- Pineapple PR update: representatives will attend the Visit North Carolina Media Mission to promote the county to New York travel writers next month; a social media influencer will visit on May 1st; and one large summer FAM trip is planned to target several national magazines including *National Geographic*, *Birmingham Home and Garden*, and an Orlando magazine.

Strategic Planning Session-Berkeley Young

Mr. Young gave an expanded presentation of the Jackson County Visitor Survey data. The presentation focused on ten areas:

- The economic impact of tourism on Jackson County’s economy;
- An analysis of the existing lodging market in the county;
- A geo/socio-demographic and spending profile of visitors, and the impact they have;
- An analysis of survey respondents who have not visited here;
- The effect of part-time residents of the county on tourism;
- An analysis of the responses of county residents;
- Image and awareness of the Visit Jackson County brand;
- Use of the research findings and recommendations to create strategic initiatives and goals with specific action items that have measurable goals.

- Census data was overlaid with survey data to show regional competition for visitors and to identify target markets and audiences to help achieve the measurable goals set based on the strategic initiatives.
- Mr. Young outlined the survey methodology and introduced the team responsible for the in-depth analysis of the survey data.

In a separate presentation, Mr. Young introduced DestinationNEXT, which is a survey compiled from 150 participants made up of local stakeholders, local government, tourism partners, and the DMO Board of Directors and staff. The information is designed as a diagnostic tool for ranking strengths and to prioritize areas where improvement is needed.

Announcements/Adjournment

Bob Williams made the board aware of the Jackson County Robotics Team which will display a project at Greening Up the Mountains. Raffle tickets to support this endeavor are available at his shop.

MOTION: *Jay Grissom moved to adjourn. Megan Orr seconded, motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 22, 2019, TDA Full Board Meeting at 1:00 pm in the Holt Library Conference Room 112, Southwestern Community College, 447 College Drive, Sylva, NC 28779.

Kathy Korb, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: May 22, 2019