



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

## MEETING MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting

March 15, 2023 (Wednesday) @1:00 p.m.

In Person Meeting – The Village Green

160 Frank Allen Road, Cashiers, NC

### Call to Order/Roll Call

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

- **Members in attendance:** Executive Director Nick Breedlove; Daniel Fletcher, Chair; Robert Jumper, Vice Chair; Board Members Craig Smith, Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Mark Jones, Mandi Cantrell, Megan Orr, Vice Chair; Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary; and Stephanie Edwards
- **Members absent:** Dale Collins
- **Others in attendance:** Cheryl Osborne, Minutes Clerk, Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group, Kara Addy, TDA Social Media Manager

### Approve Agenda

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve the agenda. Craig Smith seconded. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

### Recognize Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner

Daniel Fletcher, Chair, thanked the Vice Chair, Secretary and County Commissioner for being at the meeting today.

### Review and Approval of February 15, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meeting is available on the JCTDA website. They were also attached to the agenda for this meeting. No comments were made.

**MOTION:** Megan Orr moved to approve meeting minutes. Ashlie Mitchell seconded. The motion carried.

### Review and Approval of February 28, 2023 Financial Report

Ms. Fox presented the financial report as follows. Highlights for February include Occupancy Tax collections of \$100,309.46 with penalties of \$119.78 and YTD collection totals of \$1,707,104.95 which is 82.87% of the budget. Airbnb collections totaled \$47,498.67. The Home Away and VRBO total was \$7,123.04 and the VACASA, NC total was \$4,347.62. 62 accounts reported rentals for January rentals

(decrease of 9 accounts from last year). Collections were up 1.63% from the same period in 2022. The February 28, 2023 cash balance is \$395,197.10 with investments totaling \$3,000,000.00. February expenses were \$136,671.55 with FYTD expenses totaling \$1,111,962.09 with encumbrances of \$54,845.60 for a combined total of \$1,206,147.62, equaling 45.07% of the budget.

**MOTION:** *Craig Smith moved to approve the February financial report as presented. Mandy Cantrell seconded. The motion carried.*

**Approve Audit Contract**

The contract is for the audit all TDA statements and disclosures. It is a standard contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. in the amount of \$6,975 and an additional \$1,100 for writing the financial statements.

**MOTION:** *Craig Smith moved to approve the audit contract. Ashlie Mitchell seconded. Motion carried.*

**Review Grant Requests – Pinnacle Park Foundation & Cashiers Historical Society**

Mr. Breedlove gave a synopsis of the Pinnacle Park Foundation’s grant request. The Executive Committee has given a full recommendation to approve the request. The grant money will be used to complete a master plan for the park. The total cost of the undertaking is over \$100,000 and the Foundation is requesting \$50,000 from the JCTDA. The County and the Town of Sylva are expected to contribute funds. Pinnacle Park is open year round and is one of the few places where tourist can hike in the winter since the Blue Ridge Parkway is closed. Pinnacle Park has also been featured in national publications as a location for “Forest Therapy.” Many tourists are attracted by the wellness aspects of the park.

The Cashiers Historical Society is requesting a grant to fund marketing and promoting their events. Their budget is down due to renovations to their building. The grant will offset the budget shortfall. They are requesting \$10,000 to market their events. They included a detailed list of events. It was decided that the TDA would use their advertising agency, BGRM, to publicize the Historical Society’s events by providing creative resources and media buying. Mr. Breedlove displayed BGRM’s Marketing Strategy Overview for the CHS in response to Ms. Mitchell’s comments. Mr. Jumper asked if CHS had given any numbers on the grant application to how many people attend their events. Mr. Breedlove responded in the affirmative.

The vote today will be to approve the two grant requests and to initiate a budget amendment to cover the additional funds to cover the requests.

**MOTION:** *Robert Jumper motioned to approve the grant request from Pinnacle Park Foundation for their Master Plan contingent upon them securing the remaining funds prior to JCTDA issuing a check and to approve the Cashiers Historical Society’s grant utilizing BGRM for placements. The final part of the motion is to allow the finance officer and chair to execute a budget amendment to transfer funds from the general fund to the Capital Projects fund. Ashlie Mitchell seconded. Motion carried.*

**JCTDA Director’s Brief**

Mr. Breedlove sent Director's Brief by email with the meeting agenda. Highlights are as follows:

- Mr. Breedlove introduced and welcomed new employee, Kara Addy, who will be the Social Media Manager. Ms. Addy expressed her thanks and introduced herself and her qualifications.
- Mr. Breedlove and Ms. Addy attended a Visit NC Conference and learned that Home Away and VRBO have contracts with the NC Dept. of Revenue to remit taxes directly while Booking.com does not and they leave it up to the owners to pay the taxes to the state. The North Carolina Travel and Tourism Council is working to get a contract with Booking.com.
- Mr. Breedlove shared weekly occupancy numbers and ADR in his report; however, he learned at the Visit NC Conference that Oxford Economics, who owns Tourism Economics, is predicting a small mild recession in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2023. Hopefully, Jackson County tourism will not feel the effects too greatly. Research projections show budget travel will be most affected by the recession while luxury travel is less impacted.
- Tiffany Collins has exited the employ of the JCTDA. Mr. Breedlove stated that there was nothing of significance mentioned in her exit interview to why she resigned. Mr. Breedlove is currently looking at options for the role of the Social Media Content Specialist and will bring them to the Board at the next meeting.

#### **Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director Report – February**

The report was sent with the agenda of this meeting. Ms. Spiro shared the highlights of the activities of the Chamber.

- Cleanup of River Roads will have to be rescheduled since there were no volunteers.
- The Chamber published a new "Eating Out" Guide and it is currently stocked in the kiosks, which were recently cleaned and restocked.
- The Chamber is having an open house Thursday and Friday, March 16-17.
- Friends Night Out will be held March 30.

#### **Cashiers Area Chamber Director Report**

The report was sent with the agenda of this meeting. Ms. Edwards gave highlights as follows:

- The Chamber planted spring bulbs which are blooming around town.
- The Cashiers to Highlands walking trail has grown in scope and is now called the Blue Ridge Community Connector Project. The proposal now includes a connection from Clayton to Highlands and yurt-like lodging along the route. The final report incorporating public input is expected at the end of March.

Mr. Breedlove expressed his concern about the new developments coming to Cashiers and how the growth will affect tourism. The resident population in Cashiers is opposed to the influx of tourists; therefore, there needs to be a dialogue between the planning council, JCTDA, and the developers of the projects. Ms. Edwards responded that the residents of Cashiers are beginning to understand that growth is inevitable, and they will have to accept it.

**New Business**

None

**Updates from Individual Board Members**

Carter Long, Lou Hammond Group, updated the Board on the activities of LHG in the past month.

**Announcements**

None

**Adjourn**

**MOTION:** *Craig Smith motioned to adjourn. Ashlie Mitchell seconded. Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 1: p.m. 58 by Mr. Fletcher.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held April 12, 2023 in person at JCTDA headquarters unless otherwise posted.

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\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary  
Jackson County TDA Board  
Approved: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023