

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
Minutes

Present

Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts
City Manager Mark Stephens
Paresh Pankhavala
Gary Johnson
Sabrina Bengel
Gary Curry
Commissioner Danny Walsh
Commissioner Tom Mark
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Excused

Chairman Cindy King

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Erin Knight
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Chris Segal
Tammy Rodriguez
Michelle Lynn
Rene Melby
Tarshi McCoy

CALL TO ORDER:

- I. Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the January Board Meeting. Paresh Pankhavala moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Mark Stephens seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- II. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Craig Warren started with the Occupancy Tax Collection Report noting taxes collected in the month of January for hotel stays in December were \$96,814 compared to \$111,523 for the same time period last year. That represents a decrease of \$14,709 which is 13.2% compared to last year's collections for that month. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 12.4%. Fiscal YTD collections are \$904,863 compared to \$1,144,590 the previous year which represents a decrease of \$239,727 or 20.9%. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for January 2021 were \$30,520.59 compared to \$35,095 last year, decrease of 13.03%. YTD income is \$320,258 compared to \$395,608 last year, decrease of 19.1%. On the expenditure side you'll see the total spent for January was \$48,408 compared to \$35,611 last year. Total expenditures YTD are at 43.4% of the budget through 58% of the year. Looking at the balance sheet as of January 31 the cash balance is \$528,428. Adding in the net income through January of \$66,630 to the fund balance gives a total of \$558,496. Sabrina Bengel asked where the \$100,000 restricted funds are shown. Requires $\frac{3}{4}$ of the board approval to spend it. Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts motioned to have it listed separately. Sabrina Bengel seconded it. Mark Stephens moved to accept the financials as presented, Gary Curry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- IV **STR Report:** Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 58.3% compared to 76.8% in 2019. ADR was 97.11 compared to 112.58 in 2019 and RevPAR was 56.61 compared to 86.45 last year. In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 49.2 compared to 64.0 last year. ADR was 49.2 compared to 88.59 in 2019. RevPAR was 37.01 compared to 56.70 last year.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT: Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor log for January 2021 that showed 68 walk-ins compared to 184 the year before. There were 29 calls compared to 245 the year before. Starting January 16, traffic at the Cub House showed 33 walk-ins. | Melissa shared a map that showed state of origins for requests as well as source of email inquiries noting that there were 216 in January. Melissa gave an update on the website upgrades, added new pictures of the visitor center and cub house. Will be adding information about the staff as well. Also added in Vacation Rentals to our places to stay page. | Update on J Avery Marketing; after comparing other options, J Avery's offers the best rate and has been doing a great job of promoting social media sites. Will continue to partner with J Avery. | Melissa spoke about hosting our first travel blogger in March. | Vacation Rental Update: Melissa reported that moving forward, the PACE report will be used to track vacation rentals. | Melissa gave an update on future large group events, AENC planning an even for 2022. NC Sheriff's Association rescheduled their event for April 2021. Our State will be hosting an Outlander Reader's Weekend in July. | Melissa gave an update about outdoor sporting event options (Pickleball, Disc Golf, Fencing). | Brice Connors announced that we have been named as one of 2021 Southern Living Best Small Towns | Matt displayed the new Havelock QR Code | Matt said that Ellie engagement in flights, retirement and weddings are up month over month. | Brice discussed that Heart of NC Wedding Magazine did a week and half social spotlight on New Bern which earned 30,933 bridal impressions and wedding was in the top ten of our website pages visited. Future focus is on business events/conferences. Matt showed the new promotional video highlighting the Convention Center and Double Tree.

VI. HAVELOCK TOURISM & EVENT CENTER DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Pam Holder said that there were no events in January; Commissioners meeting and workshop, contractor meetings and training seminars. Facility is open by appointment. February has no events scheduled other than two City of Havelock Board of Commissioners meetings. January revenue was \$20,020.33 compared to \$52,740.33 the previous year. | Traffic to the website was about the same as previous months. Facility Improvements: New exhibit donated by the airport, aviation memorabilia Captain Mike Horton collection. Working on setting up a contractor meeting for April. 108 visitors including events/meetings.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Melissa Riggle: proposed a line-item transfer from travel training to contractual services for \$11,255. She also mentioned that she was putting together a Budget Committee consisting of Chairman Cindy King, Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts, Mark Stephens, Paresch Pankhavala, Craig Warren, and herself.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

Melissa: update on by-laws, reached out to Ross Hardeman to review that we are in compliance. Finalized report will be ready before the March meeting.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Gary Curry likes the new uniform. Nancy Figiel: Tryon will be hosting blood drive on February 25, Outlander on Feb 20, is sold out. Behind the Scenes are coming back in March. Traffic has been slow but has seen an uptick in wedding inquiries. Mark Stevens: wanted to thank Melissa for her hard work, as well as the marketing group. Sabrina Bengel mentioned that Love Letters promotion is still going on. Amanda with Berry Merry is looking for volunteers for March Pub Crawl and additional monthly events. New groups on Facebook have been started to promote businesses New Bern Cash Mob and Havelock Cash Mob. Mark Stephens: mentioned that Martin Marietta Park's development is still ongoing but many of the features are open for use. Commissioner Danny Walsh: construction on Cherry Point continues, new business in Havelock bringing in 20 new

jobs, Pickleball courts are being built, bypass is about halfway done. Paresh: wanted to know more about Pickleball. Michelle Lynn: commented on how much of a positive response she has been hearing about the Unity artwork piece.

ADJOURNMENT: Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts made a motion to adjourn. Sabrina Bengel seconded.