

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

Present

City Manager Mark Stephens
Paresh Pankhavala
Gary Johnson
Sabrina Bengel
Gary Curry
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Excused

Chairman Cindy King
Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts
Commissioner Danny Walsh
Commissioner Tom Mark

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Erin Knight
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Chris Segal
Tammy Rodriguez
Ross Hardman
Carrie Gallagher
Tarshi McCoy
Michelle Lynn

CALL TO ORDER:

- I. Melissa Riggle, Executive Director called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Melissa Riggle asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the February Board Meeting. Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Gary Curry 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 February for hotel stays in January were \$91,800 compared to \$129,849 for the same time period last year. That represents a decrease of \$38,049 which is 29.3% compared to last year's collections for that month. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 17.3%. Fiscal YTD collections are \$996,653 compared to \$1,274,439 the previous year which represents a decrease of \$277,776 or 21.8%. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for February 2021 were \$28,940 compared to \$40,935 last year, decrease of 29.3%. YTD income is \$329,198 compared to \$476,543 last year, decrease of 20%. On the expenditure side you'll see the total spent for February was \$62,042 compared to \$49,336 last year. Total expenditures YTD are at 41 of the budgets through 66% of the year. Looking at the balance sheet as of February 28 the cash balance is \$496,962. Adding in the net income through February of \$33,528 to the fund balance gives a total of \$525,394. Craig asked for the Audit Contract to be approved by the board. Sabrina Bengel approved and Gary Curry second. The motion carried unanimously.
- IV **STR Report:** Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 44.5 % compared to 67.3% in 2020. ADR was 90.15 compared to 101.2 in 2020 and RevPAR was 40.08 compared to 68 last year. In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 46.5 compared to 39.7 last year. ADR was 67 compared to 78.46 in 2020. RevPAR was 26.58 compared to 36.52 last year.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT: Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor log for February 2021 that showed 72 walk-ins and 42 calls at the main office and 77 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). | Melissa shared a map that showed state of origins for requests as well as source of email inquiries noting that there were 304 in February. | Operations Update: Melissa informed the board that inquires and RFP's are picking up with 5 group leads and 2 RFP's for the month. | Melissa gave an update about our first travel blogger, Laura Holmes, who is in town this week. Melissa attended the AENC virtual winter tradeshow at the end of February and said that everyone is excited to return to in person meetings soon. | Vacation Rental Update: Melissa reported that booking demands are up for vacation rentals. | Melissa gave an update on future large group events, AENC planning an event for 2022. NC Sheriff's Association rescheduled their event for April 2021. NC Main Street Conference happening this week and the 365 Conference will be held April 22 & 23. | News from the State: Travel Guide Roadshow was a success. Melissa presented a 7-minute pitch with Meredith Travel. The video was very well received. | Melissa informed the board about updates to our Civil War trails. There are 9 locations in our area. Interest in history is on the increase in all age brackets. | Brice Connors announced that we have entered a three-month OTT/CTV agreement within North Carolina. | Next month we will be doing a breakout series that highlights local businesses owners. Matt Potts gave updates on online stats; Ellie engagement rate is 13% with 38.6% of traffic redirected to Hotels/B&B's and 8.7% being redirected to flights.

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

Pam Holder said that there were no events in February; Commissioners meeting and workshop, contractor meetings and training seminars. Facility is open by appointment. March has a few events scheduled other than City of Havelock Board of Commissioners meetings. February revenue was \$26,362.36 compared to \$53,740.33 the previous year. | Traffic to the website was about the same as previous months. 95 visitors including events/meetings.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Melissa Riggle thanked Ross Hardeman for all the work he has done on the bi-law edits. Sabrina mentioned that the Friday and Saturday street closures will begin for street cafes in April.

IV OLD BUSINESS:

Melissa Riggle: updated the board on the progress of adding the TDA board information to the website.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Sabrina Bengel reminded everyone about Beary Merry Events and the St. Patrick's Day Celebrations going on this month. She invited Carrie Gallagher to speak to us about Juneteenth and the importance to the African American Heritage. | Gary Curry gave updates on Tryon Palace (Waystation, Garden Cottage, adding a restaurant, bathroom remodel, Hay House) | Nancy Figiel reported that Tryon Palace has opened up 2 new exhibits (Celebration of 250 Years and The Green Book) Ongoing events include Outlander tour at the end of the month and behind the scenes tours on Tuesdays. Wedding inquiries are on the increase. | Paresh reminded everyone that masks and social distancing are still a big factor for travelers. | Mark Stephens gave a reminder that during April 8-11 The Wall That Heals will be at Lawson's Creek Park.

ADJOURNMENT: Gary Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Sabrina Bengel seconded.