

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, April 14, 2021
Minutes

Present

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

Excused

Commissioner Tom Mark

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Erin Knight
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Ross Hardeman
Carrie Gallagher
Tarshi McCoy
Michelle Lynn
Taylor Shannon
Zaneta Padilla

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Cindy King called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Cindy King asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the March Board Meeting. Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Gary Curry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT: Craig Warren started with the Occupancy Tax Collection Report noting taxes collected in the month of March for hotel stays in February were \$104,465 compared to \$127,408 for the same time period last year. That represents a decrease of \$22,943 which is 18.01% compared to last year's collections for that month. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 11%. Fiscal YTD collections are \$1,101,120 compared to \$1,401,847 the previous year which represents a decrease of \$300,719 or 21.45%. Collected \$749 in penalties. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for March 2021 were \$32,932 compared to \$440,165 last year, decrease of 19.84%. YTD income is \$382,130 compared to \$476,709 last year, decrease of 20%. On the expenditure side you'll see the total spent for March was \$66,049 compared to \$41,762 last year. Total expenditures YTD are at 63.74% of the budgets through 75% of the year. Looking at the balance sheet as of March 31 the cash balance is \$491,866. Adding in the net income through March of \$1,161 to the fund balance gives a total of \$493,027. Chairman Cindy King asked for a motion to move, Gary Curry motioned.

IV. STR Report: Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 56.7 % compared to 74.5% in 2020. ADR was 88.73 compared to 99.63 in 2020 and RevPAR was 50.27 compared to 74.25 last year. In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 46 compared to 54.9 last year. ADR was 64.39 compared to 77.39 in 2020. RevPAR was 29.62 compared to 42.47 last year.

V. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor log for March 2021 that showed 325 walk-ins and 60 calls at the main office and 173 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 368 in March. | Operations Update: Melissa informed the board that there were 5 group leads and service inquiries for the month. | Melissa announced that we will begin providing welcome signs for the downtown stores for large groups. Our first group is the sheriffs 'association. Melissa announced that we will be updating and revitalizing our Civil War Trails and historical markers. | Visitor Guide sales will begin in May | Looking to create itineraries based on interest level (family fun, foodies, history, etc.) | Vacation Rental Update: Melissa reported that booking demands are up for vacation rentals. | Melissa gave an update on future large group events, Pickleball Tournament (October 1&2, 2021), NC Watercolors Association (October 1-5, 2022) United National Flag Football North Carolina Darkhorse (August 608, 2021) | News from the State: NC Weekend aired the "Romance" episode featuring the Jarvis 220. Visit NC's PR Director Margot Mertzger is working on a possible Influencer project highlighting EWN. AENC first in-person meeting will be in Pinehurst May 6, 2021. | Press/PR/Media: Havelock Chili Fest, Mumfest, and Tryon Palace Candlelight have been named 2021 Recipients of the Top 20 events for the Southeast Tourism Society. Travel Blogger Laura Homes released her article about her stay in New Bern and is collaborating with Judy on social media posts. Fodor's Travel Writer coming to town April 28 & 29, 2021. | Brice Connors announced upcoming promotional advertising deals which include Southern Living and Our State Magazine. Matt Potts gave updates on online stats; March was our best month with 1.5 million impressions. Ellie engagement rate is 15.2% with 43.3% of traffic redirected to Hotels/B&B's and 12.2% being redirected to flights. OTT/CTV streaming campaign: 148.5k impressions. Print ads: Cary Magazine, Our State, Southern Living, Ideal Living, AARP. Airport: needs to add New Bern to website and have a presence at the airport.

VI. **HAVELOCK TOURISM & EVENT CENTER DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Pam Holder said that there were no events in March; Commissioners meeting and workshop, contractor meetings and training seminars. Facility is open by appointment. April has a few events scheduled other than City of Havelock Board of Commissioners meetings. March revenue was \$26,362.36 compared to \$55,240.33 the previous year. | Traffic to the website was about the same as previous months. 65 visitors and 150 event guests. Historical site: Nicole Wagner will be doing studies on Camp Haterson. NCAE Traveling RV stopped by to honor local educators.

VII. **NEW BUSINESS**
Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts gave an update on proposed budget. Melissa Riggle provided insight on budget changes. Voting on budget will be in June 2021. Chairman Cindy King: review of the TDA Bi laws needs to be review in a close session due to general statue 143-318.11(A)(3).

VIII. **OLD BUSINESS:**

IX. **MEMBER COMMENTS:** Sabrina Bengel announced the approval of the hospitality training at the Volt Center. April 21, 2021 there will be a restaurant council to address industry needs. The Chelsea will be closing on Wednesday due to staff shortages for the month of April. | Gary Curry: street closure continues to be a good feature. Tryon Palace/Garden Sale was a big success. | Nancy Figiel: Tryon Palace tours sold out over spring break week. Outlander tours selling out on a regular basis. Weddings have a strong booking throughout the year and into next year. | Vice-Chairman Dan Roberts: Chamber Annual celebration at the Flame, tickets sold out in a week. James "Smoke" Boyd has been elected the Chamber Board Chair. Volunteers return to the Chamber. | Commissioner Danny Walsh: Havelock

construction and military cutbacks have slowed down business in Havelock, but the bypass construction is ahead of schedule.

X. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Cindy King requested that a motion to go to a closed session due to general statute 143-318.11(A)(3) for the purpose of maintaining client-attorney privilege be made. Paresh Pankhavala made a motion and Gary Curry seconded it. It was unanimously approved.