

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, August 11, 2021
Minutes

Present

Chairman Dan Roberts
Vice-Chairman Paresh
Pankhavala
Alderman Sabrina Bengel
Alderman Jeffery Odum
Commissioner Brenda Wilson
Commissioner Tom Mark
Gary Johnson
Cindy King
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Garry Curry

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Chairman Dan Roberts called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

II. ROLL CALL: Meliss Riggle conducted roll call.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the July Board Meeting. Alderman Sabrian Bangel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Cindy King seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT: Craig Warren started with the Occupancy Tax Collection Report noting taxes collected in the month of July for hotel stays in June were \$234,089 compared to \$129,421 for the same time period last year. That represents an increase of \$104,668, which is 81% compared to last year's collections for that month. **Best July EVER.** Fiscal YTD collections are \$1,751,759 compared to \$1,579,768 the previous year which represents an increase of \$171,993 or 10.9%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 17%. No penalties collected. June updates to the Fund Balance on the expenditures were adjusted to a net loss of \$30,780 for the fiscal year. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for July 2021 were \$108,796 compared to \$62,769 last year, increase of 73%. Room tax is running ahead by 22% of 8% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for July was \$29,508 compared to \$7,537 last year. Total expenditures YTD are below 4.43% of the budgets through 8% of the year. Overture of \$79,288. Looking at the balance sheet as of July 31 the cash balance is \$431,982. Adding in the net income through July of \$79,288 to the fund balance gives a total of \$540,373. Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to move; Cindy King motioned to approve; Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 69.1% compared to 56.1% in 2020. ADR was 102.1% compared to 95.82% in 2020 and RevPAR was 70.57% compared to 53.76% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 53.5% compared to 48.6% last year. ADR was 79.2% compared to 76.74% in 2020. RevPAR was 42.35% compared to 37.30% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for July 2021 that showed 692 walk-ins and 231 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 356 emails and 52 phone calls. | Visitor center improvements to include new seating, planters, new awning, and signage to be added to the entrance. QR Codes to be installed at the downtown intersections. Updates and modifications for current wayfinding signage are underway. The new 2021/22 Visitor Guide will be delivered TODAY! Bear Town Bear Map to be redesigned with help from the Bank of the Arts. (#whatsupwiththebears). African American Heritage Trail Panel Walking Tour has begun to be developed. | **Large Groups and Events:** Rotary District 7960 is set for April 2024. NC Business Association Summer Conference will be held in 2023. **News from the State:** October 8-10 we will be hosting a travel influencer from NY. October 19 VNB will participate in the In-State Media Mission for 2021. **Press/PR/Media:** The Daily Reflector July 26th, Trips to Discover – Top 9 Hidden Gems in NC, July 21st, Our State Media Tour with Editor-in-Chief, July 28-30, Our State article on Five Points Revitalization, November edition, Spectacular Magazine, August/Sept, Our State “A Weekend Between the Rivers” August/September, Pepsi & Our State Giveaway Weekend going on till August 31st.

Marketing: Brice Connors gave an update on the new OTT streaming launched in Charlotte and Myrtle Beach/Florence markets. Digital Influencers: Received 5 applications. They will be coming to our market, and we will only be paying for accommodations. Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,357,542 Total Clicks: 25,731 Total Costs: \$7,185.15. Ellie: Where to stay saw an increase of 5% month over month. Print ad placements for July, August and September will include Southern Living: 2-page spread that features an article penned by the travel writer that Melissa hosted in May. Our State: 2 full page “Try On New Bern” ads, Convention South: Half-page “Try On New Bern” ad was placed in the annual directory issue, Cary Magazine: A full-page “Try On New Bern” ad. Mini-Doc 2.0: Try On Five Points, Try On The Beer District. Website enhancements to come.

VII. **HAVELOCK TOURISM & EVENT CENTER DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Pam Holder stated that they hosted the Salute to the Vets, ECAHF summer camp was held July 19-23. Upcoming events: August 13: ECAHF Fly-IN, August 28: Reagan Day. July Revenue: \$9,840.34 Statistics: Visitors 311, Event Gusts 444, Total Visitors 755. Website statistics are slightly off due to a software update.

- VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: line-item transfer 30,005.88 of unused funds to three lines (part-time, telephone, audit) Alderman Sabrina Bengel: would like to have convention center report to be added to our TDA reports. There is a need for a convention hotel.

- IX. **OLD BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: Meeting with the volt center, off to a good start for hospitality training. How to prepare for an interview, how to fill out your paperwork. First course is for bartenders. Offer a 3-day fast track. Offer a “day-in-the-life” of hotel life.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Gary Curry: Live and Local will be on August 21 at Tryon Palace. Tammy Rodriguez: upcoming events can be found on Visit New Bern website's calendar of events page. Commissioner Brenda Wilson: Havelock visitor center to be undergoing a remodeling update. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala: next several months look strong. Alderman Jeff Odum: over 1,200 tickets sold for Travis Tritt. Vast majority of tickets are out of town. Nancy Figiel: Eddy Ellis, Stanley Spade Duel, Candlelight, Live and Local. Brice Conners: plan to highlight conventions and meetings. Alderman Sabrina Bengel: street cafes are still approved throughout November. Restaurant participation depends on staffing availability. Next year, may not do July/August due to heat. Merci on Middle will be coming back in October. At the Pepsi store, July had the highest sales.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made the motion to adjourn, Cindy King seconded the motion at 10:29 am.