

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, December 8, 2021
Minutes

Present

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

Excused

Alderman Jeffery Odham
Gary Johnson

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Tracy Stuckrath

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: Tammy Rodriguez conducted roll call.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the November Board Meeting. Alderman Sabrina Bengel 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 November for hotel stays in October were \$192,541 compared to \$133,627 for the same time period last year. That represents an increase of \$58,914 which is 44% compared to last year's collections for that month. Another record-breaking month! Fiscal YTD collections are \$874,660 compared to \$565,200 the previous year which represents an increase of \$309,531 or 54.73%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 17%. There were \$643 in penalties and late payments. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for November 2021 were \$60,698 compared to \$42,125 last year, increase of 44.09%. Room tax is running ahead by 76.9% of 41.6% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for November was \$19,060 compared to \$23,691 last year. Total expenditures are running slightly below budget at 37.33% of 41.6%. Advertising expenses will be slightly higher due to invoices coming in over the Thanksgiving holiday. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$138,881. Looking at the balance sheet as of November 30 the cash balance is \$540,213. Adding in the net income through November of \$138,881 to the fund balance gives a total of \$599,966. Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to move; Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala motioned to approve; Cindy King 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 71.1% compared to 59.6% in 2020. ADR was 111.72% compared to 9.91% in 2020 and RevPAR was 79.38% compared to 57.77% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 54.4% compared to 50.0% last year. ADR was 84.29% compared to 77.90% in 2020. RevPAR was 45.85% compared to 38.95% last year.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT: Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for November 2021 that showed 393 walk-ins and 176 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 224 emails, 1,732 Southern Living Leads and 24 phone calls. With the increased numbers of cub house visitors, we have the flexibility to adjust the cub house hours as needed to match traffic patterns. | The NC Symphony is making a return to New Bern with a December Holiday Pops Concert at the Convention Center. We have resumed selling tickets for their shows. | Airbnb/Vrbo: numbers continue to remain strong. Our hotels are not being reported on these reports. Currently there are 142 active rentals. **Large Groups and Events:** No new contracts signed for large groups in the last month. There was one loss of business, North Carolina District Attorneys Association, due to not enough rooms and rate offered. | Tarshi, Melinda, and Melissa leave this afternoon for the AMC in Raleigh. Michelle insisted on bringing up a fresh batch of biscuit donuts for the event as well. **Press/PR/Media:** Main & Broad: a sister publication of Cary Magazine, did an article on our Christmas events. We are also featured in the new Fodor's Travel guide for the Carolinas & Georgia. | In January we will be attending our first Ideal Living show for retired North Carolina. In February we will be traveling to the DC Metro area for the Travel and Adventure show. | Carolina East has renewed our designation for the next 5 years. **Marketing:** Brice Connors announced that our holiday ad was stronger than any previous year. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1.4 million Total Clicks: 24,341 Total Costs: \$6,289. | 40% of our web traffic is acquired through paid digital advertisements. Organic search traffic has increased by 61% YOY. | Ellie: Flights saw an increase of 2%, Retirement saw an increase of 5% month over month | Print ad placements include Our State: Full-page ad, Cary Magazine: A full-page holiday ad. Heart of NC Weddings: full-page ad. | Digital Influencers: Brice stated that there will be an influencer report for the January meeting showing the impact of having the 3 digital influencers in town. All 3 said they would be willing to work with us again. Judy stated that when the influencers were in town, the social media stories an increase of views from the normal 200 to over 500 views. | Released a 30 – second video featuring Nelly from when he was in town in October. | New contract has been signed for OTT Streaming which includes channels like AccuWeather, Hallmark, HGTV and more.

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

Melissa Riggle gave the report for Pam Holder: BluePrint has launched a new digital marketing campaign to promote the facility and amenities. December 9 is the Havelock Chamber of Commerce 50th Anniversary. November Revenue: \$13,750.74 | Statistics: Visitors 114, Event Guests 310, Total Visitors 424. Website statistics: New Visitors 348, Total Visitors 360, Sessions 419, Page Views 775. Havelock contract is up for review.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Nothing to report currently

IX. OLD BUSINESS: Melissa Riggle: Held our first sports meeting on November 17, identified that we are a prime location for a for profit half marathon. We reached out to Run the East and Jamie More agreed to join our committee.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Gary Curry: updates to the Harvey Mansion coming along, already have furniture. Should be getting the final approval on the outdoor restaurant this month or next. Cindy King: Marine Corps Band will be performing at the Havelock Chamber 50th Anniversary. Havelock Christmas parade is Saturday at 10 am. Tammy Rodriguez: Calendar updates. Tracy Stuckrath: Attending the PCMA convention next month in Las Vegas, attended IMAX last month, which is the largest international meeting conference in the country. Alderman Sabrina Bengel: Pepsi store had the largest black Friday sales day ever. Santa house has been strong, last year they did 570 pictures on black Friday and this year they did 875. Melissa Riggle: Next Thursday night the Chamber is hosting their holiday business after hours.

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 10:11 am.