

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, April 13, 2022
Minutes

Present

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

Excused

Alderman Jeffery Odham
Commissioner Tom Mark

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Erin Knight
Pam Holder
Gary Curry
Wendy
Amanda Norwood
Chris McGee

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

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. Special guests: Leadership Craven, and Havelock City Manager Chris McGee

II. ROLL CALL: Tammy Rodriguez conducted roll call. (A quorum was present.)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the March Board Meeting. Alderman Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Commissioner Brenda Wilson 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 March for hotel stays in February were \$161,446 compared to \$104,465 for the same time period last year. That represents an increase of \$56,981 which is 54.5% compared to last year's collections for that month. Another record high! Fiscal YTD collections are \$1,449,495 compared to \$971,707 the previous year which represents an increase of \$177,788 or 49.2%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 18.7%. There was \$580 in penalties and \$1,106 in late receipts. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for March 2022 were \$50,895 compared to \$32,923 last year, increase of 46.3%. Room tax is running ahead by 198% of 75% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for March was \$47,151 compared to \$66,049 last year. Total expenditures are running slightly below the budget at 69.3% of 75%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$96,610. Looking at the balance sheet as of March 31, 2022, the cash balance is \$502,548. Adding in the net income through March of \$96,610 to the fund balance gives a total of \$557,695 Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala made a motion to approve the financials. Commissioner Tom Mark seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

- V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 61.7% compared to 49.8% in 2021. ADR was 106.97% compared to 88.73% in 2021 and RevPAR was 66.05% compared to 44.14% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 40.8% compared to 42.3% last year. ADR was 79.10% compared to 66.09% in 2021. RevPAR was 32.28% compared to 27.98% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for March 2022 that showed 444 walk-ins and 182 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 271 emails, 320 Southern Living Leads and 37 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. ENC will be picking up a new feeder city, Boston, which is new to us. We will be adding Havelock visitor stats to our monthly report. We plan to customize some of the fields to reflect Havelock's tourist patterns. | Tammy has been accepted to Leadership Craven along with Nancy Figiel. | Melissa has registered for a leadership masterclass and equity diversity and inclusion program through Destinations International. | Visitor Guide Updates: Judy has started sales and updating content. We will be partnering with Blueprint again. We will be repositioning Havelock within the visitor guide as well. | Airbnb/Vrbo: Continuing to be strong with 146 active rentals. **Large Groups and Events:** We have had 37 leads generated and 7 leads outstanding YTD. March had a total of over \$192,622 of contracted business. Included in the pack is a report showing convention center events and where they are staying, that we helped source. **Media Contributions:** 7 Ways to Get Outdoors in New Bern (Our State Magazine). | 13 Diverse & Fun Things to Do in New Bern (Virginia Travel Tips) | 20 Super Charming Small Towns in North Carolina (Virginia Travel Tips) | All of these together generated and delivered a \$8,160 value of earned media. We hosted an editor from Afar Magazine who will be doing an article on the Inner Banks and should be published in May. | We also had an editor from Visit NC, who is also interested in doing an Inner Banks article. | In addition, we hosted 2 coeditors from Our State Magazine collecting information for 2023, featuring the Heritage Home Tour. **News from The State:** Melissa & Judy attended the 365 Conference end of March in Durham with over 500 attendees and DMOS. | North Carolina is now the 5th most visited state in the nation. | They were awarded the Best Tourism Office and the coveted Barkery award, which is the highest award for tourism.

Marketing: Brice Connors highlighted the collaboration with EWN and the new flight to D.C. With that, they will be placing ads in Northern Virginia Magazine, placed OTT streaming video spots into Washington D.C. and secured a D.C. influencer family to come to New Bern in June. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,328,212 Total Clicks: 23,365 Total Costs: \$5,850.13. | Direct traffic is up more than 60% YOY| Ellie: Engagement rate: 14.82%, Flights saw a 2.6% increase MOM, Accommodations increased by 4.1%., retirement saw a 5% decrease and weddings decreased by 2% | Print ad placements include Southern Living National: A quarter-page Try On New Bern ad placed for March. Southern Living Reginal: Half-page Try On New Bern ad highlighting outdoors placed in March issue Our State: full-page ad to run throughout March highlighting family fun and Bear Town Bears. Heart of NC Weddings: full-page ad| Digital Influencers: Shay Farrell will be returning to highlight our Juneteenth festivities. Katy Vale is an Army veteran who will be bringing her family from Washington D.C. in June to showcase New Bern & Havelock. | New itineraries page has been created and offers 3 different options (foodies, outdoor enthusiast and history buffs). And all walking tours are now complete and updated.

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

Pam Holder: Parking lot updates. The Havelock Chamber is sponsored an Aritisan Affair on March 19. Meet and Greet for the new City Manager was held on March 31. Registration for the ECAHF Elementary School Summer Camp is open for grades 4-6. Camp dates are July 25-29 | March Revenue: \$22,730.40 | Statistics: Visitors 146, Event Gusts 1,135, Total Visitors 1,281, Telephone: 45, Email: 48, Elie. | Website statistics: New Visitors 1,054, Total Visitors 1,081, Sessions 1,253, Page Views 1,885.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Budget Committee: Current budget is \$550,000 and ask the board to approve \$700,000. \$15,000 reallocated from Havelock to marketing to encompass all marketing expenses. Promotional expenses increased due to becoming good partners with VisitNC and have 2 additional travel writers coming in June. We will be hosting AMC in July and hosting Trail to Tryon marathon in November. Employee benefits and cost of living increases are being discussed as well.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: Melissa Riggle: Social Districts – will be holding 2 community meetings to discuss what they are and to hear resident questions. Research shows an increase in revenues upwards of 30% or higher. The committee is made up of a variety of business owners from restaurants, shops and hotels. Havelock: We will be repositioning Havelock to give them more presence in the visitor guide and website.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Gary Curry: corporate business is returning; progress is being made on the Harvey. Erin Knight: Congressman Murphy is coming to speak on April 21. Salute to the Vets will be May 10. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pavahala: changed hotel name to Clarion Point Hotel and it is doing good with 70-80% occupancy. Tammy Rodriguez: Calendar of events updates. Chairman Dan Roberts: Thanks to Tammy and Bria for all their hard work. Chamber is still waiting on hearing back from a framer to continue the work to the front of the building.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengal made the motion to adjourn, Commissioner Brenda Wilson seconded the motion at 10:48 am.