

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, November 9, 2022
Minutes

Present

Chairman Dan Roberts
Vice-Chairman Paresh
Pankhavala
Sabrina Bengel
Commissioner Tom Mark
Matthew Paul
Gary Johnson
Nancy Figiel
Bill Stafford
Commissioner Brenda Wilson
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Excused

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Pam Holder
Cailin Gibson
Gary Curry
Marrisa Moore
Melinda Mowry
Rowena Arroza

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Chairman Dan Roberts called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

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 October Board Meeting. Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala 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 October for hotel stays in September were \$226,790 compared to \$207,982 for the same time last year. Online travel companies made up 17.5% of the total collected. Fiscal YTD collections are \$703,139 compared to \$682,075 the previous year which show a 3% increase. There was \$0 in penalties and \$4,082 in late receipts.

Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for October 2022 were \$71,495 compared to \$65,566 last year, showing 9% increase. Room tax is running ahead by 43.8% of 33% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for October was \$57,463 compared to \$60,575 last year. Total expenditures are running flush with the budget at 33.3% of 33%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$80,033. Looking at the balance sheet as of October 30, 2022, the cash balance is \$561,444. Adding in the net income through October of \$80,033 to the fund balance gives a total of \$641,477. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala made a motion to approve the financials. Matthew Paul seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 71.1% compared to 70.7% in 2021. ADR was 126.04% compared to 111.07% in 2021 and RevPAR was 89.56% compared to 78.49% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 53.4% compared to 53.4% last year. ADR was 90.42% compared to 89.40% in 2021. RevPAR was 48.30% compared to 47.70% last year.

VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle shared visitor stats for the month of October. We saw 552 walk-ins, 46 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends), and 138 walk-ins at the Havelock Visitor Center. There were 232 emails, 477 Southern Living Leads and 27 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, South Carolina, Pennsylvania. Top attractions continue to be, Walking Tours, Tryon Palace, Local Events, Dining, and Trolley Tours | We are creating an employee manual that will contain a set of standard operating procedures and employee policies. | Monthly Highlights: Tammy attended Coast Host Fall Conference (virtual) and presented a New Bern 101 to the NC Community College SPA group, Melissa attended the MPI Fall Conference in Cary, VNB was awarded Convention South's Readers' Choice Award for the 12th time. In addition, RFCC & TEC both won CS awards as well. Melissa completed DEI Masterclass through Destinations International. | AirDNA: 268 active rentals, still seeing a strong demand | Civil War panels are being installed in 3 places (The Jones House, The John Wright Stanley House and the New Bern Academy) | Advocacy committee to share information with the community, on how we all work together to better businesses and community.

Group Business: Booked \$53,000 for a group that will be here in 2024. Convention and business groups are starting to pick up. | Tail to Tryon is this weekend. We have 251 registrants, 11 people coming in from VA. **From the state:** New Bern is featured in the NC 101.

Marketing: Brice Connors gave an update on | NCTA Tourism Achievement Award nomination have been submitted. | The Great Fire ad and brochure are in production. | New Christmas itinerary has been added to our website | Advocacy assets are under production as well. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,813,950 Total Clicks: 31,179, Total Cost: \$6,643. | Ellie: Current events saw an increase of 5% MOM, retirement and weddings saw an increase of 3% MOM. | **Print:** NC Travel Guide: full-page ad, Our State: full-page holiday ad, Heart of NC Weddings: full page ad, New Bern Magazine: full-page Trail to Tryon ad. **Digital:** | Search engine optimization overhaul to include meta descriptions to help the website run faster |

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

Pam Holder: **Facility Updates:** New commercial grade dishwasher was installed. New display racks have been received for the visitor information area. | October Revenue: \$25,938.59 **Statistics:** Visitors 138, Event Gusts 2,017, Total Visitors 2,155 Telephone: 21, Email:2, Ellie; 2. | **Website statistics:** New Visitors 932, Total Visitors 957, Sessions 1,112, Page Views 1,643.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: Springtime arts festival in the works, performance art (civic theater/rivertowne players), art events.

IX. **OLD BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: EWN announced the return of the American Airline summer flights to Washington DC. EWN invited Melissa to attend the Mead and Hunt Annual Air Service Conference in Arizona to speak about tourism and the importance of having the airport in New Bern.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Marissa Moore: Historical Society's Ghost Walk has sold over 3,800 tickets so far with a goal of 4,000. Sabrina Bengel: Beary Not-So-Scary Halloween had 53 businesses and residents and approx. 2,000 kids participate. Looking at next year combined MumFeast with Halloween and Ghost Walk events. Beary Merry Christmas Kickoff is on November 25 with the tree lighting and opening Santa's house. Judy Avery: Christmas Gala is December 2, Trail to Tryon volunteers still welcome. Thursday night holiday nights for extended shopping hours, live window displays, ice skating rink, and much more. Tammy Rodriguez: calendar of events updates. Nancy Figiel: Houses are in the process of being decorated for the holidays. Our State will be filming at the palace. Candlelight sales are close to selling out. Gary Curry: updates continue on the Harvey. New headquarters will be on Craven Street. Rowena Arroza: new manager with DoubleTree, updates on renovations, will be a new tapestry hotel. Chairman Dan Roberts: front of the chamber building will begin once the windows are here.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts made a motion to adjourn. Mathew Paul seconded the motion at 10:16 am.