

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom  
Wednesday, September 14, 2022  
Minutes

**Present**

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

**Excused**

Commissioner Brenda Wilson  
Gary Johnson

**Guest**

Judy Avery  
Brice Connors  
Matt Potts  
Tammy Rodriguez  
Pam Holder  
Cailin Gibson  
Brynn Harms  
Tracy Stuckrath  
Gary Curry  
Carrie Gallagher  
Marrisa  
Niel  
Melinda

**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. He then welcomed Bill Stafford to our board.

**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 August Board Meeting. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Sabrina Bengel 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 August for hotel stays in July were \$256,663 compared to \$256,948 for the same time last year. Online travel companies made up 21% of the total collected. Fiscal YTD collections are \$256,663 compared to \$256,948 the previous year which virtually the same showing less than half percent change. There was \$149 in penalties and \$7,652 in late receipts. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for August 2022 were \$80,912 compared to \$81,002 last year, showing a slight decrease. Room tax is running ahead by 25.5% of 16.6% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for August was \$104,767 compared to \$72,546 last year. Total expenditures are running just ahead of the budget at 19% of 16.6%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$50,572. Looking at the balance sheet as of August 31, 2022, the cash balance is \$420,308. Adding in the net income through August of \$50,572 to the fund balance gives a total of \$612,017. Sabrina Bengel 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 70.7% compared to 70.4% in 2021. ADR was 123.95% compared to 17.56% in 2021 and RevPAR was 89.08% compared to 75.71% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 53.5% compared to 52.8% last year. ADR was 93.71% compared to 87.47% in 2021. RevPAR was 50.18% compared to 46.18% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle shared visitor stats for the month of August We saw 561 walk-ins, 201 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends), and 224 walk-ins at the Havelock Visitor Center. There were 244 emails, 829 Southern Living Leads and 33 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, Virginia, New York, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Top attractions continue to be, Walking Tours, Tryon Palace, Trolley Tours and Dining | We are creating a comprehensive advocacy plan to share with community on the benefits of tourism. | Tammy and Blueprint created a new day trip itinerary for Havelock. We presented the new itinerary to Chris McGee, Mayor Lewis and Cindy Morgan. | Melissa attended a conference with Southeast Tourism Society which included 13 southern states. **Group Business:** Over \$320,000 sent out for the month and had \$112,237 move to contract. Our new economic impact calculator is now in use. It can be used for festival and events as well as conventions. | American Airlines has offered us a discount code that we can share with meeting planner for attendees flying into EWN. | AirDNA: 1st time in two years, we saw a dip in numbers. Concerns are starting to arise with vacation rentals.

**Marketing:** Brice Connors gave an update on new itinerary for Havelock and New Bern Nightlife| Bridal market is still showing a strong interest, which has led to an overhaul of our Weddings page on our website. | American Airlines has reduced hundreds of flights and we are keeping that in consideration in marketing ads. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,867,113 Total Clicks: 28,547, Total Cost: \$7,324. | Traffic from Raleigh market is up 25% YOY. | Ellie: Weddings saw an increase of 2.7% MOM and flights saw a decrease of 1.3% MOM | Mobile use has increased by 27% | **Print:** Southern Living: half-page Try On New Bern ad in September magazine, Our State: full-page ad and in SIP (special interest publication) NC 101, Heart of NC Weddings: full page ad, New Bern Magazine: full-page Trail to Tryon ad. | New Pitch Sheet **Digital:** New e-Newsletter design. | logo design for Trail to Tryon, digital advertising campaign | Dog friendly itinerary has been added to our website. | **Digital Influencers:** Marissa out of DC was in NB last month & has created some great content to help promote Trail to Tryon and New Bern.

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

Pam Holder: Fly-In was a good success **Facility Updates:** new signage for the brochure area | August Revenue: \$19,938.54 | **Statistics:** Visitors 224, Event Gusts 1,285, Total Visitors 1,509 Telephone: 12, Email: 12, Ellie; 2. | **Website statistics:** New Visitors 1,011, Total Visitors 1,039, Sessions 1,253, Page Views 2,179. Damage to aircraft has been repaired.

- VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:** Chairman Dan Roberts: welcomed the New Bern Historical Society (Nelson McDaniel and Marissa More). NBHS requested a grant to help promote The Great Fire of New Bern's 100 Year Anniversary. Request is for \$5,000. Sabrina Bengel made the motion to appropriate \$5,000 from fund balance towards the great fire brochure and marketing promotions. Bill Stafford seconded the motion. Chairman Dan Roberts called for a vote, and it was approved unanimously.

**IX. OLD BUSINESS:** Chairman Dan Roberts: resolution opposing the change of the convention center name, letter is printed. Melissa Riggle received a certificate for creating Equitable and Sustainable Urban Heritage Tourism Districts.

**X. MEMBER COMMENTS:** Carrie Gallagher: Thank you for your partnership with the historical society. Oral history library is being launched. Gary Curry: leaving Hampton Inn to open a new hotel property in Wilmington. Nancy Fegiel: Lawn Party was a good success and allowed family to take part, Mike Wiley will be performing on Sept 23, Spinning and Weaving week Oct 3-10, Africa to NC exhibit on display. Garden lovers' weekend & plant sale October 7-9. Bill Stafford: Oktoberfest Sept 24. Tammy Rodriguez: calendar updates. Matthew Paul: Chili Festival Sept 24 in Havelock, Candidate Forum Oct 3 Sabrina Bengel: helping with Beary Merry Christmas, volunteers are needed. Streets will be closed for live window displays. Businesses will be open till 8pm on Thursdays until Christmas. Chairman Dan Roberts: still waiting on the repairs to the front of the building.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**  
Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengl made the motion to adjourn, Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala seconded the motion at 10:49 am.