

HCTDA Board Meeting Minutes
August 23rd, 2023
Lake Junaluska Bethea Welcome Center

Members/Staff Present: Jim Owens, Kristian Owen, Mike Huber, Dr. Shelley White, Gail Mull, Melissa Clark, Jennifer Best, Jeff Hillis, Jon Feichter, Scot Blair, Tammy Wight, Kelsie Baker, Natalie Hawkins, Corrina Ruffieux, Hayley Printz

Members Absent: David Francis, Twinkle Patel

Guests: Jane Maurer, Brionna Dallara

1. **Call to Order** – Chairman Jim Owens called the HCTDA Board Meeting to order at 9:00 AM.
2. **Introductions** – Jim welcomed new Board member Natalie Hawkins, representing 20 units or more, to her first Board meeting. Members and staff present introduced themselves.
3. **Adjustment to Agenda** – None
4. **Public Comment Session** – Jane Mauer from the GSMNP Association announced that bear wise door hangers are available to be ordered off of the website. Jane also announced that in July, Cataloochee had 9300 visitors, Heintooga had 14,000, and Deep Creek had 69,000. Dr. Shelley White announced that the Dahlia ridge trail was opened and they are hosting their first 5k trail run on September 16th. Funds support the Haywood Strong scholarships.
5. **Board Comments** – None
6. **Consent Agenda**
 - Request approval of minutes – June 28th, 2023

Mike Huber made a motion to approve. Jon Feichter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Finance Reports

- Occupancy tax reports – Corrina Ruffieux

For the fiscal year end, we are up almost 11% in occupancy tax collections. March, April, and May were a little down from previous years, but we increased again in June.

8. Old Business

- Request to approve contract with PR company MMGY NJF | **VOTE**

Dr. Shelley White made a motion to approve the contract, after removing the typo (\$21,000) and to approve Corrina Ruffieux to sign the contract. Melissa Clark seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

9. New Business

- Request to waive occupancy tax penalty - Best Western | **VOTE**

Tammy Wight made a motion to approve the waiver. Jeff Hillis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Request approval of occupancy tax waiver guidelines. | **VOTE**

Tammy Wight made a motion to approve the occupancy tax waiver guidelines, with the addition of a sentence referencing that amounts over \$1,000 will be decided by the Haywood County Board of Commissioners. Kelsie Baker seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Request approval of revised bylaws. | **VOTE**

Jeff Hillis made a motion to approve the bylaws, as presented. Tammy Wight seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Discuss branding RFP & Master Plan RFP, request approval to proceed | **VOTE**

Mike Huber made a motion to approve both RFPs, as presented. Jeff Hillis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Add board meeting date due to RFP schedules. Requesting November 1st. | **VOTE**

Tammy Wight made a motion to approve the November 1st date. Natalie Hawkins seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Discuss guidelines for Product Development Committee | **VOTE**

Jeff Hillis made a motion to approve the guidelines, as presented. Dr. Shelley White seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports/Announcements

- Occupancy tax website, forms, brochure; Destinations International Conference; Wander Map & Outdoor Economy Conference; Marketing & Social update; Visitor Guide ad sales; Ice Festival update and sponsorship information
 - Next TDA Board meeting is September 27th
 - Adjournment

Tammy Wight made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Shelley White seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM