



**Haywood County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting**

Gaines Auditorium | Wednesday, February 25, 2026 | 9 AM

## Meeting Notes

**Members Present:** Jim Owens, Mike Huber, Chad King, Jeff Hillis, Terry Spalding, Gail Mull, Angie Frisbee, Chuck Dickson, Scot Blair, Kristian Owen, Jeremy Boone, Bridget Shaughnessy, Case Brown, Corrina Ruffieux, Amie Diehl, Ashley Rock, Hayley Printz, Alycin Ray, Joya Darville

**Members Absent:** Hannah White, Jennifer Best

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Jim Owens called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM
2. **Presentation of [FY 24/25 Audit](#)** – *Travis Kever, Gould Killian CPA Group*
  - Travis Kever reported that the audit was completed and submitted to the LGC in December 2025. The TDA received a clean audit opinion. He thanked Corrina and Hayley for their cooperation.
  - The audit included a review of internal controls, such as expenditure approvals, credit card documentation, and payroll processing. No weaknesses were identified.
  - Exhibit 3 reflected a \$700,000 increase in cash on hand and \$566,000 in occupancy tax receivable. Of the fund balance, \$2.2 million is unassigned, and \$1.5 million is restricted by zip code.
  - Exhibit 4 showed a \$760,000 increase in fund balance. Occupancy tax revenue decreased approximately 10%, while overall expenditures remained flat year-over-year. Increased post-Helene marketing costs were offset by lower 1% zip code expenditures.
3. **Introductions** – Welcome New Board Member Terry Spalding of Cataloochee Ranch, representing 20 or more lodging units. Board members all introduced themselves.
4. **Adjustment of Agenda** - None
5. **Public Comment Session (12 minutes total, limit 3 minutes per person)** - None
6. **Board Comments** - Chuck Dickson announced that the Chili Cook Off is this Saturday and wristbands are \$10. He said that a special event social district was just approved by Waynesville Town Council.
7. **Consent Agenda | VOTE**
  - Request approval of minutes – [January 28, 2026](#)

Chuck Dickson made a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. Jeremy Boone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

8. **Finance Reports**
  - [January Financial Report](#) – *Kristian Owen*

Kristian Owen presented the January financials as follows:

- Total Checking/Savings – \$5,275,534.26
- Total Assets – \$5,316,174.70
- Total Liabilities – \$279,872.84
- Total Income January – \$280,417.44

- Total Income YTD – \$1,764,235.39
- Total Expenses January - \$262,769.58
- Change in Net Position January – \$17,647.86
- Total Expenses YTD – \$1,505,703.59
- Change in Net Position YTD - \$258,531.80

- [Occupancy Tax & Lodging Data](#) – *Corrina Ruffieux*

Corrina Ruffieux presented the December occupancy tax report, noting that the year-over-year increase is somewhat skewed due to comparisons with last year’s post-Helene impacts. She added that October through December were among the strongest months on record.

Board members expressed strong encouragement regarding the continued growth and positive momentum. In response to a question about the Open Haywood campaign, Corrina shared that while multiple factors contributed to the increase, the campaign’s messaging played a meaningful role in supporting the strong results.

Angie Frisbee reported lower occupancy at Route 19 Inn, while several other lodging members reported increases. Mike Huber noted that Lake Junaluska operates differently as a group-based property.

## 9. Old Business

- [Annual Conflict of Interest Statement](#)

Corrina Ruffieux reminded the Board that the Conflict of Interest Statement was approved in March 2025 and it states that they must sign a new statement each year. The forms were passed out to Board members to complete.

## 10. New Business

- [Resolution to Declare Surplus Items](#) | **VOTE**

Corrina Ruffieux explained that we had some outdated items in storage, including old brochure racks, fishing poles, and holiday décor that we no longer need and would like to give to other organizations. Jim Owens asked if we know who will take the items and Corrina stated that the intended recipients will be asked after the Resolution is passed.

Jeff Hillis made a motion to approve the Resolution, as presented. Chad King seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- [Finance Policies Update](#) | **VOTE**

Corrina Ruffieux explained that next year’s budget and Fund Balance were discussed in Finance Committee and it was determined that paragraph C is not needed because paragraph D covers the TDA in terms of appropriate allocation of Fund Balance.

Chuck Dickson made a motion to approve the finance policy update by striking paragraph C from section 2. Mike Huber seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- [Festival Grant Extension Request](#) | **VOTE**

Corrina Ruffieux explained that the Haywood Festival grant, approved last year, included formation of the new Haywood Restaurant Association nonprofit. Because establishing the nonprofit took longer than anticipated, the applicant is requesting to roll the grant forward and hold the event in April 2027. She noted that similar rollovers have been approved in the past.

Bridget Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the grant rollover request. Angie Frisbee seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## **11. Staff Reports/Announcements**

- Marketing Committee Representative – Canton

Corrina Ruffieux stated that one of the Marketing Committee members resigned and there is now an opening for a Canton representative. The deadline for applications is March 16, 2026. She said the applicants will come before the Board in March for approval.

- Fat Burger Month coming March 1-31, 2026

Corrina Ruffieux announced that Fat Burger Month starts on Sunday and we have a lot of prizes this year. She explained the prize tiers and showed the T-shirt, mason jar, and hat to the Board. She encouraged Board members to participate and promote the campaign. Joya Darville added that almost everyone who turned in their sticker cards last year to the Welcome Center said that they went to a restaurant that they had never been to before.

- 2026 Visitor Guide Now Available

Ashley Rock announced that the 2026 Destination Guide is now available. She thanked the advertisers who support the guide and stated that we will be discussing with our agencies to determine what to do with the 2027 guide, as it is almost time to start working on that. Corrina Ruffieux said that we have boxes of guides available at the Welcome Center that Board members can take.

- Annual T-Shirt Contest Open

Alycin Ray announced that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual T-shirt contest opens today and that new this year is that there will be two rounds of voting. Corrina Ruffieux said that this project had unanticipated benefits, such as connecting with new artists in the community and developing new relationships. She said it was also great to be able to spend money within Haywood County and support local.

- Mountain Mornings for National Travel & Tourism Week May 7, 2026 at 8:30 AM – Warren Center

Corrina Ruffieux announced that the next Mountain Mornings will be in honor of National Travel and Tourism Week. She requested that Board members mark their calendars. Amie Diehl added that Fat Burger Month winners will be announced at the meeting.

- Next Meeting: March 25, 2026 at 9 AM – Gaines Auditorium

**12. Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.

**13. Ten Minute Media Communication Session**