



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

Gaines Auditorium, Lake Junaluska | Wednesday, June 24, 2026 | 9 AM

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jim Owens, Mike Huber, Hannah White, Tommy Long, Terry Spalding, Bridget Shaughnessy, Chad King, Case Brown, Gail Mull, Kristian Owen, Angie Frisbee, Chuck Dickson, Jeremy Boone, Corrina Ruffieux, Ashley Rice, Hayley Printz, Alycin Ray, Amie Diehl

Members Absent: Jeff Hillis, Scot Blair

Guests Present: Jane Mauer, Paul Nielsen

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Jim Owens called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM
2. **Introductions** – All board members and guests introduced themselves.
3. **Adjustment of Agenda** – Add a 3rd budget amendment for Capital under Old Business
4. **Public Comment Session (12 minutes total, limit 3 minutes per person)**
 - Jane Mauer presented GSMNP data showing that numbers for 2026 are still trending higher than 2025, with May up 3% from last year but still lower than post-Covid Mays. Smaller entrances are showing larger swings – Cataloochee Valley is up 68%. The new summer issue of Smokies Life is out and the new park superintendent, who is from Clyde, is on the cover.
5. **Board Comments** - None
6. **Public Hearing on FY 2026-2027 [Budget Ordinance](#) | VOTE**
 - [Proposed FY 26-27 Budget](#) and [Budget Narrative](#)

Chad King made a motion to open the public hearing. Chuck Dickson seconded the motion. Public Hearing opened. No public present to make comments.

Chuck Dickson made a motion to close the public hearing. Mike Huber seconded the motion. Public Hearing closed.

- Corrina Ruffieux stated that the budget was presented in detail at the May meeting but pointed out that there was a change in the Budget Ordinance from previous years. This year's ordinance includes a clause that the Executive Director be allowed to transfer contingency funds without waiting to obtain Board approval, but will be required to announce it to the Board.

Mike Huber made a motion to approve the Budget Ordinance. Bridget Shaughnessy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7. **Consent Agenda | VOTE**
 - Request approval of minutes – [May 27, 2026](#)
 - Mike Huber made a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. Chad King seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Finance Reports

- [May Finance Report](#) – Kristian Owen presented the May financials as follows:
 - Total Checking/Savings - \$5,193,782.73
 - Total Assets - \$5,234,400.49
 - Total Liabilities - \$271,026.94
 - Total Net Position - \$5,065,498.55
 - Total Occupancy Tax Revenue May - \$198,448.08
 - Total Occupancy Tax Revenue YTD - \$2,340,082.52
 - Total Income May - \$216,944.25
 - Total Income YTD - \$2,578,832.55
 - Total Expenses May - \$264,847.76
 - Change in Net Position May – (\$47,903.51)
 - Total Expenses YTD - \$2,393,229.06
 - Change in Net Position YTD - \$185,603.49
- [Occupancy Tax & Lodging Data](#) – Corrina Ruffieux presented that April 2026 was up 22% over last April and we are tracking 10% up for the fiscal year. Looking at the visual comparison, this April was the highest on record.

9. Old Business

- 2025-2026 Year-end Budget Amendments
 - [Administration & Operations](#) | **VOTE**
It was explained that in March, a trucker hit the company vehicle and the TDA received a little over \$6,000 so far from Progressive to pay the repair shop, which shows as revenue. There will also be some expenses to secure a rental vehicle.

Mike Huber made a motion to approve the Administration & Operations Budget Amendment as presented. Chuck Dickson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- [Marketing & Sales](#) | **VOTE**
It was explained that this budget amendment is just shifting funds from different lines within Marketing to ensure adequate funds to finish paying expenses.

Jeremy Boone made a motion to approve the Marketing & Sales Budget Amendment as presented. Mike Huber seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Capital Budget Amendment | **VOTE**
It was explained that the Administrative Assistant's laptop has had recurring issues, and this budget amendment would allow for a proactive replacement.

Chad King made a motion to approve the Capital Budget Amendment as presented. Angie Frisbee seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Product Development Committee – [Canton vacancy](#) | **VOTE**
Jason Pierson applied to be on the Product Development Committee. He resides in Canton and is a local artist.

Angie Frisbee made a motion to appoint Jason Pierson the PDC Committee. Mike Huber seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

10. New Business

- One Net Contracts for FY 2026-2027
 - [Schedule C - Fixed Price Big Ideas Features](#) and [Schedule D - Growth Retainer](#) | **VOTE**

- Once the website goes live, these agreements to continue developing the website will be needed. The funds are in the budget, and Marketing Committee has reviewed and supports the continued website work.

Case Brown made a motion to approve Schedule C and Schedule D and authorize the Executive Director to sign the contracts. Chad King seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

○ [Lure Creative Contract for FY 2026-2027](#) | **VOTE**

- The Finance Policies state that for regular projects, we can contract with the company for up to 6 years before another RFP needs to be issued. This last RFP garnered 3 proposals – one higher, one incomplete, and one from the incumbent agency, who we have been happy with over the last several years.

Chuck Dickson made a motion to approve the motion to approve the agreement with Lure Creative and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract and negotiate extensions of the agreement for a total term not to exceed six years, consistent with the HCTDA procurement and finance policies. Bridget Shaughnessy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

○ **Elect Board Officers for FY 2026-2028 | VOTE**

- The bylaws state that in the June meeting, Board Officers will be voted for two-year terms. The proposal is to reappoint Jim Owens as Chair, Jeff Hillis as Vice-Chair, Mike Huber as Treasurer, and Chad King as Member-At-Large. The floor was opened for nominations. There were no nominations.

Chuck Dickson made a motion to approve the Officers as presented. Gail Mull seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Staff Reports/Announcements

- Public Relations Update
 - Amie Diehl presented that we received great PR mentioned recently: Cataloochee Ranch was mentioned in Forbes, PBS did a segment on Ice Fest, TimeOut Magazine included Main St Diner in an article, and Travel and Leisure included the Pigeon River in an article.
- New Website Update
 - Example screenshots of the new website were shown to the Board. The two current websites (haywoodtda.com and visithaywood.com) will be combined into one. The website is being built from the ground up for user experience and for AI. The website is tentatively scheduled to go live the week of August 24th. There will be a partner portal so partners can update their own listings, and there will be a training session with One Net the first week of September.
- Haywood Business Partner Opportunities
 - Ashley Rice explained that staff created a content calendar for the upcoming year to make it easier for partners to know what is coming up and how they can work with us.
 - The November issue for Our State print and digital newsletter is coming up and there are 2 spots still available for each.
 - Ad placements are being accepted for the 2027 Destination Guide. The deadline to secure an ad space is August 17th.
 - The Partner Guide is listed on haywoodtda.com and includes all the opportunities for partners to get involved.
- Next Mountain Mornings – July 30, 8:30am at Springdale Resort
- Next Meeting – August 26, 2026 at 9 AM – Gaines Auditorium

12. Adjournment – Chad King made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chuck Dickson seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.

13. Ten-Minute Media Communication Session