



Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority Minutes of 5/27/21 Virtual Board Meeting

Present: Grant Bullard, Layton Parker, Libby Freeman, David Guice, Dee Dee Perkins, Ali Lien, Jessica Whitmire, Tracie Trusler

Absent: Mac Morrow

Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, MJ Gordon, Corey Gafnea

Guests Present: Karen Tessier, Jonathan Griffin

Call to Order – Layton Parker

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM by Layton Parker.

Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker

The minutes of the April 22, 2021 board meeting were presented for review by Layton Parker. Dee Dee Perkins made a motion to approve as presented. Grant Bullard seconded. Motion passed.

Director's Report – Clark Lovelace

Financials – Revenues continue to trend way above expectations with year-end well over budget. With the exception of our tourism grant program, which is well below, expenses are in line to finish at or close to budgeted amounts. Dee Dee Perkins made a motion to approve April financials as presented. Ali Lien seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Funding Requests

As covered in your advance packet, Jeff Parker, the Regional Director for NC Soil and Water, made a request for \$10K for debris removal as they finish out a year with greater floods and have depleted the \$25K funding from the county for this purpose. After a discussion, Grant Bullard indicated that he felt this was a tourism-related expenditure that achieved our sustainability objectives and made a motion to fund the \$10K request with funds from the strategic plan expense category. Ali Lien seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Also as covered in your advance packet, staff has been working on a plan to support visitors and create vibrancy to the visitor center and have a plan for a bike repair station coordinated by the Chamber with a \$2,000 grant from TCT. After discussion, Dee Dee Perkins stated that she felt the bike repair station was tourism-related, meeting our goal of supporting cycling infrastructure, and made a motion to approve the request for \$2,000 with funds coming from the strategic plan expense category. Tracie Trusler seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Office Report and Tourism Updates

Larry Chapman would like to do a presentation about the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas. He also offered the museum as a meeting space for a future in-person TCTDA board meeting, if we'd like. A decision was made to invite him to the July meeting and for each board member to commit to visit the museum in June.

Chair Report – Layton Parker

Chamber/TCT Contract Update – Clark sent out a letter from Jaime Laughter regarding the Chamber/TCT Contract in advance of the board meeting. Leadership at the County, TCT, and the Chamber all understand the need for dedicated leadership at TCT and are working hard on due diligence and research to find the best path forward. This will not be a quick process.

Layton indicated that since our guests are here we should move forward to the marketing plan followed by the Ecusta Trail presentation and then return to the chair report and cover the FY22 budget.

FY22 Marketing Plan – Dee Dee Perkins and Market Connections

Dee Dee shared that this plan was covered in detail with the marketing committee, whose job is to dive deep and vet the plan. She thanked Market Connections (MC) for the hard work that goes into the report and the committee and staff for their diligence in reviewing. She asked Karen to cover the highlights.

Karen highlighted the documents that were sent in advance, focusing on differences from the prior two years and major items like the development of biking and arts/culture sub-brands, a new website, market research, and a multi-year market plan. Clark reminded that the board is not being asked to say “yes” to everything within the plan right now, but is being asked to approve the total amount and the basics of the plan. Staff and the marketing committee will work with MC throughout the year and additional approvals are required for certain items, particularly big-ticket items like the new website, which will likely require an RFP process. Karen answered a few questions and indicated being available after the meeting for any additional questions.

Layton suggested that we discuss approval of this when we cover the FY22 budget.

Ecusta Trail Presentation – Chris Burns, Page Lemel, Tad Fogel

Chris Burns provided a detailed presentation covering the history of the Ecusta Trail, cost estimates, benefit projections, current challenges, and a path toward completion. In the end, he requested that TCTDA provide 1/5 of their annual revenues (1% of the 5%) for a period of five years to support the completion of the trail. He indicated that the HCTDA recently voted to do the same with their funds and stated that our investment would make the Transylvania portion come to life.

Chair Report – Layton Parker (continued)

FY22 Budget – The FY22 budget is based on a conservative 5% annual growth rate over projected year-end for FY21. The plan is to have expenditures match anticipated revenue. Layton reviewed the proposed budget, answering questions as he did.

Jonathan noted that a public hearing will need to be set up prior to approving the budget. He will get with Clark on specific wording and one will be set up for the June 24 board meeting.

Layton asked that we return to the FY22 marketing plan in the advance packet and reviewed by Karen. Dee Dee Perkins made a motion to approve the FY22 marketing plan as presented. Grant Bullard seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

It was decided that for the next few months we will keep our meetings virtual.

New Business

Staff is reviewing the grant application process and will be working to create one grant form with three different paths. The goal is for the grant application process to be finalized and in place by July 1, 2021.

Karen Tessier let everyone know that Nathan Jordan would be leaving Market Connections in July to start his own photo and video business. They are in the process of hiring a new creative director.

Dee Dee Perkins announced that she has announced her candidacy for Mayor of Brevard.

Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourn

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 by Layton Parker. Seconded by Libby Freeman.
Motion passed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Corey Gafnea