

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority

Minutes of 6/25/20 Virtual Board Meeting

Present: Grant Bullard, Aaron Baker, Layton Parker, Mac Morrow, Libby Freeman, Tracie Trusler, Mike Hawkins

Absent: Dee Dee Perkins, Tad Fogel

Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, Mary Jo Gordon, Karen Tessier, Nathan Jordan

Guests Present: Jonathan Griffin

Call to Order – Layton Parker

The meeting was called to order at 8:33AM by Layton Parker.

Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker

The minutes of May 28, 2020 were presented for review by Layton Parker. Libby Freeman made a motion to approve as presented. Aaron Baker seconded. Motion passed.

Office Report – Clark Lovelace

Financials – Clark noted that starting with this meeting, he is now providing detailed comments on monthly financials with the advance packet so board members have time to review and consider prior to the meeting. Rather than review in detail at the meeting he will highlight a couple of key points and ask if there are any questions, as he is doing right now for this month. Discussion was held regarding the fact that Clark recently discovered that Airbnb collects and remits occupancy taxes at time of booking rather than at time of the overnight visit like traditional accommodations. Grant made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Tracie seconded. Motion passed.

Office Report and Tourism Updates – Clark covered the following:

- **Messaging to Partners**
 - We started messaging to partners regularly due to COVID-19 but have backed off recently as there is less new information. We will be starting a monthly eblast to tourism partners with MJ putting it together. It will go out on or around the 10th of each month.
- **Business Support Task Force**
 - Still meeting regularly with Transylvania Tomorrow being the one thing still moving. Now over 150K awarded to almost 90 businesses. Clark expressed gratitude to the city and Oskar Blues for their contributions. Transylvania Tomorrow may be needed again in winter to help tourism businesses through the winter with slower traffic.
- **Visitor Center**
 - Opened on June 8, averaging 25-50 visitors per day. No major incidents with COVID-19 related protocols. Planning on opening on Saturdays for partial days beginning this weekend. Chamber and TCT staff are available by appointment.
- **Local Tourism News**
 - Based on feedback from the board, TCT will be sponsoring the Steep Canyon Rangers' drive-in concert in Brevard for \$1,500. In addition to being a good community event during this challenging time, this will also provide a great virtual experience for our audience.
- **Misc.**
 - Clark has received an open records request through sunshinerequest.com, which appears to be a WNC-based website that creates an easy way for individuals to make such requests. The

request is for all TCT communications regarding marketing and promotion of our destination as state restrictions are lifted. He spoke with county personnel for advice on how to handle the request. This will include any emails board members sent to each other, so he will be reaching out with details on what is needed. For the future, it is recommended that board members have a separate email for board business.

- Clark shared TCT diversity and inclusion efforts over the past six months, including shooting additional footage to include a more diverse example of visitation, efforts with a new business, Black Folks Camp Too, and his role on the newly formed Community Relations Board. Consensus was to hold off on issuing a statement until we have action to put behind it. Project Empathy was also suggested as a good local source of information.

Chair Report – Layton Parker

- **Committees** – We had a set schedule for the year that included MC attending and presenting every other month and each committee presenting quarterly. That has been thrown off recently, but committees are back up and running and we need to hear from them. The plan for the next three months is as follows:
 - July – Transylvania Always, Destination Infrastructure
 - August – Market Connections, Marketing
 - September – Finance
- **FY21 Budget** – This is essentially the same budget that was reviewed last when we were informed of the public hearing requirement. Following announcement of a public hearing during this meeting, no one requested to attend this meeting or to come in to review the budget with Clark. Layton opened the public hearing and asked for comments. Since there were none, Layton closed the public hearing and asked for a motion to approve the budget. Mike Hawkins made that motion. Mac Morrow seconded. Motion passed.
- **FY21 TCT/Chamber Contract** – The contract has been signed by the Chamber and TCT. Layton reminded the board that this is a one-year contract. There is a plan to discuss a 5-year option again in 2021.

Market Connections Report

Karen Tessier and Nathan Jordan went over the Marketing Report that was sent out in advance of the meeting.

Old Business

None

New Business

Aaron asked if the new facemask requirement would affect our messaging. Nathan said he thought it fit well within our current messaging.

Nathan mentioned that VisitNC would be launching a Leave No Trace campaign and that they would bring attention to our Leave it Better campaign at the same time.

Clark explained how the new digital version of the Get Out Guide will work.

Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourn

Mac Morrow made a motion to adjourn. Tracie Trusler seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:46 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Prentiss Brewer
