



**Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA)
Board Meeting
October 24, 2024**

Minutes

Board Members Present: Dee Dee Perkins, Jessica Whitmire, Lauren Wise, Dionne Hodgeson, Isaac Allen, Larry Chapman, Madeline Magin, Dana Antonuccio

Board Members Absent: Nory LeBrun (Zoom attendee)

Staff: Virginia Watkins, Clark Lovelace, Mollie Gordon, Meagan O'Neal, JJ Carson, Karen Tessier, Mark Johnson (arrived at 9:21)

Zoom Attendees: Garnet Fisher, Nory LeBrun, Julie Hooten

Members of Public: Layton Parker, Julia

I. Call to Order & Welcome: Board Chair, Dee Dee Perkins, called the meeting to order at 8:31am and noted a quorum. Introductions were then made around the room while welcoming TCTDA's new staff member, JJ Carson.

II. Public Comment: Julia introduced herself as a visitor to the area.

III. Agenda Modifications: Jessica made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. With a second from Larry, the motion unanimously carried.

V. Consent Agenda:

- A. Minutes from the August 22, 2024, Board Meeting
- B. Financial Statements as of August 31, 2024
- C. Financial Statements as of September 30, 2024
- D. FY 23/24 Partner Funding List

Lauren made a motion to approve the consent agenda, with a second by Isaac and all in favor, the motion carried.

VI. Presentations

A. Director's Report: Clark Lovelace shared a presentation of the TDA's response to Hurricane Helene, as well as provided updates on various projects and committees.

B. Financial Report: Meagan O'Neal presented the latest financial report, which Jessica made a motion to accept. With a second from Larry, the motion passed.

C. Marketing Report: Market Connections' Mark Johnson presented the 2025 first quarter (July-Sept.) marketing overview. Clark covered messaging in the wake of Hurricane Helene. Karen

covered reopening actions and strategies with a revised fall 2024 marketing approach that prioritizes thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the recovery. She outlined plans for the next two months to target day trippers to support retailers and restaurants for holiday shopping, a strategic winter push, and spring messaging highlighting our many assets reflecting Helene is behind us.

A board member discussion was held on tone of messaging and spending strategy, including accurate road closure messaging, cancelations of lodging reservations and the housing of relief workers and infrastructure providers. Ideas presented included creating an official leaf route of accessible roads to promote, the creation of a Transylvania Tomorrow flyer that summer camps could include in their mailings to families, the drop of rates for television ads after the election and encouraging early lodging bookings to help generate immediate partial revenue.

Clark noted the \$22,000 that was unspent when marketing efforts were paused, as well as the strong likelihood that occupancy tax revenues will be below budget due to Helene and asked the board how they wanted to proceed with marketing plan spending. Through conversation, the board stated that our focus should be on driving visitation because our partners need us now, even if we ultimately must dip into the fund balance at the end of the year. They also expressed support of the marketing plans that were shared and putting the unspent funds back into our efforts. Larry requested more information about the spring marketing plan as those details take shape in the coming months.

VII. Old Business

A. New Board Terms Beginning in 2025: Clark covered slides detailing protocols for the appointment of board members, the upcoming openings, and the applications on file. Dee Dee led a conversation on what recommendations to make to the County Commissioners.

Following discussion, Madeline made a motion to recommend to the County Commissioners that Dana Antonuccio serve a second term on the board in the accommodations position. With a second from Larry, all were in favor and the motion passed. Lauren made a motion to recommend applicant Catherine Lemel for the Interested Individual opening to the County Commissioners. With a second by Larry and all in favor, the motion passed unanimously. Dana's dedication and efforts over her first term and Catherine's position within the important camp industry were among the reasons noted.

B. Board Chair in 2025: Clark covered the protocols for a chair of the TDA being named. Jessica made a motion to recommend Dee Dee for a second year as Chair of the Board of Directors to the County Commissioners. With a second from Lauren and all in favor, the motion passed.

VIII. New Business

A. Transylvania Tomorrow Funding: Clark spoke on the program, the guidelines, requirements and funding sources, noting that partner agencies are being asked to serve as seed funding for the initiative. The TDA made two investments of \$15,000 in FY21 when the effort was launched in support of pandemic recovery. He mentioned conversations with attorney Julie Hooten with Teague Campbell and advice to utilize earned funds from advertising revenue for this investment.

After discussion, Larry made a motion to contribute \$20,000 of the TCTDA's earned revenue from 2024 tourism partner marketing toward the Transylvania Tomorrow grant project funding. With no second, Madeline made an amendment to the motion on the floor to contribute the TDA's full revenue from 2024 partner marketing (quoted at approximately \$39,000 by Clark) toward the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund's grant awards. Dana seconded the amendment, and with 7 board members in favor and 1 opposed, the motion passed. Madeline then made a motion to approve \$5,000 from the Destination Infrastructure expense category in the current budget to cover marketing and operational expenses of the Transylvania Tomorrow relief fund. With a second by Jessica and all in favor, the motion passed.

VII. Public Comment: There was no public comment at this time.

VIII. Board Member Comments:

- Jessica announced that the Fly Fishing Festival on Nov. 2nd at Deerwoode Reserve will be a Helene relief fundraiser.
- Virginia spoke on the Fore U Golf Helene fundraiser and the Explore Brevard sponsored White Squirrel Artisan Market's Fall Fiesta also taking place on Saturday, Nov. 2nd.
- Larry spoke on the Veterans Day celebration on the 11th and other ways to honor our veterans.
- Lauren provided City of Brevard updates including the resolution passed for eliminating red tape and waving STR's (short-term rentals) 180-day restrictions to help assist locals currently unhoused from Helene.
- Davidson River campground will be providing sites for temporary housing.
- Clark provided a quick update on the public lands, complimenting the efforts of local land managers and noting great appreciation for the open communication lines and partnerships we have with them, which is not always the case with land managers and tourism organizations.

Adjournment: With a motion from Jessica and a second from Larry, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24am. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 5th at 8:30am.

Minutes submitted by Virginia Watkins.