

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA)

Board Meeting

August 28, 2025

Minutes

Board Members Present: Dee Dee Perkins, Lauren Wise, Dionne Hodgeson, Madeline Magin, Nory LeBrun, Jessica Whitmire (8:36), Dana Antonuccio (8:45)

Board Members Absent: Larry Chapman, Catherine Lemel

Staff: Virginia Watkins, Clark Lovelace, Mark Johnson, Karen Tessier, Garnet Fisher, Kelly Kraemer

Zoom Attendees: Julie Hooten

Members of Public: Wilson Hooper (COB), Liam McKissock (TC), Jason Cox (TC), Meagan O'Neal (TC)

Call to Order

I. Welcome

Board Chair, Dee Dee Perkins, called the meeting to order at 8:32am and noted a quorum. She introduced newly hired contractor, Kelly, followed by Clark's explanation of the position and Kelly's brief introduction. Board and staff members introductions were then made around the room.

II. Public Comment

Dee Dee welcomed Market Connections staff and Wilson Hooper, who will be presenting later in the agenda, as well as other public in attendance. No members of the public chose to speak at this time.

III. Agenda Modifications

Jessica made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. With a second from Madeline, the motion unanimously carried.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Minutes from June 26, 2025, Board Meeting

C. Updated FY25 Financials (year-end)

D. FY26 Partner Funding List

E. Contracts

Lauren made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. With a second from Nory, the motion unanimously carried.

V. Presentations

A. Financial Report – Meagan O’Neal

Meagan O’Neal provided a presentation of the quarterly financial report of the TCTDA. Afterwards, Clark provided additional information based on Helene’s impact. Dionne made a motion to accept Meagan’s report as presented. Lauren seconded and all in favor. Motion passed.

B. Ecusta Trail Update - Wilson Hooper, Brevard City Manager

Wilson Hooper provided an update on the development process of the Ecusta Trail, including the successful opening weekend recently in Henderson County. He also discussed current financial setbacks due to differences between the projected engineering costs on the Transylvania County side versus actual costs. It looks like most will be covered by NCDOT, but additional local funds, possibly in the range of \$300,000 is required very soon so there is not a stop in the work. He will be speaking to the Friends of the Ecusta Trail as well and is hoping to get the funding shortfall covered between the two organizations. He is asking for the TDA board to approve “up to \$300,000” at this time. Wilson then answered a few questions from board members.

C. Director’s Report – Clark Lovelace

Clark reported on the Helene milestone event by SparkPoint, the Tourism Trailblazer Award (with Nory’s willingness to join the committee to review nominations), the Outdoor Economy Conference, the 2024 County level spending report from Visit NC, Blue Ridge Outdoor’s top adventure town voting for round 2, and several other miscellaneous items.

D. Marketing Report – Market Connections

Market Connections provided a marketing report, starting with an overview from Karen, followed by marketing tactics, digital, print, broadcast, newsletters and blogs, billboards and signage and 4th quarter highlights. Mark covered influencers, public relations, website traffic, social media, and the NC Weekend with PBS of NC, noting that it will be the first time an entire 30-minute program will be done on Transylvania County and debuting on Oct. 2. Mark then covered other current and upcoming highlights and the new Lodging Spotlight and PMO 2026 program. Garnet covered the 2026 Adventure Guide and Points of Interest Map research, review, and outcomes.

VI. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

VII. New Business

A. Funding Request – Southern Highlands Reserve (Red Spruce Pine Greenhouse)

Dee Dee reviewed a slide covering the background of previous funding and the current request. Ultimately, there are committee motions for \$15,000 from the Transylvania Always Committee (TAC) and \$10,000 from the Destination Infrastructure Committee (DIC). After discussion, Lauren seconded the DIC motion. With 5 in favor and 2 opposed, the motion

passed. Madeline then seconded the TAC motion. With 5 in favor and 2 opposed, the motion passed.

B. Funding Request – The Ecusta Trail

Following a brief discussion, Dana made a motion to approve up to \$250,000 for the engineering funding shortage for Ecusta Trail as presented by Wilson. With a second by Jessica and all in favor, the motion passed.

VIII. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

IX. Board Member Comments

Jessica noted numerous events coming up and commended businesses on supporting each other through the summer while encouraging continued synergy into the fall. Dionne mentioned an uptick in interest in her lodging. Jessica announced that the Fly-Fishing Festival will move to March at Deerwoode Reserve next year rather than in the fall.

Lauren gave updates on the Estatoe Trail's rerouted section being underway, acquiring Main St. from NCDOT for a terminus, as well as movement toward additional developments in several sections.

Nory expressed his pleasure of serving on this board and is meeting with local leadership about the Brevard Hotel after the property was put up for auction on the Courthouse steps with little to no notice to community or local leadership.

Dana said Catherine will present on her behalf if the Grant Committee will be presenting at next month's board meeting since she will be out of the country.

Adjournment

The next monthly board meeting will be on Thursday, September 25 at 8:30am. With a motion from Dana and a second from Jessica, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38am.

Minutes submitted by Virginia Watkins.

Advance notice of all meetings has been provided and all TCTDA are open to the public.

A schedule of meetings and minutes can be found at

<https://explorebrevard.com/tct/meeting-schedule-and-minutes/>