**Transylvania County Tourism**

**Minutes of April 23, 2020 Board Meeting *(Virtual)***

**Present:** Layton Parker, Dee Dee Perkins, Grant Bullard, Tad Fogel, Libby Freeman, Tracie Trusler, Mac Morrow, Mike Hawkins, Aaron Baker

**Absent:** None

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

**Guests Present:** John Lanier, Kate Hayes, Nancy DePippo

**Call to Order** **– Layton Parker**

The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by Layton Parker.

**Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker**

Minutes of March 26, 2020 were sent out via email in advance of the meeting. Dee Dee made a motion to approve as presented. Aaron seconded. Motion passed.

**Office Report – Clark Lovelace**

Financials – Clark reported on revenues from the month of March which represent February’s returns. Revenues were 1.5% over budget and 11.6% over prior year. Budget was high due to expectations of the new Holiday Inn opening. Year-to-date is 9% over budget and 18% over prior year. Expenses are at or below budget. Dee Dee made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Tad seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Amended Budget – Layton indicated that the finance committee met with Clark and created an updated FY20 budget. This document was sent to the board ahead of time and shared during the meeting as well. Layton reviewed year-end projections and highlighted cuts in the marketing plan, lower revenues from occupancy tax and ads, underspending in strategic plan and Transylvania Always, suspension of the grant program and a $10,000 contribution to the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund. This was presented as a motion from the finance committee. Discussion was held. Mike seconded the motion to make these changes and approve the amended budget as presented. More discussion was held. Motion carried.

Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund – Clark explained the history and partners of the task force and Transylvania Tomorrow. There is over $60,000 in the fund right now with 70 applications already received. The first deadline is April 24 then every 2 weeks until the funds run out.

Misc. – Clark updated on what he’s been hearing from TDAs within the region and VisitNC, He indicated that VisitNC was working on getting some marketing-related funding for DMO’s from the state but had no other details at this time.

**Chair Report – Layton Parker**

Strategy for Closing Out FY20 – Layton reiterated that we have cut all non-essential funding, including all advertising. We are focused on maintaining necessary basics of our marketing plan, with limited, but important messaging. He asked Nathan and Karen to provide an update on our marketing plans over the next three months.

Market Connections Update – Nathan shared the April Marketing Report and reviewed COVID messaging. The FY21 marketing plan is in the works with the Marketing Committee meeting next week. Two weeks later, the draft plan will be presented to the Marketing Committee and then to the full board at the May meeting. Nathan also reviewed, and shared onscreen, the marketing highlights. Karen shared key strategies for moving forward. Layton thanks them for their work in cutting expenses, etc.

Grants – Layton informed the board that the finance committee met regarding grants and decided to recommend suspending the grant program until further notice. Tad seconded the motion from committee. Motion passed.

Ecusta Trail – Layton reminded that Clark sent out an email detailing Henderson County’s contribution and the request for funds to be distributed in May. Mac made a motion to disburse the funds provided the proper documentation was provided. Aaron seconded. Motion passed.

**Committees**

Layton stated that we should touch on the work of each committee to ensure that we’re focused on what is necessary right now. He highlighted the following:

* Finance - Working on year-end. Note that other expenses could be cut it revenues come in lower than forecasted. Will finalize a tentative budget prior to the marketing committee meeting so they can have a figure to work with for next year’s marketing plan.
* Marketing – As mentioned earlier, the focus is on a marketing plan for FY21.
* Transylvania Always – Funding has been cut at this point. Staff and MC are working on messaging asking visitors to explore responsibly. Aaron and Clark will connect on getting the committee back together.
* Destination Infrastructure – Role will be different in the short-term. Should get together to discuss.

**Old Business** – None

**New Business** – None

**Public Comment** – None

**Meeting Adjourn** – Dee Dee made a motion to adjourn. Libby seconded. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 10:16am by Layton Parker.

Minutes respectfully presented by Prentiss Brewer.

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