

# **Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA)**

## **Board Meeting Minutes**

**January 4th, 2024**

**8:30 am**

### **Call to Order**

#### **I. Welcome**

The following members were present at the meeting: Lauren Wise, Nory LeBrun, Larry Chapman, Madeline Magin, Chair Dee Dee Perkins, Dionne Hodgson, and Dana Antonuccio. Jessica Whitmire arrived during Presentations.

The following staff members were present at the meeting: Clark Lovelace, Virginia Watkins, and Mollie Gordon. Transylvania County Finance Director Meagan O’Neal, County Attorney Lindsay Underwood, Market Connections Account Executive Mark Johnson, Assistant System Administrator Jason Cox, and Human Resources Program Manager Kate Hayes were also present.

Chair Dee Dee Perkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 8:31am and noted that three new board members were in attendance – Lauren Wise, Nory LeBrun, and Dionne Hodgson. All board members completed introductions and Chair Perkins also noted the meeting would be the TDA’s organizational meeting and they would be looking at their committees and appointments.

#### **II. Public Comment**

Chair Dee Dee Perkins opened the floor for members of the public to participate in public comment.

Andrew Schmitt representing the Pardee Hospital Foundation stated that he has lived in Transylvania County since 2016 and has previously worked with Platt Architecture and Brevard College. He stated that Pardee is interested in engaging Transylvania County.

#### **III. Agenda Modifications**

There were no agenda modifications. Dana Antonuccio moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Larry Chapman, and unanimously approved.

#### **IV. Consent Agenda**

Dana Antonuccio moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Madeline Magin, and unanimously approved. The following items were approved:

- a. Minutes from December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Board Meeting

- b. Contracts – AAA Living, BP Solutions – AG, BP Solutions – Map, iHeartMedia, and WNCW
- c. FY 23/24 Partner Funding List

## **V. Presentations**

- a. Financial Reports – Meagan O’Neal

Transylvania County Finance Director Meagan O’Neal presented the Financial Report for the TDA through November 2023. This included 4 months of revenue and 5 months of expenses. Tax collections through October were up 1.5% over prior year and up 1% from the previous month. Including approved funding for tourism-related expenses, the TDA has allocated 87% of the expenses to administrative spending and 13% to tourism-related expenses, out of a minimum 2/3 and allowed 1/3 respectively. Meagan also explained that the County receives an administrative fee for collecting occupancy taxes for the TDA – 3% of the first \$500,000 collected and 1% of the revenue exceeding that amount. Meagan presented a chart detailing revenue associated to the month in which it was due and which month revenue or fees had been collected. Fees could be incurred if taxpayers paid their occupancy taxes late. Clark discussed difficulties in trending revenue that is collected in other months and asked Meagan if she could present the total amount collected and attributed to the month in which it was due to have the most accurate picture for board members.

Clark elaborated on the TDA’s financial position in relation to the budget projection. To offset the shortfall in revenue increases compared to the 5% budget growth projection, staff have intentionally pulled back \$100,000 in unspent funds from the marketing plan. Typically, Market Connections would recommend other avenues to spend the available funding, but this puts the marketing plan on trend for a flat budget. At the half-way point in the year, Clark advised the board that there are three large areas below budget – the Ecusta Trail as well as the Transylvania Always and the Destination Infrastructure categories. Staff and committees are pushing partners for grant requests for worthwhile projects as the year comes to a close and are waiting from the City of Brevard on the Ecusta Trail funding.

Madeline Magin moved to approve the Financial Reports as presented, seconded by Nory LeBrun, and unanimously approved.

- b. Office / Staff Report – Clark Lovelace

Clark Lovelace provided an update on recent TDA operations. He highlighted the e-blast that staff sends out and mentioned that board members would have access to county email addresses for all TDA business. The TDA has been certified as a Unity Blaze partner with Black Folks Camp Too. PBS for NC Weekend came to the area and did a feature on the ATOM (Aluminum Tree & Ornament Museum) exhibit at the Heritage Museum. There is also a Winter Wonderland in Brevard page on the website to push the unique things to do in the wintertime as it is a harder time to sell to visitors. Partners are encouraged to offer special winter discounts

and package them with winter ads. There is also a winter marketing sweepstakes ongoing to get in front of more people. The TDA sponsored a cabin at the Festival of Lights at Deerwoode Reserve. Clark also reminded board members that Market Connections will be at the next meeting and that orientation for new board members would be immediately following the meeting.

## **VI. Organizational Meeting**

### **a. Adoption of Code of Ethics**

Jessica Whitmire moved to adopt the Code of Ethics as presented, seconded by Lauren Wise, and unanimously approved.

### **b. Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule**

Nory LeBrun moved to adopt Resolution 1-2024 Regular Meeting Schedule of the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority, seconded by Larry Chapman, and unanimously approved.

### **c. Appointment of Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair of the TDA serves at the pleasure of the Chair and the Chair has the discretion to appoint the Vice Chair per Resolution 35-2021. Jessica Whitmire has agreed to serve as the Vice Chair and her term will run concurrently with that of the Chair.

### **d. Committee Resolutions**

Committee Resolutions were originally created in January 2022, after the County resolution which sets the parameters for the TDA. The current makeup of the committees includes six members with three board members and three community members. Language has been included to allow more flexibility with at least three board members and up to four community members. No more than four board members may be on the committee. The resolutions would supersede the prior resolutions. Dana Antonuccio moved to pass all committee assignment resolutions as presented including Resolution 2-2024, 3-2024, 4-2024, and 5-2024, seconded by Lauren wise, and unanimously approved. These include the Marketing Committee, Destination Infrastructure Committee, Transylvania Always Committee, and Grant Committee.

### **e. Committee Assignments**

Clark Lovelace let board members know that each member would need to serve on at least one committee, and some may need to serve on two to make up the committee membership. According to County Attorney Lindsay Underwood, a fifth board member may attend a committee meeting as a member of the public, but she will have to do some research on the level of participation that person may conduct. Virtual attendance at a meeting will not count as part of the quorum and a board member attending virtually may only observe. Board members discussed the committee assignments and recommended the following board membership to the Chair:

Destination Infrastructure Committee: Madeline Magin (Chair), Jessica Whitmire, and Lauren Wise

Grant Committee: Isaac Allen (Chair), Larry Chapman, and Dana Antonuccio

Marketing Committee: Dee Dee Perkins (Chair), Nory LeBrun, Dana Antonuccio, and Dionne Hodgson

Transylvania Always Committee: Jessica Whitmire (Chair), Lauren Wise, and Dionne Hodgson

Clark Lovelace let board members know that he and staff were here to support the committees and he would be sending out a roster. Larry Chapman requested full contact information for board members when Clark sends out the committee assignments. Committee Chairs may meet with Clark to determine community membership on the committees. Jessica Whitmire requested a calendar be created with all committee meetings listed and be sent to board members. Chair Dee Dee Perkins included a general overview of the committee assignments.

f. Additional Member Questions on CAC Training and/or 2024 Orientation Packet

Clark Lovelace let board members know that they received the Citizen Advisory Council training materials in the advanced packet, but to let him know if anyone had questions about the role of the TDA and the role of a board member on an advisory committee. There were no questions at the time.

## **VII. Old Business**

Jessica Whitmire shared that there is one more meeting about the future of the fish hatchery and the impact it has on Transylvania County. She invited any board members or interested members of the public to attend.

## **VIII. New Business**

Virginia Watkins will be making new nametags for board members and staff and will need to have everyone acknowledge the spelling of their names. Jessica Whitmire encouraged everyone to put events up on the TDA calendar so businesses do not double book dates with other events and board members can work together to promote the county. Chair Dee Dee Perkins stated that once all the committee assignments of members and at-large seats are filled a full roster will be sent out to the board that includes contact information.

## **IX. Public Comment**

Andrew Schmitt representing the Pardee Hospital Foundation stated that he thought there would be more members of the public present to make comments at the meeting, but he asked board members what the public can provide to allow the TDA to fulfill their mission.

Nory LeBrun responded that in the upper part of the county there is always a question of healthcare and that there used to be a commitment from Mission/HCA in that area, but it does

not exist anymore. Adequate healthcare would impact education, the economy, and employment and people who visit want to know that they are going to be well taken care of. He continued to state that a tourist wants to know what happens or where they should go if they get sick and Virginia Watkins added that in some parts of the county the closest emergency location could be in Jackson County. Andrew Schmitt responded that there is a new Pardee cardiac facility close to the entrance to Pisgah National Forest.

#### **X. Board Member Comments**

Larry Chapman stated that the Military Museum will be closed until March for organizational changes, but he looks forward to it being open again. It is an important downtown asset as 80% of the visitors are walk-ins.

Dana Antonuccio stated that WLOS is doing a journalism piece on victims of builders in the area who have taken money from people and not completed the work, as happened to Dana herself.

Chair Dee Dee Perkins stated that it is important to keep the county updated with places to eat and changes in businesses. She learned that Maya's Grill will be closing, and another Mexican restaurant may be going into that location in downtown Brevard. There is also a new restaurant coming downtown to the plaza on Broad Street called Wood and Vine. Dana Antonuccio added that she learned that the Munch Box will be closing. Virginia Watkins added that Smokey Sunrise is coming to Mayberry's location. Clark Lovelace asked board members to alert TDA staff of any changes they become aware so they can keep up to date and make sure the Adventure Guide and website have accurate information.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business Jessica Whitmire moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dana Antonuccio, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:54 am.