



Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority  
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation

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Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, March 21, 2024

- Present (Voting):** Brenda Durden, Chair; Matthew Lehman, Vice Chair; Kathleen Mosher, Lucious Wilson, Elizabeth Putnam, Scott Patel, Michael Lusick, Larry Crosby
- Absent (Voting):** HP Patel (attended online)
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore, Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
- Staff:** Vic Isley, Jennifer Kass-Green, Michael Kryzanek, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Sha'Linda Pruitt, Dodie Stephens, Penelope Whitman, Tina Porter
- BC Finance:** Mason Scott
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Attorney
- In-Person Attendees:** Randy Claybrook, Bent Creek Lodge/Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association  
John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member  
Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association  
Robert Sponder, Parks Hospitality  
Megan Thorp, Summer Casiano, Miranda Bowman; Tanger Outlets
- Online Attendees:** Mickey Poandl, Luisa Yen, Anna Harris, McKenzie Provost, Emily Crosby, Tiffany Thacker; Explore Asheville  
Jim Muth, TPDF Committee  
Chris Smith, Madison Davis; Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission  
Zach Wallace, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Andrew Celwyn, Herbiary  
Felicia Sonmez, Blue Ridge Public Radio  
Will Hofmann, Asheville Citizen Times

## **Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes**

- Durden called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority, and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:02 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Minutes from the February 28, 2024, BCTDA meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The February 2024 financial reports were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Randy Claybrook and Michael Andry were appointed to the TPDF Committee with an 8-0 vote.
- Vic Isley provided the President & CEO's report.
- A summary of the Business Development team's sporting event bookings from March 2024 – October 2024 was shared.
- A Finance Committee report was heard. With an 8-0 vote, the net lodging tax revenue forecast for FY25 was set at \$34.3 million.
- A brief county update was given on behalf of Commissioner Terri Wells who was absent.
- With an 8-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

## **Call to Order of the Joint BCTDA Meeting**

Durden called to order the joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority, and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:02 a.m.

Durden said the meeting was being livestreamed. She noted that the agenda and meeting documents are available on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com) and were emailed to everyone who registered via Zoom by 8:00 a.m. Additional materials, including the PowerPoint, are posted after the meeting.

Introductions were made around the room.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Lusick made a motion to approve the February 28, 2024, regular meeting minutes. Putnam seconded the motion. There were no questions or discussion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

## **Financial Reports**

Mason Scott, of Buncombe County, presented February 2024 financials, reviewing operating and earned revenue funds, project funds, and year-to-date lodging sales trends by month and lodging type.

There were no questions. Crosby made a motion to approve the February 2024 financial reports as presented. Mosher seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

## **Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Committee Appointments**

Durden explained there were two vacancies (one lodging and one financial) on the TPDF Committee.

She provided background on the application process and said 15 applications were received. Durden said the TPDF Nominating Committee, which was comprised of Jim Muth, Ken Stamps, and David McCartney, recommended appointing the following as members of the TPDF Committee:

- Randy Claybrook, of Bent Creek Lodge, as the lodging appointment
- Michael Andry, of Morgan Stanley, as the financial appointment

There were no questions. Mosher motioned to approve the TPDF Committee appointments as recommended by the TPDF Nominating Committee. Lusick seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

## **President & CEO Report**

Vic Isley presented February 2024 lodging occupancy and demand compared to previous years. She showed an updated commercial featuring the Chihuly exhibit at Biltmore, reminded the board of the plans for the BCTDA Annual Planning Session the following day, invited participation in the Travel & Hospitality Earth Day Cleanup, and announced that Explore Asheville was taking nominations for the Heroes of Hospitality Award. Isley concluded her updates with a list of festivals and events Explore Asheville supported in March and April.

## **Business Development Sports Update**

Michael Kryzanek, vice president of business development for Explore Asheville, provided an overview of the sporting events booked by his team so far between March 2024 and October 2024. Kryzanek spoke to the direct spending of attracting these sports groups to the community. Kryzanek showed a breakdown of the various sports and host facilities. He noted several of the venues had received TPDF investment.

## **FY25 Budget Process**

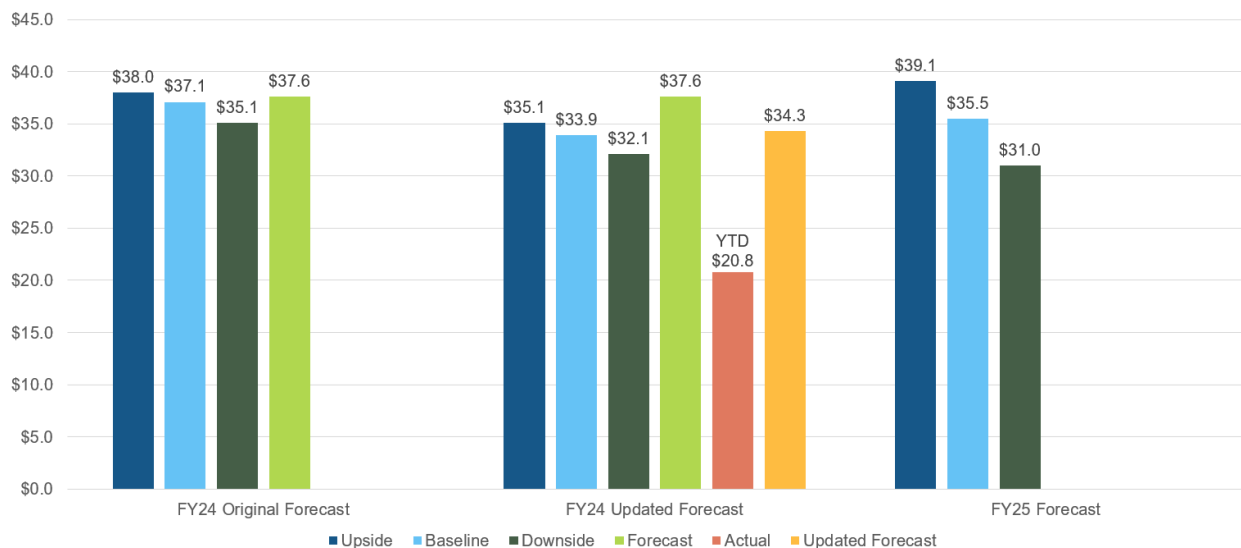
### Finance Committee Report

HP Patel, BCTDA's Finance Committee chair and treasurer of the nonprofit, was absent from the board meeting. On HP Patel's behalf, Lehman recognized and thanked fellow Finance Committee members.

### Trends/Forecasts

Jennifer Kass-Green, vice president of culture and business affairs at Explore Asheville, showed lodging tax revenue history from FY19 to FY24. She noted that net revenues this fiscal year are expected to be down five percent compared to last fiscal year's actuals. Kass-Green explained the impact of the county's increased administrative fee on net lodging tax revenue.

Kass-Green shared an updated net lodging tax revenue forecast for FY24, which included three scenarios (an upside, baseline, and downside) that were guided by Tourism Economics and compared them to the original forecast. She then outlined the three FY25 net lodging revenue scenarios that were discussed by the Finance Committee and compared them to FY24 for reference using the chart below.



(Note: Net lodging tax revenue forecast amounts in chart above are represented in millions.)

### FY25 Revenue Forecast

The BCTDA's Finance Committee recommended establishing the FY25 BCTDA net lodging tax revenue forecast at \$34.3 million. The total FY25 lodging tax forecast, including the Buncombe County administrative fee, is \$36.1 million, with BCTDA net revenues received of \$34.3 million.

It was noted that the committee's recommendation for the FY25 net lodging tax revenue forecast mirrored the updated forecast for FY24 and was closest to the FY25 baseline scenario. Discussion followed and all questions were answered about the committee's recommendation and rationale.

Lehman motioned to accept the recommendation of the BCTDA's Finance Committee and establish the FY25 net lodging tax revenue forecast at \$34.3 million. Rockoff clarified a second was not required since the motion came from the committee. There was no further discussion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 9-0.

### **Asheville City Council Update**

Vice Mayor Kilgore was absent, so no city-related business was shared at this meeting.

### **Buncombe County Commission Update**

Commissioner Wells was absent, but Durden reported on recent county-related business that Wells shared in advance, including an update on the study being conducted about merging Buncombe County Schools and Asheville City Schools.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

There was no miscellaneous business presented at this meeting.

### **Comments from the General Public**

No one from the public signed up to make virtual or in-person comments during this meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The PowerPoint presentation and relevant documents are on file with Explore Asheville and are posted on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com).

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room, located at 27 College Place. The annual planning session is Friday, March 22, 2024, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Barrel Room of Highland Brewing Company, located at 12 Old Charlotte Highway.

Crosby made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Putnam seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Simpson, Manager, Executive & Strategy