

# Explore ASHEVILLE

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

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

---

Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau – 27 College Place, Asheville

**Board Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, April 24, 2019

- Present (Voting):** Jim Muth, Chair; Gary Froeba, Vice Chair; Leah Ashburn, Chip Craig, John Luckett, John McKibbon
- Absent (Voting):** Andrew Celwyn, Himanshu Karvir, Tom Ruff
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher
- CVB Staff:** Stephanie Brown, Marla Tambellini, Dianna Pierce, Glenn Cox, Jonna Sampson, Jennifer Kass-Green, Dodie Stephens, Sarah Kilgore, Landis Taylor, Audrey Wells, Charlie Reed, Elizabeth White, Cat Kessler, Jason Tarr, Hannah Dosa
- BC Finance:** Don Warn, Autumn Lyvers
- Advertising Agency:** Angie Arner, Ashley Keetle, Darren Borrino, Rob Rutherford, Frank Cartagena; 360i
- Guests:** Richard Kort, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Legal Counsel  
Demp Bradford, Madison Davis; Asheville-Buncombe Regional Sports Commission  
Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bob McMurray, Black Mountain - Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce  
John Ellis, BCTDA Finance Committee  
Liz Button, Katie Button Restaurants  
Chris Corl, US Cellular Center  
Tina Kinsey, Asheville Regional Airport  
Rick Bell, Engadine Inn  
Meghan Rogers, Asheville Downtown Association  
Joey Robison, City of Asheville  
Jason Sandford, Ashvegas  
Dillon Davis, Asheville Citizen-Times  
Virginia Daffron, Mountain Xpress  
Holden Mesk, Sunshine Request

## **Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes**

- Chairman Muth called the joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m.
- Minutes from the March 21, 2019 BCTDA annual planning retreat and the March 22, 2019 regular meeting were approved with separate 6-0 votes.
- The March 2019 financial statements were approved with a 6-0 vote.
- A resolution appointing the BCTDA's President and CEO as budget officer and Buncombe County's Director of Finance as the BCTDA's finance officer was approved with a 6-0 vote.
- In her President's Report, Ms. Brown reviewed recent Explore Asheville and industry metrics and activities and provided updates on the Tourism Management and Investment Plan and African-American Heritage Trail process.
- The BCTDA gave consensus for CVB staff to move forward with changes presented by Ms. Brown to include when presenting the proposed FY 2019-20 Earned Revenue strategies and budget.
- The 360i team presented creative concepts and reviewed the process to develop a new advertising campaign, which included specific deliverables and a production budget. With a 6-0 vote, a budget amendment, in the amount of \$950,000, was approved to cover estimated production costs.
- Demp Bradford provided a report on the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission's recent and upcoming activities and initiatives.
- An update from Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield was heard.
- Under Miscellaneous Business, Tina Kinsey shared information related to Asheville Regional Airport and Ms. Brown introduced Explore Asheville's new Director of Finance, Jennifer Kass-Green.
- The joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

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

Chairman Muth called the joint meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. The visitors in attendance introduced themselves.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **BCTDA 03.21.19 Annual Planning Retreat Minutes**

Mr. McKibbon made a motion to approve the March 21, 2019 annual planning retreat minutes as presented. Vice Chairman Froeba seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

### **BCTDA 03.22.19 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. McKibbon made a motion to approve the March 22, 2019 regular meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Luckett seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

The minutes are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

## **Financial Reports**

### **March 2019 Financial Statements**

Ms. Lyvers reviewed the March 2019 financial statements. There were no questions.

Mr. Craig made a motion to approve the March 2019 financial statements as presented. Vice Chairman Froeba seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

The financial statements are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

### **Resolution Appointing a Budget Officer & Finance Officer**

Attorney Richard Kort said he has been working with Ms. Brown to develop a policy manual for the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority to ensure compliance in relation to North Carolina General Statute 159, which governs public authorities. In a first step in this process, Mr. Kort said a resolution to fulfill the legislative mandate to officially appoint a budget officer and finance officer is needed. He asked the board to turn to the resolution provided in the board books and in advance of the meeting. Mr. Kort said the resolution appoints the Authority's President and CEO as the BCTDA's budget officer and Buncombe County's Finance Director as the BCTDA's finance officer.

Ms. Brown said this is the first in a series of policies that will be presented to the board in relation to NC G.S. 159, and that resolutions are a good board practice. She noted that recently Mr. Kort, Attorney Murphy Fletcher, and Glenn Cox, Jonna Sampson and herself from the CVB, participated in a 90-minute phone conversation with the North Carolina School of Government to gain a better understanding of requirements as they relate to public authority budgets and NC G.S. 159.

Mr. McKibbin made a motion to approve the resolution appointing the BCTDA's President and CEO as budget officer and Buncombe County's Finance Director as the BCTDA's finance officer as presented. Mr. Luckett seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

The resolution is on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

## **President's Report**

Chairman Muth congratulated Ms. Brown on the successful and impressive execution of the Destinations International CEO Summit that took place in Asheville, April 15-18, which brought 250 destination CEOs from across the country to our area. Ms. Brown thanked Chairman Muth for the kind words and extended her gratitude to the CVB team who helped coordinate the conference, with a special commendation to Group Communications & Services Manager, Carli Adams, who created prearrival content and organized a *Beer City Base Camp* event at Catawba Brewing Company.

### Tourism Management & Investment Plan

Ms. Brown provided an update on the Tourism Management & Investment Plan (TMIP) process. She said Phase I, the assessment phase, is underway and PGAV has begun compiling data and coordinating meetings. Ms. Brown has met with city and county managers and other community stakeholders. Ms. Brown shared the list of people on the Steering Committee and the names of local leaders who have been invited to serve on the Community Leadership Council. She noted a page has been developed on the CVB's industry web site with a link for the public to sign up to receive periodic updates, and a press release about TMIP and its participants will be distributed today.

The documents shared are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau. Information on TMIP can be found at [ExploreAshevilleCVB.com/TMIP](https://ExploreAshevilleCVB.com/TMIP).

### African-American Heritage Project Phase I Proposal

Ms. Brown said the CVB staff has been working on the African-American Heritage Project and is reviewing the Phase I scope of work proposal from PGAV. She said to kick-off the process, the BCTDA is sponsoring the opening reception of the 2019 Creative Sector Summit at the YMI Cultural Center, where Dina Bailey, CEO of Mountain Top Vision, will share how telling truthful stories is often tied to ideas about vice, scope, agency and power. Ms. Brown said Ms. Bailey will serve on the project team, along with Kimberly Hunter, Entrepreneurship Program Manager at Mountain BizWorks.

### CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard & Quick List

Ms. Brown briefly reviewed activities and metrics from the CVB Staff Recap and Destination Dashboard and answered all related questions. Tina Kinsey answered questions related to airport traffic activity and reported three new nonstop flights on American Airlines and one on Delta are scheduled to start soon at Asheville Regional Airport. In response to a request by Ms. Brown to share the airport passenger data she has been collecting at an upcoming board meeting, Ms. Kinsey said she would be happy to provide a report.

The CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard, Quick List, financial statements, board meeting minutes, agendas, and relevant research reports can be found on [ExploreAshevilleCVB.com](https://ExploreAshevilleCVB.com).

### FY 2019-20 Earned Revenue Strategy

Ms. Brown said that in the new fiscal year, the CVB team is recommending a change in how earned revenue is allocated. She said that several years ago, the BCTDA provided direction to staff to include advertising and a booking tool on ExploreAsheville.com, which has generated a discretionary earned revenue fund that is not subject to the legislative mandates that apply to occupancy tax. Ms. Brown said the funds have been successfully used to support local festivals and events primarily through an application-based process utilizing specific criteria. She reviewed the packet of information that was provided, which listed the events that were funded in the various FY 2018-19 Earned Revenue budget spend categories, along with a narrative of the proposed changes for the next fiscal year.

Next, Ms. Brown said that in FY 2019-20, staff is recommending a different approach in the categorization of the events. She referred to the documentation provided and reviewed the types of events that would fall into each category. She then said staff will be proposing an earned revenue budget in the amount of \$175,000, utilizing the following monetary breakdown:

- Festival and Cultural Events - \$10,000
- Major Events Sponsorships - \$75,000
- Events Development Support - \$25,000
- Local Support - \$20,000
- Special Projects - \$45,000

Ms. Brown said additional detail can be found in the packet of information provided and she answered all related questions.

When the discussion ended, Ms. Brown said staff is requesting board consensus to move forward with the recommendation as presented for next year's Earned Revenue budget, to which all board members nodded in agreement.

The detailed packet of information that was presented is on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

### **Nominating Committee**

Chairman Muth said nominations for officers for FY 2019-20 are currently under consideration and will be presented at the May board meeting.

### **Advertising Agency Report**

#### **Creative Concepts Presentation**

Angie Arner, Ashley Keetle, Darren Borrino, Rob Rutherford and Frank Cartagena with 360i shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the process they are following to develop new creative based on the approach shared at the BCTDA's annual planning retreat held in March. During the presentation, the team shared a strategy recap, creative themes and direction, production approach, partner criteria and examples, the production budget, a timeline and next steps. It was noted that the production budget totals \$950,000 and deliverables will include two 30 second video spots, four 15 second video spots, a 30 second radio spot, original music, video and still assets, talent and residuals for two years, and talent usage fees on still photography. The creative will last a minimum of two years, be seen 622 million times in FY 2019-20, will have media applications across TV, radio, digital video, social, display, editorial and print, and the cost falls below the advertiser average ratio of media to production spend. Following today's approval, the agency will move forward on the plan and the new campaign will launch in early August.

It was noted that local talent will be utilized wherever possible, to include cultural insights, location scouting, photographers, casting, music arrangements and sound studios. Mr. McKibbin suggested 360i reach out to Asheville Community Theatre for local actors, and Ms. Keetle thanked him for his input and asked the board to continue sending such recommendations her way.

During and after the presentation, the 360i team and Ms. Tambellini answered all related questions.

Ms. Tambellini said the creative approaches that were presented today have the potential to evolve and extend through several years, and she appreciated the agency developing the concept with that potential. She then shared a slide with the recommended action and requested approval to move forward with the production process and budget as presented.

A discussion centering on the production budget and development of the campaign took place. When the conversation ended, Chairman Muth thanked the 360i team for the presentation and called for action.

#### **Budget Amendment for Production of New Creative**

Mr. Craig made a motion to approve the budget amendment to appropriate \$950,000 from Fund Balance to the Marketing Cost Center/Advertising Program/Creative Assets Spend Category, for the production of new creative spots for broadcast and radio, and photography for digital and print promotions, as presented. Vice Chairman Froeba seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

The PowerPoint presentation and budget amendment are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

#### **Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission Update**

Mr. Bradford said the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission (ABRSC) originated in 2009 and will soon be celebrating its 10-year anniversary. He thanked the Explore Asheville CVB staff, BCTDA board, Chris Corl with the US Cellular Center, the City of Asheville and Buncombe County for their initial and ongoing support throughout the years. He shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting recent and upcoming ABRSC activities, sporting event successes, initiatives and outreach efforts.

Chairman Muth thanked Mr. Bradford for the update, and commended Ms. Pierce and the Group Sales team for their efforts in supporting the ABRSC.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

#### **Asheville City Council Update**

Councilwoman Mayfield reported on city-related business, including the Flatiron Building controversy, the ongoing discussion to determine levels of city support for Chow Chow and other nonprofit events, and Thomas Wolfe Auditorium (TWA) renovations. US Cellular Center (USCC) General Manager Chris Corl answered questions related to the TWA renovation process and provided an update on the naming rights bids received from US Cellular and Harrah's, noting both will be presented to Asheville City Council on May 28.

Ms. Ashburn expressed her gratitude to Councilwoman Mayfield for the city providing advance notification about water issues for today and May 2. She then asked about the status of the John B. Lewis Soccer Complex, and a brief discussion took place on this topic, including the fact that the fields were designed to flood, however, the artificial turf hasn't been able to withstand the excessive rains and flooding seen in the Asheville area over the past year. She noted that at Asheville City Council's meeting on April 7, an agreement was signed designating that the Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association will take a primary role in fixing and rebuilding fields for the next 10 years.

Chairman Muth thanked Councilwoman Mayfield and Mr. Corl for the update.

### **Buncombe County Commission Update**

Commissioner Belcher had left the meeting due to scheduling conflict, therefore, a Buncombe County Commission update was not provided at this meeting.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

Tina Kinsey clarified the start date for the new American Airlines flights at Asheville Regional Airport and announced two new concessions, Auntie Anne's and Cinnabon, have recently opened.

Ms. Brown introduced Jennifer Kass-Green as the CVB's new director of finance.

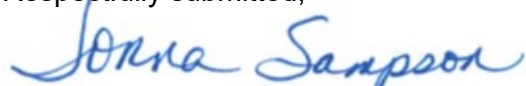
### **Comments from the General Public**

There were no comments from the general public made at this meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Muth thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:19 a.m. The BCTDA will next meet on Wednesday, May 29, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager