



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

Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 31, 2023

- Present (Voting):** Kathleen Mosher, Chair; Brenda Durden, Vice Chair; Matthew Lehman, HP Patel, Larry Crosby, Andrew Celwyn, Michael Lusick, Scott Patel
- Absent (Voting):** Elizabeth Putnam
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore
- Staff:** Vic Isley, Jennifer Kass-Green, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Holly Watts, Marla Tambellini, Penelope Whitman, Mike Kryzanek
- BC Finance:** Mason Scott, Buncombe County/BCTDA Interim Fiscal Agent
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Attorney
- In-Person Attendees:** Chris Corl, Debra Campbell; City of Asheville
Brian DeWine, Asheville Tourists
Crystal Camacho, Alexis Clingenpeel; Virtelle Hospitality
Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association
Randy Claybrook, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association
Sharon Tabor, Jason Burk; Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber
Zach Wallace, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
Meghan Rogers, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association
Chris Smith, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member
Peter Pollay, Posana
Ben Williamson, Buncombe Decides
Tyler Smith, Rosemary Dodd, Melanie Chopko; Asheville Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)
Roy Harris, Pepi Acebo, Ginna Reid, Nina Tovish, Mary Standaert, Cat Hebson, Reid Andry; Community Members
Norma Baynes, Shiloh Community Association
Jen Hampton, Emmaleigh Azonata, Dan Dean; Asheville F&B United
Timothy Sadler, Closed Loop Consulting
Kevin Jones, Neighborhood Economics
Ernie Boyd, Just Economics
Sarah Honosky, Citizen Times
Greg Parlier, Francis O'Connor; Mountain Xpress
Jason Sanford, Ashvegas.com

Online Attendees: Jon Schmieder, Huddle Up Group
Don Staley, Snap Sports Tourism
Glenn Ramey, Charlie Reed, Mickey Poandl, Emily Crosby, Khal Khoury, Carli Adams, Connie Holliday, Tina Porter, Kathryn Dewey, Kimberly Puryear, Sha'Linda Pruitt, Anna Harris, McKenzie Provost, Cass Herrington, David Thompson; Explore Asheville Staff
Madison Davis, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
Jim Muth, TPDF Committee
Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
Stu Helm, Asheville Food Tours
Lacy Cross, Movement Bank
Himanshu Karvir, Scott Kerchner; Virtelle Hospitality
Stephanie Moore, Center for Craft
Lindsey Kass-Green, Warren Wilson College
Kevin Beattie, Madison Smith; WLOS
Koree Case, MMGY Global
Jonathan Kay
M Ritter

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Mosher called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:01 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Minutes from the April 26, 2023, BCTDA meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The LIFT Fund Nominating Committee appointments were announced.
- The April 2023 financial reports were reviewed and approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The FY23 audit contract with Mauldin & Jenkins was approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The resolution to join the North Carolina Investment Pool (NCIP) was approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Vic Isley provided her President & CEO's report.
- A budget presentation was given; with an 8-0 vote, a public hearing for the consideration of the FY24 proposed budget ordinance was set for June 28.
- Huddle Up Group provided an update on the sports commission organizational assessment.
- The city's funding request for McCormick Field was referred to the TPDF Committee to review and make recommendations.
- Commissioner Terri Wells provided county-related updates.
- Comments from the public were heard.
- With an 8-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Call to Order of the Joint BCTDA Meeting

Mosher called to order the joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority, and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:01 a.m.

Mosher said the meeting was being livestreamed. She noted that the agenda and meeting documents are on 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

Crosby made a motion to approve the April 26, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Lusick seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

Appointment of Nominating Committee for Legacy Investment From Tourism (LIFT) Fund

Tiffany Thacker reminded the board of the LIFT Fund implementation timeline. Thacker noted that LIFT Fund grant cycles would alternate with Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) grant cycles.

Thacker said the establishment of the LIFT Fund Committee is underway and that committee applications opened on May 15 and will close July 7. She outlined the LIFT Fund Committee structure and said the nominating committee will consist of three TPDF Committee members. The LIFT Fund Committee member recommendations will be presented in August for BCTDA approval.

Mosher appointed Brenda Durden, Ken Stamps, and Fielding Lowe as the LIFT Fund Nominating Committee members.

Financial Reports

April 2023 Financial Reports

Mason Scott, BCTDA interim fiscal agent, presented the April 2023 financial reports. There were no questions.

Durden made a motion to approve the April 2023 financial reports as presented. Celwyn seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

FY23 Audit Contract

Mason Scott provided background on the recommendation of the FY23 auditor, noting that the county issued an RFP for a three-year contract after five years with the same auditor. Scott answered questions about the selection of Mauldin & Jenkins.

Celwyn made a motion to approve the Mauldin & Jenkins FY23 audit letter and contract as presented. HP Patel seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

North Carolina Investment Pool (NCIP) Resolution

Lehman said the Finance Committee recommended joining NCIP as discussed in the April meeting and presented a resolution. There were no questions.

Crosby made a motion to approve the NCIP resolution as presented. Durden seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

President & CEO Report

Vic Isley highlighted some of Explore Asheville's recent work. Isley then presented lodging occupancy and demand for April compared to previous years. Isley shared year-over-year visitor spending data.

Isley concluded her report with a reminder that the Monthly Highlights and Destination Performance reports are posted on AshevilleCVB.com.

BCTDA Proposed FY24 Budget Presentation

Lehman made a few opening remarks on behalf of the Finance Committee about visitor spending and the vast beneficiaries of tourism are outside of lodging businesses. Jennifer Kass-Green then presented the FY24 proposed budget, outlining the allocations to operating fund, TPDF, and LIFT Fund, and she highlighted certain items. (Refer to the presentation on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com) for more detail.) Celwyn shared his perspective about Explore Asheville's compensation. No other comments or questions were shared about the proposed budget.

Crosby then made a motion to make the ordinance available for public review and to schedule a public hearing for the consideration of the ordinance on June 28. Lehman seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

The proposed budget ordinance is on file with Explore Asheville and posted on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com).

Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission (ABRSC) Assessment Update

Vic Isley provided background on the organizational assessment of ABRSC and the BCTDA's involvement with the sports commission. Isley then introduced Jon Schmieder of Huddle Up Group and Don Staley of SNAP Sports Tourism Consulting who joined the meeting virtually via Zoom.

Schmieder shared information about Huddle Up Group, explained the assessment process, and reviewed their primary and secondary recommendations from the report. Schmieder explained the blended model structure that Huddle Up Group proposed for Asheville and the associated rationale that it keeps the 501(c)(3) sports commission and separate board intact.

Crosby, who is on the ABRSC board, outlined the next steps in the process, including a supplemental evaluation by a task force before a final decision. Isley said action was not needed by the BCTDA at this point but asked whether there were any reservations with proceeding; no objections were expressed.

Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) – Major Works Pathway, McCormick Field Request

Chris Corl, director of community and regional entertainment facilities for City of Asheville, presented the city's request for the BCTDA's support via TPDF for the McCormick Field Centennial Restoration and Capital Improvements Project—a collaborative, multi-year partnership with the city, Buncombe County, and the operator. The request for funding included the reallocation of \$1.95 million previously awarded funding for the Coxe Avenue Project and \$1.4 million annually for 15 consecutive years.

Corl gave an overview of the project benefits, facility details and history, expanded vision for the venue, costs, timeline, proposed funding structure, long-term commitments, growth projections, community and economic impacts, and alignment with the BCTDA's pillars. Corl then answered all questions.

Lehman made a motion to approve assigning the City of Asheville's request for investment in McCormick Field through the Major Works Pathway to the TPDF Committee to review and make a recommendation to the BCTDA. Durden seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0. The TPDF Committee will bring a recommendation to the June 28 BCTDA meeting.

Asheville City Council Update

Vice Mayor Kilgore was absent, so city-related business was not reported at this meeting.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Wells reported on recent county-related business, including updates that the county's 2043 comprehensive plan passed and that a public hearing on the proposed budget is June 6.

Miscellaneous Business

There was no miscellaneous business discussed at this meeting.

Comments from the General Public

Call-In Public Comments

Mosher said members of the public could sign up to call in comments during the in-person BCTDA meeting. She reported that no requests to speak virtually had been received as of the May 30 deadline at 12:00 p.m.

In-Person Public Comments

Mosher said upon arrival to the BCTDA meeting, anyone who indicated a desire to make public comment completed the public comment sign-in sheet, affirming that they read, understood, and agreed to abide by the Rules of Decorum.

Roy Harris addressed the board about collaboration. Timothy Sadler, Pepi Acebo, Emmaleigh Azonauta, Jen Hampton, Ginna Reid, Rosemary Dodd, Nina Tovish, Kevin Jones, and Ben Williamson spoke about the lack of affordable housing for local workforce being problematic. Representing a larger campaign—which collected 2,000+ signatures by canvassing—the group advocated for the LIFT Fund to support affordable housing for service workers and for service worker representation on the LIFT Committee.

Isley acknowledged the community needs were understood and thanked commenters. Isley noted that anyone interested in the LIFT Fund Committee could apply. Isley also clarified that based on legislative requirements a nonprofit or government entity must submit a request for a specific project to be considered for LIFT Fund grants.

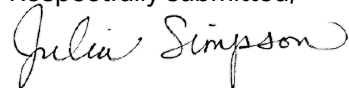
Adjournment

Durden made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Crosby seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

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, June 28, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Ingles Mt. View Room of UNC Asheville Sherrill Center, located at 227 Campus Drive in Asheville.

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Simpson, Manager, Executive & Strategy