

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, July 31, 2019

- Present (Voting):** Gary Froeba, Chair; Himanshu Karvir, Vice Chair; Jim Muth, Immediate Past Chair; Andrew Celwyn, Chip Craig, Tom Ruff
- Absent (Voting):** Leah Ashburn, John Lockett, John McKibbin
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield
Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** None
- CVB Staff:** Stephanie Brown, Marla Tambellini, Dianna Pierce, Glenn Cox, Pat Kappes, Jennifer Kass-Green, Jonna Sampson
- BC Finance:** Don Warn, BCTDA Fiscal Agent
- Advertising Agency:** No one was in attendance from 360i
- Guests:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Legal Counsel
Kit Cramer, Samantha Cole; Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
Demp Bradford, Asheville-Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association
John Ellis, BCTDA Finance Committee
Sharon Tabor, Black Mountain - Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce
Robert Foster, Biltmore Farms Hotels & TPDF Committee Chair
Lew Bleiweis, Asheville Regional Airport
Dave Nutter, Community Activist
Kathi Petersen, KP Communications
Rick Bell, Inn at Engadine
James Poole, The Foundry Hotel
Lacy Cross, Entegra Bank
Steffi Rausch, Citizens Climate Lobby
Rick Lerche, Reimaging Asheville Tourism
Jason Sandford, Ashvegas
Holden Mesk, Sunshine Request
Brooke Randle, Mountain Xpress
Dillon Davis, Asheville Citizen-Times

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Froeba called the joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:02 a.m.
- Minutes from the June 26, 2019 BCTDA regular monthly meeting were approved with a 6-0 vote.
- The preliminary June 2019 financial statements were reviewed and approved with a 6-0 vote.
- The Clifton Larson Allen letter and contract to perform the BCTDA's FY 2018-19 audit were approved with a 6-0 vote.
- In her President's Report, Ms. Brown briefly reviewed recent Explore Asheville CVB and industry metrics and events.
- Ms. Tambellini shared a Marketing & PR departmental update.
- Ms. Kappes and Mr. Cox shared a Public Affairs departmental update.
- Updates from Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield and Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher were heard.
- Under Miscellaneous Business, items of interest were shared by Kit Cramer and Robert Foster.
- Under Comments from the General Public, comments were shared by David Nutter, Steffi Rausch and Demp Bradford.
- The joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Call of the Joint BCTDA Meeting to Order

Chairman Froeba called the joint meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He noted this is his first meeting as Chair of the BCTDA and thanked Mr. Muth for his leadership in serving in this role for the past two years. Introductions were made around the room.

Chairman Froeba congratulated Kit Cramer on the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce being named Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. It was noted that this is a national designation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Muth made a motion to approve the June 26, 2019 regular meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Ruff 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

Preliminary June 2019 Financial Statements

Mr. Warn reviewed the preliminary June 2019 financial statements and answered all related questions. It was noted that additional expenses and revenue will be accrued back to June to close out the fiscal year and the final June financial statements will be presented later in the year in conjunction with the annual audit.

Ms. Brown reminded the board that all of the projected Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) revenue in FY 2018-19 was allocated for projects and FY 2019-20 will begin with a virtual zero balance in undesignated TPDF funds.

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

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

FY 2018-19 Audit Contract

Mr. Warn presented the audit letter and contract to engage the firm of Clifton Larson Allen to perform the BCTDA's FY 2018-19 audit. He noted that the documents were emailed to the board in advance of today's meeting. Mr. Warn said this is the same firm that performed the FY 2017-18 audit and he stated the contract is in alignment with the Request for Proposal. Mr. Warn requested approval of the letter and contract.

Mr. Craig made a motion to approve the Clifton Larson Allen FY 2018-19 audit contract and letter as presented. Mr. Karvir seconded the motion. A vote was taken and with all in favor, the motion carried 6-0.

The contract will be executed and kept on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Buncombe County Finance Department.

President's Report

CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard & Quick List

Ms. Brown briefly reviewed select metrics from the Staff Recap and Destination Dashboard and answered all related questions.

Ms. Brown encouraged everyone to attend the BCTDA's Annual Meeting, scheduled Thursday, September 5, from 3-6 p.m. at The Omni Grove Park Inn. She thanked Chairman Froeba for his generosity in hosting the event again this year.

The CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard, Quick List, financial statements, board meeting minutes, agendas, and relevant research reports can be found on ExploreAshevilleCVB.com.

Marketing Update

Ms. Tambellini shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting recent marketing activities and metrics. She reviewed results of the spring advertising campaign and presented an overview of the FY 2019-20 media plan, along with recent public relations efforts.

Ms. Tambellini also reviewed details related to recently launched initiatives and upcoming events, including the 360i Marketing Seminar for local businesses on August 6, the Google Knowledge Panel Partnership, and the [WelcomeToAVL](http://WelcomeToAVL.com) platform.

During the update, Ms. Tambellini answered all related questions. The PowerPoint presentation is on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Public Affairs Update

Ms. Kappes shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting recent Public Affairs initiatives and events. She provided an update on the Heritage Trail Project, reviewed partner events and extranet engagement, announced upcoming River Arts District Wayfinding and Tourism Management & Investment Plan (TMIP) input sessions, and shared recent changes to ExploreAshevilleCVB.com.

Ms. Kappes answered questions throughout the presentation and concluded by encouraging everyone to register for and attend the BCTDA's Annual Meeting on September 5, 2019.

Ms. Brown provided a brief TMIP update and answered all related questions.

Next, Mr. Cox shared slides highlighting the goals and activities of the recently-formed *Attraction Partners Collaborative*, facilitated by Ken Stamps of Navitat and Jeff Greiner of the Adventure Center of Asheville, with assistance from the Explore Asheville team.

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

Asheville City Council Update

Councilwoman Mayfield reported on recent city-related business, including Asheville City Council taking steps to weigh legal options related to voter districting and a possible short-term hotel moratorium. She explained the reasons these are being considered and outlined anticipated next steps in the processes.

Chairman Froeba stated the BCTDA has not taken a position on the proposed hotel moratorium and does not plan to take one at this time and will, instead, defer to Asheville City Council to develop a policy. He added the BCTDA will continue with its mission to drive visitation to the community to increase economic vitality.

Ms. Cramer shared comments indicating she recognizes that there are mixed feelings about hotel development, however, encouraged Asheville City Council to allow the moratorium process to be staff-led, and cautioned against singling out any one industry, which can be a detriment to healthy, well-balanced economic growth.

Chairman Froeba thanked Councilwoman Mayfield for the update.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Belcher reported on recent county-related business, including the commissioners working to develop a 20-year strategic plan for Buncombe County, and his recent visit to Carolina Day School to learn about its impressive Horizons Project.

Chairman Froeba thanked Commissioner Belcher for his report.

Miscellaneous Business

Ms. Cramer invited everyone to attend a reception today, at 1:30 p.m., at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, to celebrate the installation of three new sculptures created by local artists.

Robert Foster shared information on the *Sweet Dreams, Full Plates* initiative that launched in 2017. He said in September, 42 local hotels will donate \$2 for every room with guests who choose to participate in the program by forgoing select hotel services. The initiative has grown significantly since its inception and it is estimated that more than \$50,000 will be raised during National Hunger Action Month to directly benefit MANNA FoodBank. Mr. Foster encouraged everyone to learn more and get involved by going to SweetDreamsFullPlates.org.

Comments from the General Public

David Nutter said he is on the City of Asheville's Aesthetics Committee and they are working with NCDOT on a network of greenway projects to thread into the design of the I-26 connector. Ms. Brown asked him, in his role as a member of the TMIP Community Leadership Council, to ensure that this is brought up in group discussions and included in the list of potential projects. Councilwoman Mayfield said the planned overhaul of the Bowen Bridge as a pedestrian-friendly gateway into downtown would also be a great project for the Tourism Product Development Fund.

Steffi Rausch, with the Citizens Climate Lobby, said more business leaders are needed to engage in an effort to secure natural resources to put a price on carbon emissions. Ms. Rausch said the Energy Innovation Carbon Dividend Act has garnered increased support and she shared examples of organizations that have adopted the Act. She added she would be meeting with two BCTDA members after today's meeting and invited others to join in on the conversation if they were available.

Demp Bradford thanked the BCTDA for its continued support of the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission (ABRSC) and shared recent sporting event successes and upcoming events. Mr. Bradford said he was pleased to attend the dedication of improvements to Aston Park a few weeks ago, which were largely funded by USTA Southern as a result of Fed Cup being held in the Asheville area. He thanked Councilwoman Mayfield for her participation in making the project come to fruition. Mr. Bradford then encouraged everyone to like and follow the ABRSC on social media channels.

Adjournment

At Chairman Froeba's invitation, Mr. Muth moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Karvir seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. The BCTDA will next meet on Wednesday, August 28, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager