

# Explore ASHEVILLE

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

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

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

**Board Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, August 28, 2019

- Present (Voting):** Gary Froeba, Chair; Himanshu Karvir, Vice Chair;  
Leah Ashburn, Andrew Celwyn, Chip Craig, John Luckett,  
John McKibbon, Tom Ruff
- Absent (Voting):** Jim Muth, Immediate Past Chair
- 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, Jonna Sampson, Carli Adams, Daniel Bradley,  
Connie Holliday, Beth McKinney, Ray Vincent-Rossi
- 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  
Tina Kinsey, Asheville Regional Airport  
Jackson Tierney, Asheville Homestay Network  
Madison Davis, Asheville-Buncombe Regional Sports  
Commission  
Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association  
John Beatty, North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association  
Sharon Tabor, Black Mountain - Swannanoa Chamber of  
Commerce  
Robert Foster, TPDF Committee Chair  
Bob Michel, Michelle Smith; Asheville Homestay Network  
Rick Bell, Inn at Engadine  
Joel Burgess, Asheville Citizen-Times  
Holden Mesk, Sunshine Request  
Steffi Rausch, Citizens Climate Lobby

## **Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes**

- Chairman Froeba called the joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m.
- Minutes from the July 31, 2019 BCTDA regular monthly meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The July 2019 financial statements were reviewed and approved with an 8-0 vote.
- In her President's Report, Ms. Brown briefly reviewed recent Explore Asheville CVB and industry metrics and events.
- The board approved adding a new Director of Public Information and Community Engagement position to the Explore Asheville team, and corresponding budget amendment in the amount of \$76,978, with an 8-0 vote.
- Ms. Pierce and Carli Adams shared a Group Sales & Services departmental update.
- Ms. Tambellini shared a recap of the 360i marketing seminar that was attended by 180 participants on August 6.
- Tina Kinsey shared an Asheville Regional Airport update focusing on air service development.
- Jackson Tierney presented an overview of the Asheville Homestay Network.
- Updates from Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield and Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher were heard.
- Under Miscellaneous Business, items of interest were shared by Robert Foster, Ms. Brown and Ms. Kappes.
- Under Comments from the General Public, comments were shared by Steffi Rausch.
- The joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, adjourned at 10:44 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 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made around the room.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Karvir made a motion to approve the July 31, 2019 regular meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Celwyn seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

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

## **July 2019 Financial Report**

Mr. Warn reviewed the July 2019 financial statements and answered all related questions. He noted revenue received in July is for June hotel sales and is accrued back to FY 2018-19, therefore, there is no revenue accounted for on the statements (only expenses and interest appear on the financials).

Mr. Lockett made a motion to approve the July 2019 financial statements as presented. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

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

## **President's Report**

### **New Position Recommendation & Budget Amendment**

Ms. Brown asked board members to turn to the new position memorandum, job description and budget amendment provided in the board books and in advance of the meeting. She said she is requesting a new position be added to the Explore Asheville team with the title of Director of Public Information and Community Engagement. Ms. Brown reviewed the responsibilities of the position, noting the person hired would serve as the official liaison for the public and local media to receive information about tourism and the programs of the BCTDA, among other responsibilities. This addition would help to relieve capacity challenges across departments. Ms. Brown said once approved, the position would be advertised with an October 1 anticipated start date and then she answered all related questions.

When the discussion ended, Mr. McKibbin made a motion to approve the new Director of Public Information and Community Engagement position and budget amendment, in the amount of \$76,978 from Appropriated Fund Balance into Salaries and Wages and Benefits categories, as presented. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. A vote was taken and with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

The relevant documents are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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

Ms. Brown briefly reported on the Tourism Management Investment Plan (TMIP) process and said that at the September 25 BCTDA meeting, PGAV will present a full update. She answered all related questions and commended Pat Kappes for handling the public engagement logistics related to recent surveys and community input sessions.

Ms. Brown said she had the privilege of speaking and serving on a panel at a recent Leadership Asheville Breakfast Buzz meeting on the topic of connected community. It was facilitated by UNC Asheville's Nancy Cable and included City Manager Debra Campbell, County Manager Avril Pinder, and Lakesha McDay of Dogwood Health Trust. Ms. Brown shared copies of the resulting article that ran in the Mountain Xpress.

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

## **Group Sales & Services Report**

Ms. Pierce introduced the members of the Group Sales & Services team who were present, and then she and Carli Adams shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting recent and upcoming departmental program of work initiatives and metrics. Items reviewed in the presentation included objectives and creative elements of the new “Elevate Campaign,” which included a die-cut mailer, a new landing page at [ElevateMyMeeting.com](http://ElevateMyMeeting.com), an on demand webinar, and integrated marketing strategies. Ms. Pierce and Ms. Adams also reviewed the new and improved AAA destination training webinar format and gave an update on the upcoming brand refresh project.

In response to a suggestion made to include all cities with air service to and from Asheville in the webinar, instead of just referencing new routes, Ms. Pierce said she appreciated the feedback and will make the change.

During the report, Ms. Pierce and Ms. Adams answered all related questions.

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

## **360i Marketing Seminar Recap**

Ms. Tambellini gave a PowerPoint presentation of highlights from the 360i Marketing Seminar that was presented to 180 participants from local nonprofits and businesses on August 6 at the US Cellular Center. She reviewed the content presented, key takeaways, and the positive feedback received from participants.

Mr. Craig said he attended the seminar and was very impressed by the number of agency representatives present and the quality of the information provided.

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

## **Asheville Regional Airport Update**

Tina Kinsey shared a PowerPoint presentation on recent air service development initiatives undertaken by the Asheville Regional Airport board and staff. She focused on current air service, top markets, air service development goals, and airline engagement efforts. Ms. Kinsey reviewed new and expanded routes since 2018 and year-over-year capacity metrics. She concluded her presentation by reviewing challenges and current activities and answered all related questions.

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

## **Homestay Network Report**

Jackson Tierney shared an overview of the Asheville Homestay Network, which is an organized group of Airbnb and short-term rental owners, via a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed the organizational structure, trade associations the group is affiliated with, metrics related to permit holders, and results of a recent host survey. Mr. Tierney answered all related questions during and after the presentation.

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 considering proposed changes to the homestay ordinance, an upcoming meeting related to imposing a hotel moratorium, and an upcoming discussion on election districting.

Chairman Froeba thanked Councilwoman Mayfield for the update.

### **Buncombe County Commission Update**

Commissioner Belcher reported on recent county-related business, including a brief overview of the economic development report shared at the August 20 Buncombe County Commission meeting highlighting the economic impacts of Reich LLC, East Fork Pottery, Haakon Industries and Fox Factory.

Chairman Froeba thanked Commissioner Belcher for his report.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

Robert Foster said the *Sweet Dreams, Full Plates* initiative kicks-off on Sunday and \$22,000 has already been raised in sponsorships. He said for the month of 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 since its inception in 2017 and will now expand to the Raleigh area. Proceeds raised will directly benefit MANNA FoodBank. Ms. Brown commended Mr. Foster on last week's kick-off event, adding the hoteliers and their teams are passionate about raising money to fight hunger in the community.

Ms. Brown said the inaugural Chow Chow culinary festival event will take place September 12-15, and tickets are still available for the larger events, including Pickled in the Park, which offers a locals' discount for Sunday. She said the coordination has been a labor of love by a community of volunteers and nationally recognized chefs will participate in events throughout the weekend. Ms. Ashburn noted the opening party will be held on Thursday at Highland.

Ms. Kappes reminded everyone to register to attend the BCTDA's Annual Meeting, taking place Thursday, September 5, at The Omni Grove Park Inn from 3–6 p.m.

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

Steffi Rausch, with the Citizens Climate Lobby, said she is addressing the board again to encourage business leaders to support bipartisan climate control legislation to protect natural resources by putting 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 that last month she met with Jim Muth and Chip Craig, who each individually endorsed the Act, and said she is available to meet with other BCTDA members after today's meeting.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Ashburn moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Celwyn seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m. The BCTDA will next meet on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager