



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  
Wednesday, September 27, 2023

- Present (Voting):** Brenda Durden, Chair; Kathleen Mosher, HP Patel, Michael Lusick, Larry Crosby, Lucious Wilson, Elizabeth Putnam, Scott Patel
- Absent (Voting):** Matthew Lehman, Vice Chair
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore, Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
- Staff:** Vic Isley, Tiffany Thacker, Marla Tambellini, Mike Kryzanek, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Connie Holliday, Tina Porter
- BC Finance:** Melissa Moore, Buncombe County/BCTDA Fiscal Agent  
Matt Evans, Buncombe County
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Attorney
- In-Person Attendees:** Randy Claybrook, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association  
Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association  
Jason Burk, Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce  
Chris Smith, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission  
Meghan Rogers, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association  
Himanshu Karvir, Virtelle Hospitality  
John Ellis, Prior TDA Board Member  
Dave Nutter, Nutter Associates  
Will Hoffman, Asheville Citizen Times  
Jason Sanford, Ashevillegas.com  
Chase Davis, Mountain Xpress
- Online Attendees:** Mickey Poandl, Emily Crosby, Kathryn Dewey, Carli Adams, ShaLinda Pruitt, McKenzie Provost, Holly Oakley, Emilie Soffe, Khal Khoury; Explore Asheville  
Rebecca Lynch, ArtsAVL  
Timothy Love, Buncombe County  
Lacy Cross, Movement Bank  
Megan Shields, MMGY Global  
Madison Davis, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission  
Jaime Matthews, City of Asheville  
Tina Kinsey, Asheville Regional Airport  
Jim Muth, TPDF Committee  
Chris Hardy, Jack Benton; Parks Hospitality Group  
Lydia Carrington, Brucemont Communications  
Scott Kerchner, Element Asheville Downtown  
Tanya Frisch, Virtelle Hospitality  
Ben Williamson, Tourism Taxes for Affordable Housing Coalition  
Erin Miller, LocaliQ  
Grey Hallock, WLOS  
Andrew Jones, Keith Campbell; Asheville Watchdog

## **Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes**

- Durden called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority, and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Durden welcomed a new city-appointed board member, Lucious Wilson.
- Minutes from the August 30, 2023, BCTDA meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Durden welcomed the new BCTDA fiscal agent, Melissa Moore.
- The August 2023 financial reports were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- With an 8-0 vote, Chandler Asset Management was approved as an investment services advisor.
- The Legacy Investment from Tourism Fund Committee nominees were appointed with an 8-0 vote.
- Vic Isley provided her President & CEO's report.
- Marla Tambellini presented a marketing update.
- Vice Mayor Kilgore and Commissioner Terri Wells gave brief reports.
- With an 8-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 10:48 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 9:00 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.

## **Welcome New BCTDA Board Member**

Durden welcomed a new, city-appointed board member, Lucious Wilson. Durden outlined Wilson's appointment and term details. She thanked him for volunteering his service to the board.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Mosher made a motion to approve the August 30, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Crosby seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

## **Financial Reports**

### **Welcome New BCTDA Fiscal Agent**

Durden welcomed Melissa Moore, new finance director for Buncombe County and BCTDA fiscal agent. She expressed gratitude for the support of Mason Scott who served as interim BCTDA fiscal agent.

### **August 2023 Financial Reports**

Matt Evans of Buncombe County Finance presented August 2023 financials, reviewing operating and earned revenue funds, project funds, and year-to-date lodging sales trends by month and lodging type. Evans noted Moore will review financials at future board meetings once she's through onboarding.

There were no questions. Putnam made a motion to approve the August 2023 financial reports as presented. Lusick seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

### BCTDA Finance Committee Update – Investment Services Recommendation

HP Patel, chair of the BCTDA Finance Committee and treasurer of the nonprofit, gave background and rationale for pursuing more strategic investments. He said in addition to joining the North Carolina Investment Pool (NCIP), which the board approved in May, the BCTDA Finance Committee encouraged engaging a dedicated investment advisor to maximize returns through proactive management.

HP Patel explained that the BCTDA Finance Committee and Explore Asheville staff worked with Buncombe County Finance to issue an RFP to select an investment advisor; proposals were received from Sterling Capital Management and Chandler Asset Management. After evaluating the two firms, the BCTDA Finance Committee recommended selecting Chandler Asset Management as the investment advisor. Chandler is currently engaged in investments for Buncombe County, works primarily with public funds, and reported zero losses for clients. All questions were answered.

Crosby made a motion to approve Chandler Asset Management as recommended by the BCTDA Finance Committee; HP Patel seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

### **Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fund Update – LIFT Fund Committee Nominations**

Tiffany Thacker, director of grants, provided an update on efforts to establish the inaugural LIFT Fund Committee. She reviewed requirements of the committee and offered context on how the LIFT Fund Nominating Committee evaluated applications.

Thacker presented the LIFT Fund Nominating Committee's nine recommendations:

- Laura Webb – Founder & President of Webb Investment Services
- Dr. Joseph Fox – Founder & Owner of Fox Management Consulting Enterprises
- Barbara Benisch – Nonprofit management & Community Development Consultant
- Mike McCarty – Owner of The Lobster Trap
- Himanshu Karvir – President & CEO of Virtelle Hospitality
- Kyle Highberg – Senior Director of Operations at Biltmore Farms
- Amy Kelly – Managing Principal at Hatteras Sky
- Kathleen Mosher – Vice President of Communications at Biltmore
- Shelton Steele – Co-Owner of Wrong Way River Lodge & Cabins

Thacker also relayed a recommendation that the board liaison position serve as ex-officio for both the LIFT Fund Committee and the TPDF Committee. As BCTDA nonprofit treasurer, HP Patel would be the ex-officio liaison for the LIFT Fund Committee. There were no questions or comments from the board.

Lusick motioned to approve the LIFT Fund Committee as recommended by the LIFT Fund Nominating Committee. Scott Patel seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

### **President & CEO Report**

Vic Isley presented August 2023 lodging occupancy and demand compared to previous years. Isley shared highlights from the Annual Meeting, which marked 40 years of the BCTDA, and she provided copies of the FY23 Annual Report. Isley showed a graph of the growth of visitor contributions to the community since 1983 and spoke to the organization's role in economic development locally.

Isley recounted the sports commission organizational assessment with the participation of Sabrina Rockoff, BCTDA attorney, and Mike Kryzanek, vice president of business development, for supporting details. Isley said founding members would meet on October 3 to determine the next steps. She

explained her intent to respect the sports commission advisory board's desire for the sports commission employees to remain staff of the 501(c)(3) with funding from the BCTDA more in line with the funding from the other founding members. Isley noted bylaws and governance changes were still being considered. The board engaged in discussion and several perspectives were shared. No one objected to the plan, and the board was supportive of remaining collaborative partners.

Isley listed festivals and events that Explore Asheville supported in September and October; she added that the Festivals & Cultural Events 2024 grant cycle was open. In celebration of Blue Ridge Pride, "You are Welcome Here" rainbow window clings were distributed. Isley concluded by mentioning the condensed monthly dashboard report and Dodie Stephens start date as vice president of marketing.

### **Marketing Update**

Marla Tambellini, senior vice president of marketing, presented an update that focused on upcoming promotions. Tambellini gave details about this year's fall foliage campaign, paid media partnerships, efforts related to supporting business development, and some major initiatives planned for FY24.

### **Asheville City Council Update**

Vice Mayor Kilgore reported on recent city-related business, including the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium work session and City Council's approvals of the reimagining Pack Square plan and Project Aspire.

### **Buncombe County Commission Update**

Commissioner Wells reported on recent county-related business, including upcoming events and programming, economic development incentive policy updates, increased shelter capacity, Ferry Road development, and Medicaid expansion.

### **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**

Lusick 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 10:48 a.m.

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

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room, located at 27 College Place.

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Simpson, Manager, Executive & Strategy