

Explore ASHEVILLE

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

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

Via Zoom Webinar due to the COVID-19 Pandemic/State of Emergency

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Present (Voting): Kathleen Mosher, Chair; Brenda Durden, Vice Chair; Leah Ashburn, Andrew Celwyn, Larry Crosby, Gary Froeba, Matthew Lehman, Michael Lusick, John McKibbon

Absent (Voting): None

Present (Ex-Officio): Asheville City Councilmember Sandra Kilgore
Buncombe County Commissioner Robert Pressley

Absent (Ex-Officio): None

CVB Staff: Vic Isley, Marla Tambellini, Marshall Hilliard, Jennifer Kass-Green, Jonna Sampson, Julia Simpson, Daniel Bradley

BC Finance: None

Legal Counsel: Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bisette

Online Attendees: Carli Adams, Glenn Cox, Kathryn Dewey, Hannah Dosa, Connie Holliday, Sarah Kilgore, Sarah Lowery, Kathi Petersen, Michael Poandl, Sha'Linda Pruitt, Glenn Ramey, Charlie Reed; Explore Asheville Staff Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Madison Davis, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission Timothy Love, Buncombe County Jim Muth, John Ellis; Past BCTDA Board Members Nicole Will, Asheville Wellness Tours David McCartney, Kimpton Hotel Arras Peter Pollay, Mandara Hospitality Jason Sandford, Asheville.com Sunshine Request

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Chairwoman Mosher called the virtual joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m.
- Larry Crosby, Matthew Lehman, and Michael Lusick were welcomed as new board members after having been recently appointed to the BCTDA by Asheville City Council.
- Minutes from the August 25, 2021, BCTDA regular monthly meeting were approved with a 9-0 vote.
- The August 2021 financial statements were approved with a 9-0 vote.

- Ms. Isley provided her President & CEO's report.
- Updates from Asheville City Councilmember Sandra Kilgore and Buncombe County Commissioner Robert Pressley were heard.
- One item was discussed under Miscellaneous Business.
- Chairwoman Mosher reported that there were no written/mailed public comments, nor requests to speak live at the meeting, received by the respective deadlines.
- With a 9-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Call of the Joint BCTDA Meeting to Order

Chairwoman Mosher called the virtual joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m. She said the agenda and meeting documents are provided on AshevilleCVB.com and the recording and additional materials will be posted after the meeting.

Board Member Roll Call: Board members responded as Chairwoman Mosher called roll verifying all BCTDA members were virtually in attendance, except for Mr. Lusick, who joined the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Welcome New BCTDA Board Members

Ms. Isley said on September 14, Asheville City Council appointed three new members to the BCTDA. She welcomed and introduced each of them.

Larry Crosby, The Foundry Hotel

Larry Crosby was appointed to a one-year partial term, filling the seat vacated by James Poole in July. Mr. Crosby is the general manager of The Foundry Hotel and represents a lodging property with 100 rooms or less. His partial term will expire on August 31, 2022, and he will be eligible for reappointment to a second term of three years.

Mr. Crosby thanked Ms. Isley and said it is a pleasure and honor to be appointed, and he looks forward to working with the board and staff.

Matthew Lehman, Grand Bohemian Hotel Asheville

Matthew Lehman was appointed to a full three-year term, expiring August 31, 2024, and would be eligible to be reappointed to a second full term, as well. Mr. Lehman is the general manager of the Grand Bohemian Hotel Asheville and is representing a lodging property with 101 or more rooms.

Mr. Lehman thanked Ms. Isley and said he is looking forward to working with the team and serving the community however he can.

Michael Lusick, FIRC Group, Inc.

Michael Lusick was appointed to a full three-year term, expiring August 31, 2024, and would also be eligible to be reappointed to a second full term. Mr. Lusick is the vice president of hospitality for the FIRC Group, Inc., and is representing a lodging property with 101 or more rooms.

Mr. Lusick said it is an honor to have been appointed. He added he has come to love the Asheville area and looks forward to giving back to the community.

Ms. Isley thanked Mr. Froeba and Mr. McKibbon for staying on the board past their term's expiration date due to the county's extension of the application and interview process. She noted the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners will interview applicants and make BCTDA appointments on October 5.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Celwyn made a motion to approve the August 25, 2021, regular meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Ashburn seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0.

August 2021 Financial Reports

Ms. Kass-Green reviewed the August 2021 financial reports.

In response to Mr. Celwyn's question to Mr. Warn last month asking if the significant increase in revenue was related to late occupancy tax payments coming in, Ms. Kass-Green reported on Mr. Warn's behalf that there was only \$4,600 collected for prior months, therefore, late payments were not responsible for the increase.

There were no questions related to the financials. Mr. Celwyn thanked Ms. Kass-Green for the clarification.

Mr. Froeba made a motion to approve the August 2021 financial reports as presented. Mr. McKibbon seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0.

President & CEO Report

Industry Metrics

Ms. Isley shared her President & CEO's report, in which she provided insight on the top five months of occupancy tax collection and a breakdown of sales by property type for each of those months.

Ms. Isley noted that this is positive news for hotel properties that are continuing to rebound from the pandemic. She added it also benefits other lodging partners, outfitters and guides, retail shops, artists, restaurants, attractions, breweries, and other local businesses that increase their customer base as a result of the BCTDA's marketing efforts. She then reviewed lodging occupancy metrics for August.

BCTDA Annual Meeting Recap

Ms. Isley provided a recap and photos of the BCTDA's annual meeting that took place on September 15 at Harrah's Cherokee Center Asheville, and highlights included:

- Bob Patel was recognized with the William A.V. Cecil Tourism Leadership Award.
- Keynote speaker Kevin Brown inspired attendees with a presentation on "Expand Your Vision, Grow Your Results."
- More than 175 business and community leaders were in attendance.
- The "[Heart of Hospitality](#)" video highlighting locals who have chosen hospitality careers was shared.

Other Updates

Ms. Isley said the CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard, and Quick List are posted on AshevilleCVB.com. She also noted that today is the application deadline for Explore Asheville's Festivals and Cultural Events Grants program, and funding recommendations will be presented to the board in October.

Chairwoman Mosher thanked Ms. Isley for the report, and everyone involved in creating the "Heart of Hospitality" video.

Asheville City Council Update

Councilmember Kilgore reported on city-related business, including the approval of a new community in Mills Gap, and an update to the UDO that will include the urban village community.

Chairwoman Mosher thanked Councilmember Kilgore for the update.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Pressley provided an update on county-related business, including the American Rescue Fund plan, BCTDA appointments, a newly selected Asheville Championship ambassador, and a mixed-use development that received approval.

Commissioner Pressley thanked Mr. Froeba and Mr. McKibbon for staying on the board while the county commissioners worked through an extended appointment process.

Chairwoman Mosher thanked Commissioner Pressley for his report.

Miscellaneous Business

Mr. Celwyn welcomed the new board members and shared ideas on how he thinks the BCTDA can better serve the community as related to long-term occupancy tax investments. He specifically encouraged the newer board members to get involved with providing direction related to the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF).

Ms. Isley thanked Mr. Celwyn and reviewed the process that staff members have been undergoing related to the TPDF program. She said meetings have been taking place throughout the summer and fall with the city, county, and UNC-Asheville staff related to understanding and updating funding priority changes since the Tourism Management & Investment Plan process took place prior to the pandemic. Ms. Isley noted that the city and county have received significant ARPA funds and other revenue streams and are working through a process to understand and apply how those funds will be used. Explore Asheville has been working with these and other stakeholders to learn how priorities have changed and how TPDF funding can be leveraged in these partnerships. Once these priorities and processes are understood, Explore Asheville staff will work with the board to develop a process for effectively distributing TPDF funds.

Chairwoman Mosher thanked Mr. Celwyn and noted members of the board are all committed to making sure TPDF dollars go as far as they can. She appreciated him sharing his suggestion and is also looking forward to moving forward in this regard, as well.

Comments from the General Public

Live Public Comments

Chairwoman Mosher said members of the public are invited to sign-up to verbally share live comments during monthly virtual BCTDA meetings. She reported that as of yesterday's 12:00 p.m. registration deadline, no requests to speak at today's meeting had been received.

Written Public Comments

Chairwoman Mosher said members of the public were invited to submit comments via email to Reply@ExploreAsheville.com through 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 28, 2021. She reported there were no written public comments received by the deadline.

Adjournment

Mr. McKibbon moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Ashburn seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0 and the meeting ended at 9:35 a.m.

The full meeting PowerPoint presentation and relevant documents are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau and are posted on AshevilleCVB.com.

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, October 27, 2021, beginning at 9:00 a.m., via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager