

**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, November 28, 2018

- Present (Voting):** Jim Muth, Chair; Gary Froeba, Vice Chair; Leah Ashburn, Andrew Celwyn, Chip Craig, John McKibbon, John Lockett
- Absent (Voting):** Himanshu Karvir, Tom Ruff (excused)
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville City Councilmember Julie Mayfield
Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** None
- BC Finance:** Don Warn, Autumn Lyvers
- Advertising Agency:** No one was present from the Peter Mayer Agency
- CVB Staff:** Stephanie Brown, Marla Tambellini, Glenn Cox, Pat Kappes, Jonna Reiff, Cat Kessler, Sarah Kilgore, Dodie Stephens, Justine Tullos, Elizabeth White
- CVB Staff Absent:** Dianna Pierce
- Guests:** Richard Kort, McGuire, Wood & Bissette
John Ellis, BCTDA Finance Committee
Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association
Demp Bradford, Madison Davis, Andrew Lawrence; Asheville-Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
Eric Hardy, Buncombe County
Lew Bleiweis, Asheville Regional Airport
Stephen Cohen, Lynne Harty; Homestay Network Members
Jason Sandford, Ashvegas
Holden Mesk, Sunshine Request

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Muth called the joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:04 a.m.
- Minutes from the October 31, 2018 BCTDA regular meeting were approved with a 7-0 vote.
- The October 2018 financial reports were approved with a 7-0 vote.
- A budget resolution, in the amount of \$15,000 to cover the BCTDA's Fed Cup sponsorship, was approved with a 7-0 vote.

- In her President's Report, Ms. Brown briefly reviewed recent Explore Asheville CVB and industry activities and initiatives.
- The marketing team shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting recent initiatives and advertising campaigns.
- Ms. Kappes and Mr. Cox shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the Wayfinding System maintenance and Year 2 assessment plans. A budget increase in the amount of \$70,000 was approved for associated costs with a 7-0 vote.
- Updates from Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield and Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher were heard.
- Under Miscellaneous Business, Ms. Brown encouraged everyone to attend the Explore Asheville Holiday Party at the Renaissance and Demp Bradford expressed gratitude for the BCTDA's support of the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission.
- The joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation, adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Call of the Joint BCTDA Meeting to Order

Chairman Muth called the joint meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:04 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

The visitors in attendance introduced themselves. Chairman Muth thanked Holden Mesk for streaming the meeting live and welcomed new Buncombe County Finance Director Don Warn to his first BCTDA meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Celwyn made a motion to approve the October 31, 2018 regular meeting minutes as presented. Mr. McKibbon seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 7-0.

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

Financial Reports

October 2018 Financial Statements

Ms. Lyvers reviewed the October financial reports.

Occupancy tax revenue received in October for September sales totaled \$1,734,347. October expenditures totaled \$692,520. The net change to fund balance was \$1,082,570. October expenditures for Salaries & Benefits: \$266,943; Net Media: \$70,118; Research: \$100; Sales: \$108,162; Marketing: \$165,808; Public Affairs: \$948; Other Operating Expenditures: \$42,940; Events and Festivals/Sponsorships: \$37,500.

There is currently \$6,526,510 in undedicated funds in the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF), which does not include new projects approved in October. Ms. Lyvers said a budget ordinance will be presented at the December meeting to establish the new project budgets.

Ms. Lyvers and Ms. Brown answered all related questions.

Mr. McKibbon made a motion to approve the October 2018 financial reports as presented. Mr. Froeba seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 7-0.

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

Budget Resolution

Ms. Brown asked the board to turn to the budget resolution provided in the board books. She said staff is requesting approval to transfer \$15,000 from the Contingency line in the budget to Sales/Sports/Sponsorships Funding to cover the sponsorship of Fed Cup, which is returning to Asheville for a second consecutive year, February 9-10, 2019, marking a very rare occurrence.

Mr. McKibbon made a motion to approve the budget resolution in the amount of \$15,000 as presented. Mr. Luckett seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 7-0.

President's Report

In her President's Report, Ms. Brown shared the Fact Sheet that was recently distributed to the CVB's industry partner list outlining the benefits of tourism as a result of the occupancy tax being invested in sales, marketing, and product development efforts.

Next, Ms. Brown briefly reviewed numbers from the Destination Dashboard and she and Ms. Tambellini answered all related questions.

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

Marketing Update

Members of the Explore Asheville marketing team shared a PowerPoint presentation outlining recent activities, initiatives and metrics. Highlights included:

- Ms. Tambellini reviewed the Google Partnership, noting the CVB is now a "trusted verifier" for Google listings and that several hundred images had already been uploaded to Google. Several training sessions were also held for partners to support the effort of better showcasing tourism businesses by enhancing their Knowledge Panel listings.
- Ms. Tambellini provided a summary from the Summer of Glass initiative; a collaboration with Biltmore and 60+ artists, studios, galleries, museums and tours, and shared an overview of the Harvest and Fall advertising campaign elements and metrics.
- Ms. Kessler reviewed the fall season initiatives including view results on fall color reports, fan photos, and a new interactive map that was debuted this year, which was demonstrated by Elizabeth White.
- Ms. Stephens reviewed fall media relations efforts including PR outreach, the team's crisis response to Hurricane Florence, and other media highlights.

- Ms. Kilgore concluded the presentation by reviewing the results of the National Geographic Travel Channel's *Asheville by Design* airings and promotional elements and an overview of the "Falliday" and Holiday campaigns.

During and after the presentation, staff answered all related questions. Chairman Muth commended the team members on their ability to quickly respond to changing conditions such as the fall foliage delay and hurricanes/inclement weather issues.

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

TPDF Wayfinding System Updates

Ms. Kappes updated the board on the Wayfinding Program via a PowerPoint presentation, and highlights included:

- The Wayfinding Signage program was initially installed in 2010 and consists of over 300 sign elements throughout Buncombe County. The project's annual maintenance is funded by the BCTDA, which includes inspecting, cleaning and repairing/replacing signs as needed.
- Staff is in the second of a comprehensive three-year, system-wide assessment plan and is ready to move forward to implement recommendations made by MERJE in FY 2017-18. The plan primarily focuses on the downtown area.
- A community input session will be held in January to collect information from the community to inform Wayfinding signage designs in the River Arts District once the City's development construction is complete.
- Assessment upgrades related to vehicular, pedestrian and kiosk signage are needed to include new tourism assets, a new kiosk in the Eagle/Market Street area, and new and improved parking garage signage.
- Ms. Kappes also reviewed anticipated future needs for the RAD, South Slope, Woodfin Blueway Wave Project, and the U.S. Cellular Center.

Mr. Cox said annual maintenance costs normally don't exceed \$40,000, however, based on the assessment and an increase in faded/missing/damaged signs, \$90,000 is needed to cover costs in FY 2018-19. Since \$50,000 was budgeted this year, approval for an additional \$40,000 is being requested. He provided insight on the increase.

Ms. Kappes said for the second year of the assessment, \$190,000 is needed, however, \$160,000 was budgeted in FY 18-19, resulting in a shortfall of \$30,000. She said to cover anticipated increased costs for both annual maintenance and the assessment plan, staff is requesting an increase of \$70,000 in undesignated TPDF funds to be approved for this purpose. Ms. Brown said the new total still falls within the occupancy tax legislation's provision that up to 10 percent of the budget may be spent on administrative costs.

When the presentation ended, Chairman Muth called for action. Ms. Ashburn made a motion to approve a budget resolution in the amount of \$70,000 from the undesignated Tourism Product Development Fund balance to cover Wayfinding System maintenance and assessment plan updates as requested. Mr. McKibbon seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 7-0.

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

Asheville City Council Update

Councilwoman Mayfield reported on city-related business, including the new city manager starting on Monday, a ban on electric scooters downtown, Council's position on the JBL Soccer Fields, budget work sessions to include the exploration of implementing a Food & Beverage tax and a transit tax, a desire to clarify tourism-related numbers that are being shared by the city and BCTDA, budget challenges, the I-26 connector project, and construction on the Bowen Bridge.

During the update, Councilwoman Mayfield answered all related questions and received input from staff and board members on the various topics.

Chairman Muth thanked Councilwoman Mayfield for the update.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Belcher reported on county-related business, including welcoming Don Warn as Finance Director, forward movement on the East Asheville library expansion, a new 48-page procurement manual that has been approved, new processes approved by resolution, personnel policy changes, school capital improvements, and the county manager search.

Chairman Muth thanked Commissioner Belcher for the report.

Miscellaneous Business

Ms. Brown encouraged everyone to attend the Explore Asheville CVB Annual Holiday Party at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel on Thursday, December 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission Executive Director Demp Bradford thanked the BCTDA for its support and encouraged everyone to watch for an invitation to attend the ABRSC's Annual Meeting next Tuesday at noon.

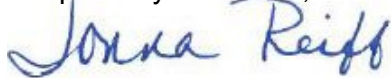
Comments from the General Public

There were no comments from the general public made at this meeting.

Adjournment

Chairman Muth adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m. The BCTDA will next meet on Wednesday, December 19, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., in the Boardroom of the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Reiff, Executive Operations Manager