

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 with a Quorum in Person at 27 College Place
due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Special Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 8, 2020

- Present (Voting):** Chairman Gary Froeba, Leah Ashburn, Andrew Celwyn, Kathleen Mosher, and John Lockett attended in person; Vice Chairman Himanshu Karvir and James Poole attended virtually
- Absent (Voting):** Chip Craig, John McKibbon
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher
- CVB Staff:** Stephanie Brown, Jonna Sampson and Daniel Bradley attended in person
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire Wood & Bissette, attended in person
- Online Attendees:** Marla Tambellini, Jennifer Kass-Green, Kathi Petersen, Connie Holliday, Tina Porter, Glenn Ramey, Charlie Reed; Explore Asheville Staff
Jim Muth, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association
Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association
Samantha Cole, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
John Ellis, Past BCTDA Board Member
Steph Dahl, City of Asheville
Sharon Tabor, Black Mountain/Swannanoa Chamber
Daniel Walton, Mountain Xpress
Sunshine Request

Members of the public and additional tourism industry partners registered in advance and attended the online meeting.

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Froeba called the special joint meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 11:00 a.m.
- Ms. Rockoff provided an overview of the agreement for Mountain BizWorks to administer the Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund and answered all related questions.
- A motion to authorize Chairman Froeba to enter into a Grant Administration Agreement with Mountain BizWorks was approved unanimously with a 7-0 vote.
- The joint special meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Call of the Joint Special BCTDA Meeting to Order

Chairman Froeba called the special joint meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 11:00 a.m. He welcomed the board and members of the public attending online.

Board Member Roll Call: Board members responded as Chairman Froeba called roll verifying their attendance. Ms. Brown noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a quorum of five voting members was present in person in the Explore Asheville Boardroom to include Chairman Froeba, Ms. Ashburn, Mr. Celwyn, Mr. Luckett, and Ms. Mosher. Mr. Karvir, Mr. Poole, and Councilwoman Mayfield attended remotely.

Consideration of an agreement for Mountain BizWorks to administer the Buncombe County Tourism Jobs Recovery Act

Chairman Froeba said it was a remarkable accomplishment to get the Buncombe County Tourism Jobs Recovery Act passed in last week's short session as it was very unlikely to happen with no other local bills even being considered. He thanked everyone involved in getting the bill passed, especially Senator Chuck Edwards, Commissioner Joe Belcher, members of the BCTDA, and Jim Muth and the Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association.

Chairman Froeba said we are meeting today to establish a \$5 million fund to provide financial assistance to support our local businesses in reopening, get people back to work, and help to restore the local economy.

Ms. Rockoff said the purpose of today's special meeting is to authorize Chairman Froeba to enter into a grant administration agreement with Mountain BizWorks to administer the Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund. She noted a draft agreement was sent to board members last night and while the agreement is yet to be finalized, Mountain BizWorks has approved the important pieces.

Ms. Rockoff said the legislation that passed allows the BCTDA to take up to \$5 million from the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) to transfer to an agency experienced in emergency management funding to provide grants. These grants will assist small businesses that have closed and/or experienced significant economic hardships related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mountain BizWorks has been selected as the agency experienced in emergency management funding to administer the grant process.

Ms. Rockoff reviewed the parameters of the agreement to include: timing of when funds will be disbursed, term of the agreement, fee structure, reporting criteria, key deliverables, scope of work, development of the program model, communications, and conformity to requirements of Session Law 2020-3. She noted Mountain BizWorks will provide both pre- and post- application process assistance, adding applications will be received May 15-31 and all will be considered, as this is not a first come, first served process. Mountain BizWorks will make funding decisions according to specific criteria outlined in the agreement and grants will be awarded in June.

A discussion took place centering on grant criteria, administrative fees, legislation, coordination of resources, program scope, anticipated number of grants, and grant

amounts. Mr. Celwyn noted he appreciates the two-week application period and that Mountain BizWorks is administering the program. Ms. Rockoff noted the plan's scope recommends grants should benefit the diversity of businesses in the county and that the agreement includes a recommendation to award specific percentages of awards to minority and women-led businesses, where possible. During and after the conversation, Ms. Rockoff answered all related questions.

When the discussion ended, Chairman Froeba called for action.

Mr. Luckett made a motion to authorize Chairman Froeba to enter into a Grant Administration Agreement with Mountain BizCapital, Inc., doing business as Mountain BizWorks, for the purpose of administration of the Buncombe County Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund, provided that the Grant Administration Agreement contains terms related to the funding of the program, the administration fee, and the scope of work that are, in the Chair's reasonable opinion, substantially similar to those presented today.

Ms. Ashburn and Mr. Celwyn simultaneously seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor, the motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Froeba thanked everyone for their support and a round of applause was offered marking the establishment of this historic Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund.

Councilwoman Mayfield said, as someone who does a lot of work with the General Assembly, it is remarkable that this local legislation got passed during the short session. She extended her gratitude to everyone involved in getting the bill passed.

Chairman Froeba said it was initially reported in the newspaper that the bill wasn't going to go through, however, things quickly changed and it was included in the larger COVID-19 bill. He added the funds will be put to good use to help businesses reopen when the time is right.

Ms. Brown said that for businesses interested in applying for funding, information is on AshevilleCVB.com, including a link to sign up to receive emails from Mountain BizWorks during every step of the process. She reiterated that applications will be received May 15-31, and all will be considered regardless of submission date during that time frame.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chairman Froeba thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m. The BCTDA will next meet on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager