

# **Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority**

**June 25, 2019**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Maryann Azzato, Bill Bernier, Glenda Browning, Bonnie Cox, Dana Fisher, Melaney Robbins, Buddy Rudd, and Whitney Sauls. **Absent:** Jerry Helms and Eddie Walters. **Also in Attendance:** Mitzi York, Executive Director.

### **I. Call to Order:**

Chairman Bonnie Cox was delayed to the meeting because of an accident blocking traffic. Glenda Browning, Vice-Chairman, called to order the TDA's regular monthly meeting at the Brunswick County TDA office at 712 Village Rd SW in Shallotte at 3:05 pm.

### **II. Public Hearing on FY 2019-20 Budget**

Melaney Robbins motioned to open the public hearing on the TDA FY 2019-20 Budget. The motion was seconded by Bill Bernier and passed unanimously. No member of the public asked to speak on the budget. Dana Fisher motioned to close the public hearing seconded by Whitney Sauls. The motion passed unanimously.

### **III. Public Comment:**

No one requested to speak during the public comment period.

### **IV. Approval of May 28, 2019 minutes**

Melaney Robbins motioned to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2019 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Whitney Sauls and approved unanimously.

### **V. Executive Director's Report:**

Mitzi York reviewed the financial statement for the month of May. Revenues for May totaled \$47,760.65. The major expenses for May were the Agency Fees and Public Relations. The Public Relations Agency Fee was higher than normal because of the fees associated with the FAM. Mitzi York pointed out that some budget lines have been revised to reflect year-end projections. Those lines items are highlighted in green. The changes do not alter the bottom line. Expenditure for May totaled \$53,105.06 in actual expenses and \$57,638.05 in accruals. The ending bank balance for May was \$510,373.71.

Mitzi York pointed out that additional occupancy tax funds were received for March. March is now up 2.36%. She pointed out that there is an error in the report for the month of April. April gross amount for FY 17-18 should say \$71,386.64. She also advised that revenues for April did not include two towns so April will increase at the next Board meeting. The % change column is also incorrect for April and the Year-to-date % change due to the error for Gross Amount FY 17-18

for April. Buddy Rudd motioned to approve the financial report seconded by Whitney Sauls. The motion passed unanimously.

Mitzi York reminded the Board that the budget and marketing plan were reviewed at the May Board meeting. She pointed out the increase in the occupancy tax budget over the current year budget. At the last meeting, Brittany Dagenhart and Elaine Cheedle from GlynnDevins reviewed the marketing items recommended by the agency. The most significant change otherwise in the budget is the change to Special Projects line. It decreases because in the current year we budgeted for the entire cost of the website which we will not actually be incurring. Next fiscal year the Production/Research line will go up because we will have the monthly payments for the new website. Mitzi York advised the Board that Brittany Dagenhart and Elaine Cheedle are available by phone if the Board has any questions for them. Glenda Browning asked about the fact that the proposed budget is less than the current year budget. Mitzi York responded that the current year budget includes \$393,441 in appropriated Fund Balance. After the audit we may consider appropriating additional Fund Balance for spring projects. Maryann Azzato motioned to approve the Ordinance Adopting the FY 2019-20 budget. The motion was seconded by Dana Fisher and approved unanimously.

Mitzi York reported that a design has been approved for the new website that she thinks everyone will be pleased with. We're working on the sitemap and navigation now. The website will launch in November. The May PR report includes some coverage that occurred in April as a result of the Leisure FAM including social media. In May, MSN US, MSN UK, and MSN IE included the Brunswick Islands in a roundup of "15 Best Summer Weekend Getaways You'll Want to Book Right This Second". US Daily News included the Brunswick Islands in online article "Summer Weekend Getaway: An Idea for All 15 Weekends". Vacation Idea website included Silver Coast Winery in a roundup of 24 Best North Carolina Wineries". USA Today's 10Best included Southport in their Best Coastal Small Town voting. Charlotte Five online article "For all the beach vibes, head to the Brunswick Islands". Taste of Home online included Joseph's Italian Bistro in a roundup "Best Italian Restaurant in Every State". Our State magazine included several Brunswick Islands towns and establishments in its June coastal issue. The total circulation/UVM was 56,676,765 with an earned media value of \$641,245.72 and editorial value of \$1,923,737.

## **VI. Marketing Committee Report**

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Report for May. In May, we received 13,117 leads/request for guides including downloads and views. There were 43,381 new visitors to our website and 46,063 views of the partner pages and from there 11,537 visits to our partners' websites. She reviewed the list of media that ran in May. Top states for leads were New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Year-to-date, we have received 134,595 leads compared to 119,449 in May last fiscal year. Mitzi York pointed out that the leads total were impacted by issues with a couple of campaigns. If you remove the problematic leads the total is probably closer to 128,000 leads. She advised that staff is looking to tally the total number of those leads. In May, we had 43,381 new users

and 123,897 page views. The number of new users and sessions were both up over the previous May. The top sources of traffic were Google organic followed by our cost-per-click program, direct traffic, WECT-TV and our emails. The WECT-TV campaign included the production of a video and search marketing out of the area. Top keywords were North Carolina beaches and dynamic search ads. The top pages viewed were the home page, accommodations, Holden Beach, Oak Island page, and the Fort Fisher Ferry page. The home page, and Fort Fisher Ferry, Holden Beach, Oak Island, and Capt. Nance were the top landing pages. Top states were North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio and Tennessee. Top metro areas were Charlotte, Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham, Atlanta, and Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem.

Whitney Sauls asked Mitzi York if she had spoken with any of the other coastal destinations to get their projections for the summer. She has heard from some companies in the Outer Banks that July is off. Mitzi York advised that she is having lunch with the directors from New Hanover and Pender Counties. She will ask them about what they are hearing. There was a brief discussion about why some people might be saying July is soft.

**VII. Old Business:**

No old business.

**VIII. New Business:**

Mitzi York advised the Board that Eddie Walters asked not to be reappointed to another Board term. Bill Bernier and Jerry Helms have been reappointed. Maryann Azzato and Dana Fisher were asked to complete a new application for the TDA Board. The County has determined that Maryann Azzato and Dana Fisher are not eligible to serve on the Board because they do not live and vote in the districts from which they were appointed. Mitzi York added that this is a departure from previous appointments. In the past it was sufficient to work in the district. Board members expressed concern that it might be difficult to find qualified tourism people to serve in certain districts. The County Clerk suggested that the Brunswick County Chamber can appoint Maryann Azzato for the seat vacated by Eddie Walters. Eddie Walters will chat with the Brunswick County Chamber in that regard.

Mitzi York advised the Board that the building that GlynnDevins operated in was sold. Their staff are now working from home. She expressed concern with Michelle Hubacher about the company no longer having an office in Concord. Michelle Hubacher assured Mitzi York that it would not impact service to our account. Whitney Sauls recommended that Mitzi York keep a good pulse on what is going on.

**IX. Adjourn:**

Buddy Rudd motioned to adjourn, seconded by Whitney Sauls. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: July 23, 2019 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.**