



ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, January 10, 2018: 12 Noon, Gateway Building

CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Krista Osterweil, Edward Norvell, Craig Pierce, Amie Baudoin, Steve Hall, Kelly Alexander, Brian Miller

Guests: Eddie Carrick, Tony Brewer

Not Attending: Shannon Stewart-Hill, Darrell Blackwelder, Tony Shaw, Whitney Wallace

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Lesley Pullium, Allyson Teague

I. RCTDA Call to Order

Krista Osterweil called the RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion for approval of the RCTDA December 2017 minutes.

Second: Kelly Alexander

Motion: Approved

Financial & Occupancy Tax Report

James Meacham shared the financial report with the group. As of December 31st the cash on hand is just over \$90,000 and accounts receivable totaled a little over \$84,000. Current assets were \$182,000 with total assets around \$2.7 million.

Year-to-date, occupancy taxes are \$318,000 and total revenue is just over \$430,000. A little more than 50% of the staff budget has been expended due to extra employee hours for Day out with Thomas and Polar Express. However, staffing expenses will decrease in the upcoming months since the Visitor Center will be closed on Saturdays and additional staff volume for handling packages will go down as well.

Occupancy tax revenue was up 26.8% from November 2016 to November 2017. About 10% is related to new hotel product. The additional 16% is mainly market related, especially with Polar Express during November and December.

Annual Audit Report

Eddie Carrick presented the RCTDA audit report. The management discussion analysis covers where the TDA is currently and where it will be going in the future. The occupancy tax totaled \$416,000 compared to \$396,000 from last year. In 2016 there was a little trolley income and expenses shown, but that was transferred back to the SRCVB.

Tony Brewer presented the SRCVB audit report. The occupancy tax revenue was slightly down about \$9,200 from 2016 to 2017 and the trolley revenue was down \$28,000 from 2016 to 2017. The decrease in trolley revenue is a result of the Scrooge trolley tour going back to Lee Street Theatre. In addition, the partnership support revenue was up \$32,000 from 2016 to 2017.

All total, the revenue was only down \$3,200 from the previous year. Total expenditures were down about \$352,000, which were associated with destination marketing, trolley expenses, tourism development, and the branding initiative. The balance sheet shows \$128,000 of purchased assets, which include \$40,000 worth of land, \$31,000 for Railwalk construction, \$23,000 for website, and \$34,000 for trademark. Net assets have decreased \$34,000, which was financed with \$72,000 of loan advances for the branding project. The total loan commitment has been satisfied. Also, the SRCVB still has \$29,000 of restricted funds remaining as of 6-30-17.

Destination Marketing Report

Meacham shared the current destination marketing report. The Polar Express incentive package has generated over 750 packages, with a total of 1,062 room nights from packages with around 1,500 room nights for the entire event. Kelly Alexander stated the growth of Polar Express has been tremendous and thanked the TDA for their partnership and hard work. Over 53,000 tickets were sold, with two school day trips being added. Planning and preparations for next year's Polar Express is already well underway.

Wine about Winter is the current incentive package being offered, with the event taking place on February 2nd. 13 room nights have been generated for Wine about Winter as of December 31st.

Meacham informed the group the website continues to be successful with substantial growth of visitors each month. For the year, there were just under 110,000 visitors to the website. Most visitors are experiencing the website through mobile platforms, at 68%. There is around a 2% growth each month of visitors signing up for the e-newsletter. Social media engagement is continuing to grow as well, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The NC Main Street Conference was held on December 6th & 7th and participants stayed overnight at the Comfort Suites. This event generated 42 room nights. The Husqvarna sales meeting will be hosted by the TDA in the Gateway Building from January 29th to January 31st. In addition, an undisclosed sports-tourism group is looking to partner with the RCTDA in October - November of 2018 to bring in around 760 room nights. Bids are in from hoteliers and the group will select an option soon. Planning for the Little League World Series in July is also underway.

Year-to-date, the trolley program finished at just over \$35,000 in revenue. There were around 300 room nights associated with various groups and activities related to the trolleys. In December the ridership is high and the revenue is low due to the trolleys being leased out by Lee Street Theatre for the Scrooge trolley tours.

Capital Committee

On January 17th there will be a meeting to finalize the city and county wayfinding signage project, which will include Railwalk signs. The full price tag to finish the project will be presented to the Capital Committee at their next meeting.

With regard to the Fisher Thompson Building at the Railwalk, the TDA has been instructed to install bathrooms because there is potential for assembly during events. Even though there are restroom facilities within 500 feet, Bill Burgin will be going to a meeting with North Carolina officials to address this issue.

Local Tourism Industry

The Rowan Original Service Awards ceremony will take place at the gala on January 11th. Awards will be presented to 1st place, 2nd place, and there was a 4-way tie for 3rd place. These awards are a great way to show appreciation to the front-line, hardworking employees in Rowan County.

Meacham stated Lloyd Harding, current Gateway Building Manager, will be leaving the TDA on January 18th to pursue a passion for working in disaster relief and serving others internationally.

II. Adjourn

Krista Osterweil thanked the members for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Allyson Teague, RCTDA