



**Salisbury-Rowan County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, April 13, 2016, Noon, Gateway Building**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Attending:** Dan Peters, Mark Lewis, Craig Pierce, Thad Howell, Suzanne Jones, Barbara Perry, Michelle Patterson, Vivian Hopkins, Whitney Wallace, Tony Shaw, Brian Miller and Karen Alexander

**Tourism Staff:** James Meacham, Lesley Pullium, Tara Ludwig, Melissa Murguz, Allyson Teague

**Attending Guests, Liaisons, and Officials:** Shannon-Stewart Hill, BPR Properties

**Not Attending:** Bill Burgin, Darryl Blackwelder, Kelly Alexander, Krista Osterweil and Steve Hall

**I. SRCVB Call to Order**

Dan Peters called the meeting of the Salisbury-Rowan County CVB to order at noon on 4-13-16. Mr. Peters as Policy Committee Chairman served as Chair for the meeting as Mr. Bill Burgin, Chairman, and Kelly Alexander, Vice-Chair were both unavailable to attend:

**II. SRCVB Meeting Minutes**

Dan Peters noted that the meeting minutes from March were emailed to the Board of Directors and he asked everyone to take a few moments to review the minutes. After the minutes were reviewed Mr. Peters asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented:

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion to approve the meeting minutes

Second: Suzanne Jones

Discussion: None

Motion: Approved

**III. Financial Report**

CVB, Treasurer Mark Lewis reviewed the financial statements that were distributed via email to the CVB Board with their meeting packets. CVB financials are included as an appendix in the meeting minutes in addition to the occupancy tax collection figures.

Mr. Lewis reported on the CVB's cash position, current assets, account receivables and reviewed the CVB's statement of activities year to date as of March 31, 2016. Mr. Lewis and CVB, CEO James Meacham reported that occupancy taxes fiscal year to date are 6% ahead of last fiscal year and February 2016 was 1.8% ahead of February 2015. Both Lewis and Meacham did note that March 2016 will be down from March 2015 due to a large one time business account that occurred last year and accounted for 4% of the market's revenue that month and Easter falling in March. It was noted that April 2016 is trending ahead of April 2015. If March comes in down from last year it will be only the 4<sup>th</sup> negative month since the fall of 2012.

#### **IV. Tourism Capital Committee**

Committee Chairman, Mark Lewis reported that the Capital Committee did not meet in April and does not have a report for the Board meeting. The committee will next meet on May 11, 2016

#### **V. Master Plan Committee**

Committee Chair, Barbara Perry reported that the Master Plan committee met on April 12<sup>th</sup> at the CVB and discussed three items:

##### **1) An update of the Railwalk development project**

Barbara Perry provided the Board an update on the project for the Rail Walk. It was reported that Morgan Ridge Brewhouse and Restaurant are under construction with an opening date set for summer 2016. It was discussed that the CVB is interviewing the Stewart group for outlining the streetscape and related improvements for the Rail Walk in the 300 and 400 block of Lee Street. The tentative plan is to have final project pricing back to the CVB in May 2016 for consideration.

The committee was pleased with the progress of the Railwalk and looking forward to seeing the final drawings. The timeframe presented would put improvements to the Rail Walk starting in June or July of 2016.

##### **2) Rowan Arts and Cultural Fund**

Committee Chair Perry reported that the Master Plan committee discussed the current status of the Rowan County Arts and Cultural fund and received a full report from Ed Norvell and James Meacham.

Mr. Meacham and Mrs. Perry presented to the Board of Directors that the general structure of the fund is in place through the Salisbury Community Foundation, via the Foundation of the Carolinas and has initial pledges of \$10,000 from the Community Foundation and \$10,000 from the Rowan Arts Council. The fund is designed to provide additional arts and cultural funding to Rowan County arts and cultural organizations (501c3 nonprofits) through regional corporate giving

Ed Norvell and community leaders hosted a meeting earlier in 2016 with potential corporate donors who were receptive to the concept of the fund and its potential for supporting arts and culture in Rowan County. During the meeting a positive discussion regarding the "local commitment" to the fund arose and was discussed among community and corporate representatives. An apparent need for the local community to be invested

in the fund prior to requesting corporate giving was evident and presented to the Rowan Arts Council Board at their last meeting and to the Master Plan Committee.

Mrs. Perry reported that a request was presented to the Master plan committee to make a one-time pledge of \$10,000 to the Rowan County Arts and Cultural fund as an initial investment and a match of the Arts Council's pledge and the Community Foundation's pledge.

An established goal would be to obtain \$40,000 to \$60,000 in local funding pledges and then approach the first corporate donor with a request to match the local investment in the new fund. The Master Plan committee's budget has \$10,000 currently dedicated for supporting Arts and Culture in Rowan County. The committee felt supporting the fund meets that purpose.

The committee discussed the proposal and agreed that is a sound strategic move for the committee's goal of supporting and enhancing arts and cultural funding in Rowan County. The committee approved a pledge from its FY15-16 budget of \$10,000.

### **3) Rowan County Wayfinding Signage System**

Barbara Perry reported that the committee discussed the idea of conducting a feasibility study for developing a county wide wayfinding signage system to connect with the current Salisbury system. The expanded system would create a greater sense of place, and enhance the visitor's experience and serve as a mechanism to rollout the new brand in a lasting manner.

The committee reviewed a proposal for the feasibility by Buzz Bizzell (designer of the City system). The committee reviewed the proposal and discussed that is a very affordable price given the scope of work, detail and hours involved in such a project.

The Master Plan committee voted to submit the study to the CVB Board for consideration and inclusion in the CVB's FY16-17 budget. The CVB discussed that there are a lot of opportunities available for Rowan County to differentiate itself from other County's and Destinations through a County wide system. The Board spoke favorably of the including the study in next year's budget, and felt that entrance "welcome signs" to Rowan County should also be considered.

## **VI. Destination Marketing Committee**

Committee Chair Krista Osterweil was unable to attend the meeting due to a work conflict. Tara Ludwig, CVB Director of Marketing and Communications and Lauren Litaker, CVB Director of Digital Marketing and Content provided a full report to the CVB Board. A copy of the report is included in the meeting minutes. Staff reported on and highlighted:

### **Trolley Program:**

- Supporting 122 room nights calendar year to date
- Calendar year to date ridership of over 1,200
- 24 groups/rentals booked calendar year to date
- Blooms and Barrels set to launch a tour and tasting at 4 wineries in June 2016

### **Partnership Marketing**

- Three promotions are underway or just wrapped up, 2 were with the NC Transportation Museum and 1 is with New Sarum Brewery. Combined 188 packages were sold resulting in 395 room nights

### **Digital Marketing**

- Lauren Litaker reported that March 2016 witnessed:
  - Social Media engagement of 97,167 people up 52%
  - Email newsletter distribution of 47,197
  - Website unique visitors of 26,685 up 31%
  - Total Digital engagement/reach of 171,049 people up 40%
- Litaker provided the CVB Board an update on the development of the CVB's new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system and especially focused on the new opportunities for community partners to enhance and engage their digital presence throughout the market and in partnership with the CVB. The Board was very encouraged with the progress and the future opportunities available to partners
- Litaker also highlighted recent social media marketing strategies that have proven successful for Rowan County and highlighted how partners can engage directly with the CVB and capitalize on the CVB's reach.

### **Group Business and Marketing Support**

- Tara Ludwig reported that the Destination Marketing recently approved 3 marketing support requests for lodging support and food related hospitality costs. They were for Tilley's Harley Davidson Biker and BBQ event, Salisbury Pride Fest and Downtown Salisbury Inc.'s Summer Sip. Estimated room night generation from all 3 events is 75 to 125.
- Ludwig reported that calendar year to date the CVB has supported over 1,900 room nights.

## **VII. Rowan County Branding Initiative**

Taskforce Chair Michelle Patterson thanked everyone who attended the Brand Truths event on 3-24-16 at the NC Transportation Museum and CVB staff for putting on the event. Dan Peters and other Board members also remarked that it was a great event and a wonderful opportunity that was seized to showcase Rowan's Brand Truths and Platform.

James Meacham presented a summary report of the Brand Truths that were presented on 3-24-16 and reported that the Taskforce will meet towards the end of April to officially approve the Truths, Strategy and Brand Platform. If approved, the creative process will begin in May 2016 and integration and rollout will begin in the summer of 2016.

Board members discussed various opportunities to partner with the Taskforce and the rollout and that the strategy will be to just start making brand conversions as they are available and recognized that integration and “the release” will be a sequential process that occurs over months and years.

Integration will occur on a multitude of platforms including, but not limited to web, digital, social, printed materials, banners, signage, newsletters, brochures, letterhead business cards and public relations.

With no additional business to present or discuss, Dan Peters adjourned the meeting at 1:16pm.

Respfuctlly Submitted:

Salisbury-Rowan County Convention and Visitors Bureau