

**Tourism Development Authority
December 2, 2015
Board Meeting, 2015- 9:30 am
Town Hall Council Chambers
Minutes**

Present: Brian Barnes, Carl Marquardt, Judy Decker, Calder Smoot, Talia Freeman.
Representing the Town: Ed Evans, Steve Smith
Staff to Board: Kate Gavenus.
Marketing Consultant: Craig Distl
Guest: Jeanne Birks, Misty Watson

- I. Call to Order:** Chairman Brian Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:34 am.
- II. Adoption of Agenda:** Carl Marquardt moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Calder Smoot, all approved.
- III. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the November 4th meeting were approved unanimously upon a motion by Carl Marquardt and a second by Calder Smoot.
- IV. Audit Report:** Misty Watson, CPA reported that the TDA finances were in excellent condition. Total assets exceeded liabilities by \$135,000, and our net position had increased by \$50,000 over the previous year.
- V. Financial Report:** The YTD budget was reviewed. Spending was right on track for the year. Income was down on a month to month basis, but will increase as ski season progresses.
Invoices were unanimously approved as presented, upon a motion by Carl Marquardt and a second by Judy Decker.
- VI. Chamber Report:** Kate Gavenus reported that Lauren Mills is working 14 hours per week for the Chamber and the arrangement is working well. Everyone is invited to the After Hours at the Eagles Nest River Club on December 8th from 5:30-7:30 pm. It is co-sponsored by the Avery, Beech and Banner Elk Chambers, and the host is chamber member Blue Door Spa and Coffee Shop.
- VII. Old Business:**
Cartoon Map- Kate and Lauren will send out proofs as Mark Pflug gets corrections made. There are still a number of disapproved proofs in the system.

20/20 Visioning Process- Brian Barnes reported that a rough draft of the process had been created, and covered economic, tourism and community development goals for the town. The committee will consist of 8-12 people who are either new to the mountain, have worked on the mountain less than 3 years, or are less than 40 years old. Local leaders and business people will select the participants. The team will spend three afternoons together. First they will identify the strengths and opportunities, and then they will identify strategies that help the town progress. Finally, the team will pull it all together, and report their findings to the TDA, the

Chamber, the Planning Board and the Town Council. The process is also intended to identify and develop emerging leadership, to prepare the town to move forward. Judy Decker volunteered her conference room for the meetings.

VIII. New Business:

Schedule of Meetings- the Board determined that the 2016 meeting regular meeting schedule would consist of twelve meetings which would take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm in the Town Council Meeting Room.

Fireworks Contract- The contract for next year's fireworks display at the July 2nd Hog Roast is ready to be signed and needs to be sent in by December 31st. Brian Barnes asked that Ed Evans be given the contract, as it should actually be between the town and the fireworks company, not the TDA. The TDA will need to pay ½ of the total amount as a deposit in February 2016.

- IX. The Marketing Report:** Brian Barnes reported that he and Craig Distl had discussed some summer packaging ideas that featured club facilities and lodging with club membership. Talia Freeman requested that the Holland billboard be changed to feature the tubing and ice skating at the Beech Mountain Resort, and stated that the resort would pay for ½ of the cost of changing from the current winter wrap. The board decided to discuss it at the next meeting when revenues for November/December were in, as the current billboard is acceptable for now. Kate reported that four sets of banner ads were created for BigHouse's marketing push that started Nov. 27. They focus on: Snowtubing, the Entourage Package, Skiing 101 and the \$99 Ski-Stay package. Also, Kate and Craig submitted a list of adwords that they want the marketing company to purchase. The CharlotteOnTheCheap.com campaign is up and running for three months, and they actually posted our ad a day early, on November 30. Text ads have started running across all sites of RaysWeather.com. The video that Craig and Will Mauney are working on is nearing completion. The Atlanta billboard contract is finalized and will run 12/28 through 2/21, and WRAL.com is confirmed for 12/26 to 1/31. Our website had a huge surge in visits, more than 50,000 in just three days, due to an Uberfacts tweet about the Land of Oz, and a subsequent Facebook post.

- X. The TDA Director Report:** Kate reported that the High Country Marketing Partnership will meet on December 17th to determine a regional marketing plan for spring/summer 2016. The TDA website will be fully mobile responsive by the end of the month. In-office visits are down 17% from last November. A Lunch and Learn will take place with SCORE rep Herman Metzler on December 4th from 11:30-1:30 at the Pinnacle Inn. The topic will be "12 Keys to Becoming and Remaining Successful in Business".

- XI. Adjournment:** Chairperson Barnes adjourned the meeting at 10:37 am.

Signed _____

