

## **MINUTES**

### **NASH COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**May 17, 2016**

The Nash County Tourism Development Authority met on May 17, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at Country Inn & Suites in Rocky Mount, N.C. Present were Robbie Davis, Chairman and members Dan Daly, Robert Johnson, Retho Williams, Bill Lehnes, Tracey Jackson, Faye Beddingfield, Ernestine Neal, Peter Varney and Tara Nelson.

Also present were Donna Wood, Nash County Finance Officer and guests Scott Turner with, Nash Travel and Tourism Council; Derrick Johnson, Josh Lassiter, Julia Bryant and Allen Goodson, with ECSU Down East Viking Football Classic; Amy Beasley – Nashville Blooming Festival, Shelley Gray- Nash Arts, Gary Hodges – Tackle the Tar; Susan Phelps - Down East BBG Throw Down and Jean Bailey and Brenda Crocker with the Tar River Choral and Orchestral Society, Inc. (TROC) .

Chairman Davis welcomed all members and guests and introduced the new board member, Retho Williams.

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order then asked for approval of the minutes of the January 19, 2016 meeting. Motion was made by Peter Varney seconded by Bill Lehnes and duly passed that the minutes of January 19, 2016 be approved.

Chairman Davis then called upon Finance Officer Donna Wood to present the financial information. Projection for 2015-2016 is estimated to increase fund balance by approximately \$26,000 which is primarily due to an increase in occupancy tax collection during FY2016, from July through February, the collections are 7.3% higher than prior year during this time. Also, utility expenditures are down compared to prior year for the lighting interchanges covered by TDA.

Old Business:

Chairman Davis called upon Peter Varney to present an agreement with the City of Rocky Mount regarding the Winstead Avenue Interchange Lighting. According to Varney, the original agreement in 2014 was not formally documented for the lighting charges to be paid by TDA . With a motion from Faye Beddingfield and a second by Ernestine Neal, the board unanimously approved the agreement in which TDA agrees to pay the City the cost of power of the monthly interchange lighting less the credit of the fourteen (14) streetlights. The City agrees to credit the TDA any amount overpaid (based on the credits) since the high mast lights were installed and electric service provided in February 2014

Chairman Davis requested to address the Tackle the Tar Old Business-2016, as noted on the agenda, after the Budget Presentations.

New Business:

Chairman Davis called upon Finance Officer Donna Wood to present the 2016 Audit Contract from Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. for consideration of approval. Ms. Wood stated that the contract was for \$3,925 for the audit services and \$850 for preparation of the annual financial statements for a total cost of \$4,775. Chairman Davis noted that it was the intent for FY16-17 audit that RFPs for audit services are considered. A motion to approve the contract was made by Peter Varney seconded by Bill Lehnes and duly passed that the audit contract for FY2016 be approved.

Chairman Davis discussed a possible lighting Interchange agreement at 58/64 in the Town of Nashville. He indicated that the Mayor of the Town of Nashville had approached him on behalf of the TDA to set up an agreement for this interchange similar to the agreements for the lighting interchanges in the City of Rocky Mount in which the TDA is responsible for the monthly charges. Chairman Davis noted that the Lighting Plan provided indicates an estimated monthly charge between \$500-\$600 and the agreement if approved by the Board would be

similar to the Winstead Avenue agreement as approved in the old business between the City of Rocky Mount and the TDA. A motion was made by Bill Lehnes to move forward with this 58/64 lighting interchange agreement and seconded by Robert Johnson. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Davis called the Public Hearing for the Nash County Tourism Development Authority 2016-2017 Budget Presentation to order noting that this meeting had been advertised as required on May 5, 2016 in the Rocky Mount Telegram.

Chairman Davis asked for presenters to make their requests for the 2016-2017 budget.

Chairman Davis called Mrs. Brenda Crocker and Mrs. Jean Bailey to present for Tar River Orchestra. Mrs. Crocker reported the benefits to the community and the successes from the FY2016 funding of the concert event and noted that this event brought in musicians and attendees from all over eastern North Carolina, she then requested \$25,000 for FY2017 for the Concert Projects scheduled for the 30<sup>th</sup> year of TROC .

Derrick Johnson, Josh Lassiter, and Allen Goodson from ECSU requested funding of \$55,000 for FY 2017, stating it would be the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the Down East Viking Football Classic, to be held between Elizabeth City State Vikings and Morehouse College. They noted that this was a popular event and they would like to expand the events to bring more alumni in to Rocky Mount for a longer period of time as well as increase funding for marketing of the event.

Susan Phelps from the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department requested \$20,000 for the BBQ Throw Down indicating that they are planning to expand media coverage and encourage more overnight stay.

Tracey Jackson spoke in place of Jan Mills representing the Spring Hope Chamber of Commerce requested \$4,000 funding for the 2016 Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival. She reported the upcoming festival would be the 45<sup>th</sup> year.

Amy Beasley from the Nashville Chamber requested \$8,000 for the Nashville Blooming Festival. The 2017 Blooming Festival will be the Festivals 21<sup>st</sup> year. Ms. Beasley indicated the

event brings 20,000 to 25,000 people to Nashville each year providing family entertainment and supporting local businesses.

Shelly Gray requested \$10,000 for the Nash Arts Council to help to continue funding the Nashville Showcase. The Showcase funding is used to support concerts and the related artist contracts. It was also noted by Amy Beasley that Nash Arts is planning to increase advertising.

Gary Hodges, Chairman of the City of Rocky Mount Rotary Club, requested \$5,000 to support the Tackle the Tar Event for 2017. This was a new event in 2016 and it was successful with approximately 348 runners and 200 volunteers.

Chairman Davis asked Travel and Tourism Chair, Tara Nelson to provide an update on the open director position. Ms. Nelson indicated that they were still in the processing of reviewing applicants and the target date for a new hire to begin is July 1, 2017.

Scott Turner, former Chair of Travel and Tourism presented the request for Travel and Tourism Council's budget request of \$470,000 funding for FY 2016-2017, the same amount requested in FY2015-2016. He then presented a line-by-line explanation of the budget items requested. The Board decreased some travel and training to adjust to what they considered was a good fit, reduced billboard expenditures based on renegotiations but were increasing web/electronics to accommodate changing trends for advertising and sharing of information.

Chairman Davis stated he had talked with Dr. Clark regarding USA South and he stated the USA South Committee was not requesting \$30,000 for FY 2016-2017 because the Spring Sports Tournament would be held in Georgia. He stated that the tournament is expected to return either in FY 2018 or FY 2019.

Chairman Davis stated that \$20,000 for NCC Destination as funded in FY2105-2016 was a one year request and no funding was requested for FY 2016-2017.

Chairman Davis requested additional comments regarding budget items for FY2016-17. No items were noted. Chairman Davis then closed the Public Hearing.

Budget Work Session:

Chairman Davis began the budget work sessions by noting that the items in the Recommended Column on the FY 16-17 TDA Budget form were to be considered only a starting point for discussion of all of the requested items.

Chairman Davis recommended that the proposed revenue for fiscal year 2016-2017 increase to \$785,300 based on current year trending as projected by Donna Wood.

Chairman Davis asked for discussion of the budget requests. The following items were discussed and motions made as follows:

1. TROC requested \$25,000 (3<sup>rd</sup> year) - Motion by Tracy Jackson to fund at same level as FY 2015-2016 of \$20,000, second by Robert Johnson. Motion passed.
2. Downeast Football Classic requested \$55,000 – Motion by Ernestine Neal to fund \$40,000, second by Peter Varney. Motion passed.
3. Rocky Mount BBQ Throw Down requested \$20,000 – Motion by Robert Johnson to fund \$10,000, second by Bill Lehnes. Motion passed

The following requested items were considered based on the FY16-17 Recommendation

4. Professional fees \$5,700
5. Director Fees/Supplies/Advertising \$1,200
6. Contributions by Chairman \$1,000
7. Contributions by Email Vote \$10,000
8. Economic Development \$75,000
9. Nash Travel and Tourism requested \$470,000
10. Wesleyan Tennis Center (Final of 6 year agreement \$20,000)
11. Winstead Avenue Lighting Exchange Recommended \$12,000 – Peter Varney indicated that credits as noted in agreement should lower expenditure – recommended change to \$6,000
12. Other Utilities – Lighting interchanges \$50,000
13. Town of Nashville 58/64 Lighting interchange \$7,200
14. Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival requested \$4,000
15. Nashville Blooming Festival requested \$8,000

16. Nash Arts Council requested \$7,000.

17. Tackle the Tar – 2017 \$5,000.

In consideration of the adoption of the FY2016-2017 TDA Budget as discussed, Chairman Davis reported the proposed 2016-2017 TDA budget totaled \$785,350 which includes funding requests as noted above and a reserve of \$45,250. Motion was made by Bill Lehnes, second by Tracy Jackson. Motion passed for the Adoption of the FY 16-2017 TDA Budget.

Chairman Davis indicated that Tackle the Tar 2016 had requested \$5,000 funding. A motion was made by Bill Lehnes to appropriate \$5,000 for Tackle the Tar for FY2015-2016, second by Faye Beddingfield. The Motion Passed unanimously.

Chairman Davis reported that this would be the last meeting for Peter Varney due to his term expiration on the TDA Board. He thanked him for his service on the Board.

Chairman Davis called on Peter Varney to provide an update from the Planning Committee. Peter Varney updated the Board on the City of Rocky Mount debt service expiration related to the 2% of Occupancy tax use. The Imperial Center Debt service will expire June 2028 and the Sport Complex debt service will expire June 2019. Mr. Varney indicated that the City did a refunding on the debt for the Imperial Center which lengthened the debt term.

Commissioner Davis indicated he was unaware of the change in the terms of the debt which were originally approved by the TDA for use of the 2% and noted that he would follow-up with the City of Rocky Mount for more information. He indicated he would email the Board details of information from his request.

Chairman Davis asked the Board if there were any other items to discuss:

Tracy Jackson suggested a meet and greet when the new Travel and Tourism Director is hired.

Chairman Davis stated that the next TDA meeting will be held in January 2017 to provide the Board midyear updates.

Chairman Davis called for the meeting to be adjourned, Faye Beddingfield made a motion to adjourn, second by Dan Daly. The meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Wood".

Donna Wood  
Finance Director