

Tryon Tourism Board
(Tryon Tourism Development Authority)
Amended Minutes
September 11, 2023
4:30 P.M.

Chairman Mason-Freeman called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm at the Tryon Town Hall with four members present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Mason-Freeman, Chairman; John Vining, Vice-Chairman, Bill Crowell, Tryon BOC Rep; and Jeff Fissel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Allan Casavant

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Fatland, Ex-Officio Treasurer; Meg Rogers, Secretary; and Michelle Newman, TDDA Downtown Director

Approve Minutes from August 7, 2023

Vining had sent a request to Secretary Rogers for amendment of the August 7, 2023 minutes on page 3. Amended minutes from the August 7, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed.. Fissel made a motion to approve the August 7, 2023 regular meeting minutes as amended. Vining seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Approve Corrected Financial Report for July 2023 and Financial Report for August 2023

The Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-24 amended financial report for July 2023 and the FY 2023-2024 financial report for August 2023 were presented by Ex Officio Treasurer Fatland.

Fatland explained that the Town of Tryon had corrected the Tryon Tourism Development Financial Report to reflect the accrual method which moved occupancy taxes collected by vendors during the month of June 2023 to FY 2022-2023 which ended on June 30, 2023. Therefore all occupancy taxes remitted to the Town in July 2023 (\$2,367.64) were moved to FY 2022-2023, leaving \$0.00 for the July 2023 occupancy tax revenue line item. Also, \$2,500 was added to the Tryon Tourism Development budget as expense for Capital Outlay for the new electric vehicle charging station at Depot Plaza in downtown Tryon as the Tryon Tourism Development Fund share for the project. The Town of Tryon was also paying a share for the project. An appropriation from Fund Balance was added to the budgeted revenue to balance the amended budget at a total of \$30,500. Amended FY 2023-2024 Tourism Development Fund revenues as of July 31, 2023 totaled \$0.00. FY 2023-2024 Tourism Development Fund expenditures as of July 31, 2023 totaled \$1,293.60. Fund balance as of July 31, 2023 was \$63,499.26.

Tryon Tourism Development Fund Total Revenues as of August 31, 2023 were \$2,399.90. FY 2023-2024 Tourism Development Fund expenditures as of August 31, 2023 totaled \$2,970.75. Fund balance as of August 31, 2023 was \$ 64,224.41.

Vining asked if the new electric vehicle charging stations could be added to the online GPS mapping sites.

Newman asked about budget appropriation for advertising grants, since awards had been approved at the last meeting - \$500 for Tryon Fine Arts Center and \$2,500 for Tryon International Film Festival. It was recommended to budget a total of \$5,000 for grants in FY 2023-2024. Crowell made a motion to amend the Tryon Tourism Development Fund budget to allocate \$5,000 for advertising grants. Vining seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Newman gave a brief update on Tryon Downtown Development Association(TDDA) promotions, events and advertising partnership opportunities. Currently Tryon Tourism did not have any advertising on VRBO or AirBnB websites but was doing Facebook posts and ads.

Fissel made a motion to approve the amended financial report for July 2023 as amended and to approve the financial report for August 2023 as presented.. Vining seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Saluda Grade Trail Update

Newman reported that Tryon Town Officials would be meeting with the Saluda Grade Trail steering group on September 12, 2023. Future meetings were planned with property owners and an open meeting was planned for October at Polk County High School.

The Town of Tryon Saluda Grade Committee had been created and the last at-large member had been appointed. Members would include TDDA Director Michelle Newman, Parks Committee Representative Vard Henry, Tourism Development Chairman Maria Manson-Freeman, Town Manager Jim Fatland and Commissioner Bill Crowell. and others. Regular meeting dates for the new municipal advisory committee would be established after the first meeting.

The Authority briefly discussed the Saluda Grade Trail project's progress so far and the local resistance.

Website & Social Media

Tracey Daniels' printed website and social media reports for August and September were reviewed;

Social Media Status Report-ExploreTryon Facebook Page (for last 30 days)

- 3-5 posts per week; tourism focused,
- 6 new followers in August and 6 new followers in September)
- Average post reach 3,558 in August, 3,790 in September
- Post engagement August-386 (likes, shares, comments, etc) and 132 Links to website
September 402 (likes shares, comments, etc) and 200 clicks to website
- Most liked posts – August & September = Summer Tracks and Fourth Friday

Website

• BUSINESS CHANGES & UPDATES IN AUGUST

Added or updated the following:

- Salon & Rhylee Boutique (update)
- All Good Things Bakery (update)
- Tryon Bottle (updated hours)

SEO backend – updating listing wordings and searchable terms

Miscellaneous

- Answered incoming questions (August & September)

- Answered incoming questions regarding grant forms/submissions (August & September)
- Webinar for Canva update with JB Media (tourism angle) (August & September)
- Researched information on changing design of event calendar (August & September)
- Attended Tryon meeting with TDDA, History Museum, and Historic Preservation Committee representing Tryon Tourism Authority (August)
- Attended County Tourism Meeting (September 12, 2023)
- Coordinated with County regarding Earl Scruggs Festival promos (September)
- Scheduled BEST OF FOOTHILLS social media content for Tryon Businesses (September)

Newman told the Authority members that she and Daniels were sharing control of the ExploreTryon Instagram and Facebook accounts.

SWOT Analysis Update – Work Plan Assignments

Newman updated the Authority on upcoming projects, promotions and events in conjunction with TDDA. Monthly networking coffee events were planned for the second Tuesday of each month at 9 am to 10 am at various locations. September 12, 2023 coffee would be held at Wild Petunias. Election of a new Dog Mayor was scheduled for September 22, 2023 to coincide with Tryon 4th Friday in September. A native plant sale was also to be held on McCown Street that day. Halloween Stroll was scheduled for Tuesday, October 31, 2023. TDDA's 12th annual BeerFest was scheduled for November 3, 2023 with a "High Noon" theme. Small Business Saturday events were being planned for November 25, 2023. Christmas Stroll was scheduled for December 1, 2023 to include live music and lighting of the Town's Christmas tree. Tryon Fire Department Christmas Parade was scheduled for December 13, 2023. Tryon Midnight event was scheduled for December 31, 2023. TDDA was looking for volunteers for all the listed events and would welcome any Tryon Tourism Development Authority assistance. Cooperative advertising at the BeerFest was suggested. Assistance with decorations for the holiday season was suggested. High School Service Clubs were suggested as possible sources of event volunteers. Other promotional ideas were discussed briefly. Newman wanted to get the Tryon Farmers Market going again. The recommended location for the farmers market was McCown Street on a mid-week day. Tuesday was suggested. Fissel told the Board that music festivals generated lots of traffic and overnight stays at Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC). TIEC was sending overflow to AirBnB. Ways to generate publicity and grow local festivals were discussed briefly.

Other

AirBnB and VRBO advertising – Vining asked that AirBnB and VRBO advertising be added to the October 2, 2023 meeting agenda for further discussion.

Yearlong Theme – Vining asked Newman if TDDA had tried promotion using a year-long theme. such as the "Year of the Trail." Vining suggested such an annual theme could help focus the promotional efforts. Vining suggested trying it to see if it would work for Tryon.

Confirm Date for Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was confirmed for Monday, October 2, 2023 at 4:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

Adjourn

Fissel made a motion to adjourn. Crowell seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by a vote of 4 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Prepared by



Meg Rogers
Secretary

Approved:



Marie Mason-Freeman
Chairman