

Tryon Tourism Development Authority
Minutes
October 6, 2025
4:30 P.M.

Chairman Siler called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm at the Tryon Town Hall with three members present. Mason-Freeman arrived at 4:35 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Siler, Chairman; Maria Mason-Freeman, Vice-Chairman; John Vining; and Jennifer Mathews

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Crowell, Tryon BOC Rep; and Melanie Jackson;

STAFF PRESENT: Meg Rogers, Secretary; and Lourdes Gutierrez, Tryon Downtown Development Association (TDDA) Downtown Director;

Approve Minutes from September 8, 2025

Minutes from the September 8, 2025 regular meeting were reviewed. Gutierrez asked that the \$4,500 amount allocated for the electronic interactive kiosk on page 1 be corrected to read \$14,500. Jackson made a motion to approve the September 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes as corrected. Vining seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Approve Financial Report for September 2025

The Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2025-2026 financial report for September 2025 was reviewed.

As of September 30, 2025, FY 2025-2026 Total Revenue was \$5,917.30 (29.59% of Amended Budgeted Total Revenues), Total Expenditures were \$19,208.49 (41.76% of Amended Budgeted Total Expenditures), and (Unaudited) Ending Cash Balance was \$32,223.43.

Gutierrez reported that the money recently allocated for the interactive kiosk and print ads were well-spent. The magazine ad would come out in October 2025. Gutierrez would e-mail a link to the digital version of the *Food & Travel* magazine when published. Gutierrez distributed handouts that included a Pour Tour map and the ad layout.

Vining made a motion to approve the September 2025 financial report as presented. Mason-Freeman seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Movie Showings in December

Vining had suggested asking the makers of the locally-filmed movie, "Christmas in Mistletoe", to consider additional showings of the movie in Tryon in December. The film would be premiering at the 2025 Tryon International Film Festival on October 9-12, 2025 where three showings were scheduled. Vining suggested a special ticket deal where parents purchase adult tickets but their children get in free. Gutierrez offered to check with Tryon Theatre and Tryon International Film Festival staff about the additional showings in December.

TDB Holiday Campaign Sponsorship

Chairman Siler briefly reviewed information provided about sponsorships for a Tryon Daily Bulletin (TDB) "Shop Local for the Holidays" campaign. The Authority briefly discussed the sponsorship levels

– half-page ad with Premium Sponsorship for \$1195 or one-eighth page ad with Presenting Sponsorship for \$535. TDB distribution of 25,000 that included print and online editions was not considered as reaching out far enough to promote tourism. Advertising specifically reaching out to Atlanta, GA or Wilmington, NC was considered more effective. A simple ad in the TDB's monthly publication, "Life in our Foothills" with a QR code linking to the ExploreTryon website and social media would be more effective. The Authority voted 4 to 0 against purchasing a sponsorship in the "Shop Local for the Holidays" campaign. Gutierrez would get quotes for TDB or Life in our Foothills ads for the December issues for the November Authority meeting.

Kiosk Update

Gutierrez reported that the deposit for the downtown plaza interactive kiosk was sent to the manufacturer. She stated that the kiosk would probably not be installed in time for the December 5, 2025 Christmas Stroll or before Christmas.

Pour Tour Marketing Materials Funding

The Pour Tour finalized logo design was included in Tracey Daniels monthly report packet. Pour Tour map and ad copy was handed out by Gutierrez. Current stops included KD's Sea Shack, Throwbax Bar & Grill, Sagrada Lounge & Kitchen, Brooks Tavern, The Tryon Bottle, Side Street Pizza & Pasta, Livery Pourhouse, The Fitzgerald Lounge, and Mirrorball Studio Lounge. The map would be updated regularly at the online landing page accessed from the QR code on the marketing materials. Pour Tour swag (postcard stickers) would be handed out at TDDA's 2025 BeerFest on November 1, 2025 to out-of-town visitors. Selling PourTour themed products to raise promotion funds was suggested. Chairman Siler asked about legality of fundraising by the Authority to fund more promotion. Secretary Rogers stated that the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was created by North Carolina legislation and Town of Tryon ordinance to oversee the spending of occupancy taxes collected according to the restrictions set by the State. Authority fundraising activities and revenues might cause accounting problems because of different funding restrictions. Gutierrez told the Authority that tee-shirts would be sold at BeerFest by TDDA. Gutierrez stated the Pour Tour stickers would be inexpensive and she would send stickers pricing information to Tracey Daniels. Mason-Freeman asked if there would be stickers left over to mail out to folks outside the local area. Prizes for visitors who visited all Pour Tour locations were discussed. Gutierrez stated that each location would have a rubber stamp to mark the visitor's Pour Tour card. The prizes proposed included a patch or an etched glass. Mason-Freeman suggested a new design for the patch/etched glass each year to stimulate collection of a new design each year. Providing a discount coupon for second visit to a Pour Tour business was suggested. Siler and Mason-Freeman asked about the feasibility of a cell-phone app and digital stamps to track Pour Tour participants.

Saluda Grade Trail Update

No report. Gutierrez was scheduled to attend next Saluda Grade Trail Committee meeting and would provide an update in November, 2025.

Website & Social Media

Tracey Daniels was not present but had submitted a printed report. The printed report was reviewed.

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

- 8-10 posts per week; tourism focused
- Most Liked Posts:
 - Fitzgerald's Witches event post
 - First Peak "Things to Do" post (shared)
 - Pourhouse special football hours
 - TACS Earth and Anvil fundraising dinner

Website Update

- Worked on SEO for business listings, wording updates.
- Participated in Zoom meeting with Big Boom, Tim Daniels, and Lourdes Gutierrez to kick-off website project
- Drafted letter to be shared with residents and business owners asking for input to the website wish-list (per Tracie Greenway-Morris Board of Commissioners meeting request)
- Added Pour Tour page (see list of work items below)

Miscellaneous

- Answered 5 incoming travel tourism e-mail questions and referred along to direct contacts
- Reminder: OUR STATE re Tryon December toy feature article on Wednesday, August 5, 2025

• **TRYON POUR TOUR**

- Worked with volunteer graphic designer, Kim Nelson, on final logo image
- Worked with Gutierrez to design ad to announce Pour Tour and connect to Beer Fest (October ad)
- Designed temporary Pour Tour website page dedicated to tour
 - Worked on menu bar on top of page and formatting
 - Collected business information for listings
 - Added NINE Pour Tour stops (business listings, photos, descriptions, website links, address, e-mail, social media links)
 - Worked with Tim Daniels to create updated, downloadable map of Pour Tour stops
 - Designed, Customized "Morris" Pour Tour stamp and placed order for first sample, will order 10 more for stops once approved
- NEXT STEPS/IN THE WORKS:
 - Soft launch (currently LIVE on website)
 - Creating promotional postcards, stickers, and more to distribute at the BeerFest; VIP section will have these on tables, full BeerFest will have access to promotional items, too
 - FINAL Pour Tour logo image distributed

SWOT Analysis Update – Work Plan Discussion

No discussion. Jackson informed the Authority that a Melrose Avenue long-term rental property was reported to be transitioned to three short-term rental units in the near future. Mason-Freeman reported that an equestrian event in November had increased the bookings of local vacation rental units. Gutierrez asked the members to bring ideas for promotion to the next meeting.

Other

County Tourism Funding Request – Siler stated he was trying to set up a meeting with Polk County Tourism Development Director Melinda Massey regarding the procedure for local governments to request funds for tourism promotion projects.

Downtown Toy Soldier Repaint – Vining suggested that the wooden toy soldier in downtown Tryon needed to be repainted and refreshed. Siler suggested presenting the need at a Rotary Club meeting. It was suggested that Tryon Arts & Crafts School or the Polk County Schools Interact Club might provide volunteers to caulk and paint the toy soldier. Mayor Alan Peoples originally donated the toy soldier to the Town. Gutierrez would reach out to Mayor Peoples regarding maintenance concerns.

Oil Tank Murals – Vining asked for an update on the proposal to put a mural or wrap image on the oil tanks adjacent to the Saluda Grade Trail route near Side Street Pizza. Wrap would cost less than sandblast and primer and painted mural, but the surface would still have to be smooth to prevent damage to the wrap material. Vining offered to pay a designer to prepare a design for a wrap. Chairman Siler would check on the expected lifespan of the wrap material. A well-designed wrap would be visible from the Saluda Grade Trail and provide another photo-op site for visitors. The Authority members asked if a joint meeting with the Tryon Downtown Development Association (TDDA) would be helpful. Gutierrez would check into that request and suggested an alternative of a TDDA delegation attending a future Tourism Authority regular meeting.

Christmas Committee – Formation of a committee to plan Christmas activities for visitors was suggested. Ideas for visitor activities included an attractive sleigh on the plaza for photos, app for capturing posted photos during Tryon Annual Christmas Stroll, choirs on a downtown stage during the Christmas Stroll, addition of horse & buggy rides (very popular at past events), and selling themed blankets at the stroll. Long lines for popular activities could be a problem for activities like horse & buggy rides.

Confirm Date for Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was scheduled for Monday, November 3, 2025 at 4:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room. Vining stated he would be unable to attend the November meeting.

Adjourn

Siler made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Mason-Freeman. Meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Prepared by



Meg Rogers
Secretary

Approved:



Steven Siler
Chairman