TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 12, 2026

Present: Members: Chair Tim Crabtree, Steve Crabtree, Heather Dombroskie, Hannah Edwards, Guy Gooder, Daniel Lawton, Colin McGinnis, and Rob Reale.

Absent: Heather Childress

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Robbie Tompa, Councilman
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Darlene Asher – Macon Transit

1. Call to Order- Chair Tim Crabtree

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of the September 14, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2026 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8 -0.

3. Financial Reports- ending August 31, 2026

Chair Tim Crabtree presented the Financial Report through the end of August 2026. The total collections for August were $18,723.14 (2nd highest July on record and above the 10-year average). Total expenses, thus far, for current FY 2026/2027 are $36,694.64 leaving a balance of (-$38.53) and $183,405.65 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Heather Dombroskie to approve the financial reports ending August 31 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

4. New Business

A.) New Application for Consideration – Macon County Transit – Hiker Route – March through May 2027 – Request amount $6,000

Darlene Asher, Macon County Transit Director, submitted an application for funding for their Hiker Route. She stated that they advertise in the Hiker guide, print flyers, social media and on the side of the bus. She also noted that the cost of gas, tires and salaries have increased. In 2025, they transported 940 hikers to Franklin and in 2026 they transported 1,729. Last year there was no cost to hikers to ride the bus (the fare was paid by donors). This item will be voted on at the November meeting.

There was additional discussion on the $8, 000 “other advertising line” and the need for additional clarification.

B.) New Application for Consideration – Crabtree Family Enterprises – 13th Annual Ruby Drop – December 31, 2026 – Requested amount $6,500

Tim Crabtree, Crabtree Family Enterprises, submitted an application for funding of the 13th Annual Ruby Drop. They will once again hold two (2) drops – 9 p.m. and 12 a.m. Mr. Crabtree noted that this year they plan to rent a large tent to be placed on Iotla Street and plan to get tables and heaters. This item will be voted on at the November meeting.

5. Items from the Board

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Social Media Post and Ads
  - 12 Social Media post and 5 Paid Ads
  - Facebook – 169 new followers
  - Instagram – 280 new followers
- Website
  - More than 19,000 users
  - Top Pages for views
    - Home Page & Event/PumpkinFest
  - Top Pages for engagement
    - Fall in Franklin blog & Places to Stay
- Google Searches (2.71K Clicks & 220K Impressions)
- Email/Newsletter Performance
  - 14.4 % Open rate & 5.7% Click rate
- Media Relations
  - Active Pitches – PumpkinFest, Fall, The Naturalist & 828 Treasure Quest
- Next Steps
  - Fall
  - My 10 Reasons to Visit Franklin, NC – photographer campaign
  - Nov – Winter Promotions (Veterans Day, Winder Wonderland & Ruby Drop)
  - Travel guide is out – will look into a reprint

Mr. Stewart also gave a summary of the recent Travel Writers Conference he attended. He also discussed the Familiarization Tour for influencers; noting the TDA could partner with the TDC to cover this cost to bring influencers to Franklin.

B.) Report from TDA Subcommittee

Colin McGinnis discussed splitting up the projects that the subcommittee had developed. He will send out an email to all TDA members with the list of projects. He would like TDA members to sign up for projects they would like to support and assist with. The subcommittee will meet again the last week of October.

There was discussion on downtown banner replacements.

C.) Other items from the TDA Board

Chair Tim Crabtree read the TDA by-laws (Article 2) and the NC General Statue regarding TDA funding. He said that tourism encompasses more than "heads in beds" and that the Franklin TDA satisfies the two thirds rule for marketing with the funds that are paid to Stewart Communication.

Member Rob Reale inquired about when the new application would start. Chair Crabtree said possibly in January; there needs to be a vote on the new application next month.

6. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, November 9, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7. Adjourn

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

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Tim Crabtree, Chair

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Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk