

Franklin Tourism Development Authority

Agenda

April 13, 2026

5:30 p.m.

- 1.) **Call to Order – Chair Tim Crabtree**
- 2.) **Approval of the March 9, 2026 regular meeting minutes** **Pages 2 – 8**
- 3.) **Financial Reports – ending February 28, 2026** **Pages 9 - 12**
- 4.) **New Business**
 - A.) **Post-Event Report –Taste of Scotland Celtic Festival
Separate Notebook for Review at Meeting** **Page 13**
 - B.) **Application for Consideration – Taste of Scotland Society
Taste of Scotland Celtic Festival – June 19 – 21, 2026
Requested Amount - \$3,000** **Pages 14 - 18**
 - C.) **Application for Consideration – Jodi House Moses
Mountain Roots Blue Grass Festival – May 23, 2026
Requested Amount - \$3,500** **Pages 19 - 25**
 - D.) **Vote on Application – The Special Liberty Project
Healing Hope Retreat for Military Widows – Date not posted
Requested Amount - \$7,500** **Pages 26 - 34**
 - E.) **Vote on Application – Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center
Sweet Carolina Music Festival – May 2, 2026
Requested Amount - \$8,000** **Pages 35 - 39**
- 5.) **Items from the Board**
 - A.) **Marketing Report – Stewart Communications** **Page 40**
 - B.) **Proposed River Stewardship Charter – Member Angela Martin** **Pages 41 - 51**
 - C.) **Proposed Budget for FY 2026/2027** **Pages 52 - 55**

6.) Announcements:

- A.) The next regularly scheduled TDA meeting is Monday, May 11, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7.) Adjourn



Agenda Item – Tourism Development Authority

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 2

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Minutes from March 9, 2026 regular meeting

Suggested Motion: If favorable – accept the minutes from the March 9, 2026 regular meeting as presented.

Attachments: Yes X No

Action Taken: _____

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2026

Present: Members: Chair Tim Crabtree, Town Manager Amie Owens, Heather Childress Custer, Hannah Edwards, Colin McGinnis, Rob Reale, and Heather Dombroskie (joined via phone).

Absent: Kevin Covell and Guy Gooder.

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications

1. **Call to Order- Chair Tim Crabtree**

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

2. **Approval of the February 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2026 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7 -0.

3. **Financial Reports- ending January 31, 2026**

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of January 2026. She noted that occupancy tax collected in December 2025 was \$12,027.75 (2nd highest December on record and above the 10-year average) and in January 2026 was \$8,769.74 (3rd highest January on record and above the 10-year average). Total expenses thus far \$ \$93,091.83 leaving a balance of \$86,908.17 and \$174,964.66 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Collin McGinnis made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to approve the financial reports ending January 31, 2026 as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7 -0.

4. **New Business**

A.) **Post-Event Report – The Special Liberty Project**

Jessica Merritt, Executive Director, gave a post- event report on the funds received from the TDA last year. They received \$2,000 and were able to sponsor 2 military widows for their Healing Hope Retreat last July.

B.) **New Application for Consideration – The Special Liberty Project Healing Hope Retreat for Military Widows – Date not posted – Requested amount - \$7,500**

Jessica Merritt, Executive Director of The Special Liberty Project, presented an application for funding for the 2026 Military Healing Hope Retreat for Military Widows. The event cost is \$12,000 and the requested amount is \$7,500. Ms. Merritt stated that the women who attend these retreats are brought into Town and some of them return on their own at later dates with their families. This item will be voted on at the April meeting.

C.) **New Application for Consideration – Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center Sweet Carolina Music Festival- May 2, 2026 – Requested amount \$8,000**

Kellie Burns and Pam Bowen presented an application for funding for the Sweet Carolina Music Festival, to benefit the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center, to be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026. The requested amount was originally \$5,000, but an increase was requested to \$8,000. They noted John Morgan will headline again this year, along with other artists. They also plan to increase the number of food truck

vendors. Ms. Burns noted that last year they raised \$28,000 for the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center. This item will be voted on at the April meeting.

D.) Vote on Application – Macon County Transit – Appalachian Trail Shuttle Service – March 4 through May 27, 2026 – Requested amount \$6,000

Darlene Asher, Macon County Transit Director, submitted an application for funding for the “hiker route”. The requested amount is \$6,000.

Member Rob Reale asked if the print media include the TDA sponsorship information. It was noted that there were no sponsors advertised on their print media.

Member Heather Childress Custer stated that this route was a good service for the Town.

Member Colin McGinnis said it was wrong not to support, but there is a need for more transparency.

Member Rob Reale made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to fund \$1,000 for the Appalachian Trail Shuttle Service. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

E.) Post-Event Report – New Years Eve Ruby Drop

Tim Crabtree, Crabtree Family Enterprises, gave a post-event report on the Annual New Years Eve Ruby Drop. He noted that the event was close to the budgeted amount, it was a good event, there were no issues with the social district, and next year they hope add additional food trucks.

5. **Items from the Board**

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications, gave his monthly marketing report:

- Social Media
 - Facebook followers – campaign to grow followers
- Current ads/ad views
- Media relations
- Website (more than 11,000 visitors)
 - Increase engagement
 - Build asset files (pictures/videos)
 - Increase website functionality
 - Cost around \$5000
 - Add chatbot, interactive trip tools, maps

B.) Recap of Town Council Meeting – Agreement with NC Dept of Commerce and Agreement with McAdams for Main Street Redesign – Town Manager Amie Owens and/or Councilman Robbie Tompa

Town Manager Amie Owens explained the two projects/plans. The NC Department of Commerce Economic Development project is a free program. The Main Street Redesign project is a multiphase/cost project. There will be some overlap.

C.) Sub-Committee Update

Chair Tim Crabtree said the plan is to meet monthly to discuss the larger/long term projects.

Member Rob Reale asked of the TDA could host their own events. Town Manager Owens will check on this.

D.) Other

Paul Thatcher, Franklin Terrace Bed and Breakfast Owner, asked if he could be given a few minutes to speak. He had concerns about the decrease in the annual gem show crowds (lack of reservations at his bed and breakfast) since Hurricane Helene. He inquired about additional advertising.

6. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7. Adjourn

Member Colin McGinnis made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

Timothy Crabtree, Chairperson

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk

Month	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014	FY 2014-2015	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019
July	\$14,609.25	\$13,523.75	\$12,199.87	\$12,074.19	\$12,933.83	\$14,781.99	\$16,490.96	\$16,483.17	\$15,894.85
August	\$10,802.81	\$9,436.83	\$10,574.60	\$10,142.03	\$11,288.22	\$10,743.41	\$12,801.13	\$15,268.63	\$12,353.78
September	\$9,825.43	\$8,981.30	\$11,900.99	\$9,362.51	\$9,523.55	\$10,624.11	\$11,754.89	\$14,815.74	\$14,636.43
October	\$13,997.93	\$13,580.58	\$13,809.73	\$13,204.00	\$13,826.66	\$15,955.17	\$19,377.43	\$18,874.81	\$18,173.60
November	\$5,868.77	\$5,767.06	\$6,100.84	\$6,611.03	\$6,311.47	\$7,439.21	\$8,790.32	\$9,873.21	\$13,471.11
December	\$4,501.02	\$4,718.42	\$4,746.80	\$5,173.04	\$5,500.33	\$6,574.55	\$6,879.39	\$8,375.77	\$7,878.56
January	\$4,267.06	\$3,884.80	\$3,742.12	\$4,299.16	\$4,398.08	\$5,152.86	\$6,243.12	\$5,137.19	\$3,999.90
February	\$4,902.24	\$4,085.65	\$4,746.80	\$4,471.66	\$4,919.27	\$5,152.04	\$4,546.77	\$5,404.38	\$6,630.27
March	\$5,824.17	\$5,424.68	\$7,111.54	\$7,875.74	\$6,695.48	\$7,336.92	\$7,233.81	\$8,649.55	\$10,302.99
April	\$7,615.57	\$6,997.08	\$7,814.07	\$7,796.15	\$9,098.44	\$10,186.71	\$11,146.26	\$11,234.35	\$10,830.29
May	\$9,638.25	\$9,306.44	\$10,079.92	\$9,554.36	\$11,368.53	\$11,844.69	\$12,413.42	\$12,024.60	\$14,666.32
June	\$9,781.24	\$9,738.55	\$9,166.06	\$9,084.51	\$11,097.29	\$11,603.51	\$12,131.45	\$12,313.74	\$14,915.56
Totals:	\$101,633.74	\$95,445.14	\$101,993.34	\$99,648.38	\$106,961.15	\$117,395.17	\$129,808.95	\$138,455.14	\$143,753.66
Month	FY 2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY2025-2026	Comments	10 year average
July	\$17,886.04	\$10,041.66	\$19,844.89	\$19,505.33	\$20,240.73	\$16,996.76	\$ 16,844.68	Above Avg; below previous 4 yrs	\$16,463.66
August	\$14,413.61	\$12,113.26	\$14,807.56	\$19,036.53	\$13,498.54	\$14,874.97	\$ 17,023.38	2nd highest; above average	\$13,745.42
September	\$12,866.27	\$11,026.88	\$15,164.14	\$17,939.80	\$15,579.41	\$15,903.02	\$ 16,927.28	2nd highest; above average	\$13,621.29
October	\$19,422.94	\$16,212.69	\$18,302.14	\$25,726.85	\$18,956.17	\$23,391.35	\$ 19,631.27	3rd highest; above average	\$18,929.07
November	\$10,692.08	\$9,202.11	\$14,285.57	\$14,836.36	\$16,668.76	\$15,022.50	\$ 18,458.96	Includes late payment from Oct - \$4,261.56; above average	\$11,508.43
December	\$7,013.79	\$6,079.70	\$11,423.43	\$11,503.51	\$12,879.95	\$10,102.09	\$ 12,027.75	2nd highest; above average	\$8,564.64
January	\$6,966.05	\$6,514.55	\$8,193.43	\$10,562.53	\$6,694.79	\$11,129.64	\$ 8,769.74	3rd highest; above average	\$6,817.47
February	\$6,479.11	\$6,328.60	\$8,862.11	\$8,900.44	\$7,764.10	\$8,474.67			\$6,678.34
March	\$4,085.98	\$9,189.78	\$13,973.25	\$13,903.25	\$10,640.82	\$15,940.74			\$9,813.87
April	\$707.20	\$14,346.44	\$16,311.64	\$14,428.14	\$14,456.82	\$15,576.98			\$11,665.75
May	\$4,265.21	\$16,649.89	\$14,899.46	\$19,148.76	\$14,634.68	\$14,698.74			\$13,328.57
June	\$11,137.06	\$16,794.03	\$19,839.83	\$16,077.48	\$19,806.29	\$18,609.36			\$14,938.69
Totals:	\$115,935.34	\$134,499.59	\$175,907.45	\$191,568.98	\$171,821.06	\$180,720.82	\$109,683.06		

Exhibit A

TDA BUDGET ORDINANCE FY 2025-2026

	Total Budgeted	Expenditures	Encumbrances	Balance
Advertising & Marketing	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 79,416.83	\$ -	\$ 50,583.17
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$ 3,800.00			
Stewart Communications - marketing and advertising	\$ 75,616.83		\$ 53,383.17	
Audit & Bond	\$ 3,650.00	\$ 875.00	\$ 2,775.00	\$ 2,775.00
Martin Starnes - audit Quarterly payment	\$	\$ 875.00	\$ 2,425.00	
Bond for Finance Officer - annual payment			\$ 350.00	
Festivals & Events	\$ 31,125.00	\$ 12,800.00		\$ 18,325.00
Tribal Vibes Promotions - Annual Come Together Festival	\$ 1,000.00			
Macon County Farmers Market	\$ 5,000.00			
Outdoor 76 - The Naturalist 50/100K	\$ 1,600.00			
Crabtree Family Ent - Ruby Drop	\$ 4,000.00			
Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council	\$ 1,200.00			
Undesignated/Miscellaneous	\$ 15,225.00	\$ 0.00		\$ 15,225.00
Totals:	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 93,091.83	\$ 2,775.00	\$ 86,908.17
Tim Crabtree, Chair				
Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk				

Exhibit
A

Room Occupancy Tax Report	
1/31/2026	
FY 2025/2026 Budget	\$180,000.00
7/31/2025	\$16,844.68
8/31/2025	\$17,023.38
9/30/2025	\$16,927.28
10/31/2025	\$19,631.27
11/30/2025	\$18,458.96
12/31/2025	\$12,027.75
1/31/2026	\$8,769.74
2/28/2026	
3/31/2026	
4/30/2026	
5/31/2026	
6/30/2026	
Net Collections:	\$109,683.06
Budgeted Expenses:	
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$800.00
Macon County Farmer's Market	\$5,000.00
Tribal Vibes Promotions	\$1,000.00
Stewart Communications	\$11,330.64
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Stewart Communications	\$11,932.45
Outdoor 76 - The Naturalist	\$1,600.00
Stewart Communications	\$9,615.91
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$800.00
Stewart Communications	\$13,688.61
Crabtree Family Ent - Ruby Drop	\$4,000.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Stewart Communications	\$6,229.16
Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA - audit	\$875.00
Stewart Communications	\$15,362.03
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$600.00
Stewart Communications	\$7,458.03
Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council	\$1,200.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 93,091.83
Collections (minus) - Expenses	\$16,591.23
TDA FUND BALANCE:	\$174,964.66

Exhibit A



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 3

Department/Agency: Financials

Subject Matter: February 2026 Financial Reports

- 16-year comparison month to month occupancy tax collections
- Budget spreadsheet with expenditures
- Monthly report with collections versus expenditures

Suggested Motion: If favorable – accept financial reports ending February 28, 2026, as presented.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____

Month	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014	FY 2014-2015	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019
July	\$14,609.25	\$13,523.75	\$12,199.87	\$12,074.19	\$12,933.83	\$14,781.99	\$16,490.96	\$16,483.17	\$15,894.85
August	\$10,802.81	\$9,436.83	\$10,574.60	\$10,142.03	\$11,288.22	\$10,743.41	\$12,801.13	\$15,268.63	\$12,353.78
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June	\$9,781.24	\$9,738.55	\$9,166.06	\$9,084.51	\$11,097.29	\$11,603.51	\$12,131.45	\$12,313.74	\$14,915.56
Totals:	\$101,633.74	\$95,445.14	\$101,993.34	\$99,648.38	\$106,961.15	\$117,395.17	\$129,808.95	\$138,455.14	\$143,753.66
Month	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	Comments	10 year average
July	\$17,886.04	\$10,041.66	\$19,844.89	\$19,505.33	\$20,240.73	\$16,996.76	\$ 16,844.68	Above Avg; below previous 4 yrs	\$16,463.66
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September	\$12,866.27	\$11,026.88	\$15,164.14	\$17,939.80	\$15,579.41	\$15,903.02	\$ 16,927.28	2nd highest; above average	\$13,621.29
October	\$19,422.94	\$16,212.69	\$18,302.14	\$25,726.85	\$18,956.17	\$23,391.35	\$ 19,631.27	3rd highest; above average	\$18,929.07
November	\$10,692.08	\$9,202.11	\$14,285.57	\$14,836.36	\$16,668.76	\$15,022.50	\$ 18,458.96	Includes late payment from Oct - \$4,261.56; above average	\$11,508.43
December	\$7,013.79	\$6,079.70	\$11,423.43	\$11,503.51	\$12,879.95	\$10,102.09	\$ 12,027.75	2nd highest; above average	\$8,564.64
January	\$6,966.05	\$6,514.55	\$8,193.43	\$10,562.53	\$6,694.79	\$11,129.64	\$ 10,838.80	2nd highest; above average - Jan payment made in Feb added back \$2069.06	\$6,817.47
February	\$6,479.11	\$6,328.60	\$8,862.11	\$8,900.44	\$7,764.10	\$8,474.67	\$ 10,042.76	Highest on Record	\$6,678.34
March	\$4,085.98	\$9,189.78	\$13,973.25	\$13,903.25	\$10,640.82	\$15,940.74	\$ 9,813.87		\$9,813.87
April	\$707.20	\$14,346.44	\$16,311.64	\$14,428.14	\$14,456.82	\$15,576.98	\$ 11,665.75		\$11,665.75
May	\$4,265.21	\$16,649.89	\$14,899.46	\$19,148.76	\$14,634.68	\$14,698.74	\$ 13,328.57		\$13,328.57
June	\$11,137.06	\$16,794.03	\$19,839.83	\$16,077.48	\$19,806.29	\$18,609.36	\$ 14,938.69		\$14,938.69
Totals:	\$115,935.34	\$134,499.59	\$175,907.45	\$191,568.98	\$171,821.06	\$180,720.82	\$121,794.88		

TDA BUDGET ORDINANCE FY 2025-2026

	Total Budgeted	Expenditures	Encumbrances	Balance
Advertising & Marketing	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 87,112.87	\$ -	\$ 42,887.13
Allison Outdoor Advertising		\$ 4,200.00		
Stewart Communications - marketing and advertising		\$82,912.87	\$46,087.13	
Audit & Bond	\$ 3,650.00	\$ 875.00	\$ 2,775.00	\$ 2,775.00
Martin Starnes - audit Quarterly payment		\$ 875.00	\$ 2,425.00	
Bond for Finance Officer - annual payment			\$ 350.00	
Festivals & Events	\$ 31,125.00	\$13,800.00		\$17,325.00
Tribal Vibes Promotions - Annual Come Together Festival		\$ 1,000.00		
Macon County Farmers Market		\$ 5,000.00		
Outdoor 76 - The Naturalist 50/100K		\$ 1,600.00		
Crabtree Family Ent - Ruby Drop		\$ 4,000.00		
Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council		\$ 1,200.00		
Macon County Transit - Hiker Route		\$ 1,000.00		
Undesignated/Miscellaneous	\$15,225.00	\$0.00		\$15,225.00
Totals:	\$ 180,000.00	\$101,787.87	\$2,775.00	\$78,212.13
Tim Crabtree, Chair				
Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk				

Room Occupancy Tax Report	
2/28/2026	
FY 2025/2026 Budget	\$180,000.00
7/31/2025	\$16,844.68
8/31/2025	\$17,023.38
9/30/2025	\$16,927.28
10/31/2025	\$19,631.27
11/30/2025	\$18,458.96
12/31/2025	\$12,027.75
1/31/2026	\$10,838.80
2/28/2026	\$10,042.76
3/31/2026	
4/30/2026	
5/31/2026	
6/30/2026	
Net Collections:	\$121,794.88
Budgeted Expenses:	
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$800.00
Macon County Farmer's Market	\$5,000.00
Tribal Vibes Promotions	\$1,000.00
Stewart Communications	\$11,330.64
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Stewart Communications	\$11,932.45
Outdoor 76 - The Naturalist	\$1,600.00
Stewart Communications	\$9,615.91
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$800.00
Stewart Communications	\$13,688.61
Crabtree Family Ent - Ruby Drop	\$4,000.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Stewart Communications	\$6,229.16
Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA - audit	\$875.00
Stewart Communications	\$15,362.03
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$600.00
Stewart Communications	\$7,458.03
Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council	\$1,200.00
Allison Outdoor Advertising	\$400.00
Macon County Transit - Hiker Route	\$1,000.00
Stewart Communications	\$7,296.04
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 101,787.87
Collections (minus) - Expenses	\$20,007.01
TDA FUND BALANCE:	\$174,964.66



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 4-A

Department/Agency: Taste of Scotland Society

Subject Matter: Application – Taste of Scotland

The Taste of Scotland Society, Inc. submitted a notebook for the post-event reporting. The TDA provided funding of \$1,500 in FY 2024-2025.

Suggested Motion: Received for information.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 4-B

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Application – Taste of Scotland

The Taste of Scotland Society, Inc. submitted an application for consideration of funding on April 2, 2025. The request is for \$3,000 to assist with the 27th Annual Taste of Scotland Festival June 19 - 21, 2026. The TDA provided funding of \$1,500 in FY 2024-2025.

Suggested Motion: Received for information – will vote at the May 2026 meeting.

Attachments: Yes X No

Action Taken: _____



Town of Franklin

Funds Request

Tourism Development Authority

P.O. Box 1479 • Franklin, North Carolina 28744 • (828) 524-2516

Due two months prior to regularly scheduled meeting where the request will be considered.

The Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin allots funds for the purpose of **PROMOTING TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN.**

Conditions of all funds allotments include:

- Subject to approval and availability of funds.
- Applicant recognizes the contribution made by the Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin through the use of the TDA/Franklin logo in all print media.
- Applicant utilizes the TDA/Franklin logo or tagline on all print media.

Only funding requests received two months prior to monthly TDA meetings will be considered.

For billboard requests, copy ready electronic proof must be submitted with request.

Billboard (s) Request Yes/No	(No)	Number of Billboards	Date of Event	June 20, 2026
Name of Organization	TASTE OF SCOTLAND SOCIETY			
Street or PO Box	PO BOX 2216	City, ST Zip	FRANKLIN NC 28744	
Representative	Lucy Thorne	Phone	e.gmail.com 828-226-6335	
E-mail	TASTE OF SCOTLAND FRANKLIN NC	Web Site	TASTE OF SCOTLAND.ORG	
Project Title	TASTE OF SCOTLAND CELTIC FESTIVAL		Project Date(s)	19-21 JUNE
Total Budgeted Cash Sources	\$ 29,200		TDA Request	\$ 300,000

The Project

Please describe your project and include the following paragraph headings:

- The event or purchase – what are you proposing to do?
- Marketing – how will you market the project (be specific)?
- Tourism Enhancement – how does the project enhance tourism in the Town of Franklin?
- Measurements – what tools will you use to measure the effectiveness / success of the project?
- Improvements – if you have done it before, what are you going to do to make it better?
- Net Cash Flow – how will you put to use any net cash flow generated by project?

We are hosting the 27th Annual Taste of Scotland Celtic Festival and Highland Games. We utilize Print Media - newspaper, Rack Cards, Posters, and Banners. We pull people from all over North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, and other states.

The festival helps Macon County by drawing in people from a wide area. While the people often eat at festival, many of them also eat in town, stay at a local hotel and/or make additional purchases in town.

We ask people their zip code, number in party and how they heard about us.

This year we are increasing of our ~~the~~ feature attractions by offering Birds of Prey from Georgia Mountain Falconry, and Viking Reenactors from Hall of the Mountain Horde. We did TV advertising on WLOS out of Asheville. Our spots were seen, but we had a hard time quantifying the results.

Project Budget

Insert or delete lines / columns in the table as needed and round to the nearest dollar.

	Current Year Budget	Prior Year Actual (if appropriate)
Sources of Cash:		
Your organization		
Town of Franklin TDA	3000	1500
Sponsorships <i>TDC</i>	5000	5000
Booth fees	3700	3575
Entry / other fees <i>SPONSORS</i>	6000	5830
Sales <i>tickets</i>	13000	12305.79
Other - specify	0	0
Total Sources of Cash	30,700	28210.79
Uses of Cash:		
Salaries, wages, taxes & benefits	0	0
Contracted services <i>MUSIC</i>	15,000	13209
Cost of merchandise sold	0	0
Rental of facilities (sanitation)	1275	1275
Rental of equipment	750	600
Expendable supplies	0	0
Printing		
Print media	5300	4782.96
Radio media	600	300
Other advertising – specify (digital marketing) <i>TV</i>	3500	3500
Other expenses - specify	4200	3651.20
Total Uses of Cash	39625	27318.16
Net Cash Flow	\$ 75.00	\$ 892.63

Hotel Rooms
Clean up
Insurance
Phone, tents
Sanitation
Miss Tartan
SCOUTS

I certify that any significant alterations in the project will be reported to this committee as soon as possible and that I will provide TDA with the required Project Report within thirty (30) days of the completion of the project.

Signature:

Title: President/ VP

Date:

Lucy Thorne

President

April 21, 2026



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 4-C

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Application – Mountain Roots Blue Grass Festival

The Mountain Roots Blue Grass Festival submitted an application for consideration on April 6, 2026. This is a new event and the first time requesting funds. Geographically, the event is held outside of the town limits; however, this event has partnerships with local occupancy tax collecting agencies in anticipation of attendance. The request is for \$3,500.

Suggested Motion: Received for information – will vote at the May 2026 meeting.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____



Town of Franklin

Funds Request

Tourism Development Authority

P.O. Box 1479 • Franklin, North Carolina 28744 • (828) 524-2516

Due two months prior to regularly scheduled meeting where the request will be considered.

The Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin allots funds for the purpose of **PROMOTING TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN.**

Conditions of all funds allotments include:

- Subject to approval and availability of funds.
- Applicant recognizes the contribution made by the Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin through the use of the TDA/Franklin logo in all print media.
- Applicant utilizes the TDA/Franklin logo or tagline on all print media.

Only funding requests received two months prior to monthly TDA meetings will be considered.

For billboard requests, copy ready electronic proof must be submitted with request.

Billboard (s) Request Yes/ No	Number of Billboards	Date of Event
Name of Organization	Mountain Roots Blue Grass Festival	5-23-26
Street or PO Box	4456 Highlands Rd	City, ST Zip Franklin NC 28734
Representative	Jodi House Moses	Phone 678-858-8033
E-mail	highlandsriverband.com	Web Site
Project Title	Mountain Roots Blue Grass	Project Date(s) 5-23-26
Total Budgeted Cash Sources	\$8900	TDA Request 3500

The Project

Please describe your project and include the following paragraph headings:

- The event or purchase – what are you proposing to do?
- Marketing – how will you market the project (be specific)?
- Tourism Enhancement – how does the project enhance tourism in the Town of Franklin?
- Measurements – what tools will you use to measure the effectiveness / success of the project?
- Improvements – if you have done it before, what are you going to do to make it better?
- Net Cash Flow – how will you put to use any net cash flow generated by project?

Mountain Roots Bluegrass Festival Grant Application

The Event or Purchase – What are you proposing to do?

The Mountain Roots Bluegrass Festival is a free, family-friendly community event hosted at Highlands Riverbend RV Resort & Cabins in Franklin, North Carolina. The festival will feature 65+ local vendors (currently full with a waitlist), 7 food trucks, and live bluegrass performances throughout the day. Vendor fees have been intentionally kept low at \$25 per booth to encourage participation and accessibility for local artisans and businesses. Vendor fees are used to fund our bluegrass bands, which represent our largest expense. These bands are also helping promote the event and attract out-of-state and out-of-county visitors. The event is held on privately owned land (8-acre venue at Highlands Riverbend with additional space through partnership with Heritage Garage Doors), with no facility rental costs. Cullasaja Fire Department will manage parking and traffic. This event is not for profit, but to support small businesses and provide a meaningful community experience.

Marketing – How will you market the project?

Our marketing strategy includes print, digital, and community outreach efforts: - 200 posters distributed across Western North Carolina and North Georgia - Magazine advertising (Laurel Magazine) - Radio advertising campaign - Facebook promotions and event marketing - Band promotion through their networks - Festival T-shirts for ongoing promotion - On-site banners with QR codes for engagement tracking Grant funds are being used specifically for advertising, printing, and promotional outreach.

Tourism Enhancement – How does the project enhance tourism?

This festival serves as a kickoff to the summer tourism season in Macon County. We have partnered with local hotels to offer festival rates, helping attract and track out-of-town visitors. The event encourages guests to explore Franklin, filling restaurants, lodging, and local businesses. By highlighting bluegrass music, local vendors, and Appalachian culture, we aim to position Franklin as a repeat destination for visitors.

Measurements – How will you measure success?

We will track success using: - QR code engagement tracking - Vendor surveys (sales performance and feedback) - Hotel participation and festival rate usage - Vehicle counts and attendance estimates - Data collection by assigned data clerk Survey participation will influence vendor priority for future events.

Improvements – What will you do to improve?

This is our first year, but we have systems in place for improvement: - Monthly committee meetings - Post-event recap and analysis - Vendor feedback integration - Emergency planning and volunteer coordination - Data-driven improvements for future growth Our goal is to build this into a signature annual event.

Net Cash Flow – How will funds be used?

We do not anticipate profit. Funds generated through T-shirt sales will cover event expenses including porta potties, volunteer meals, dumpsters, supplies, vendor badges, sound, and photography. Any remaining funds will be reinvested into improving future festivals and expanding marketing efforts.

Project Budget

Insert or delete lines / columns in the table as needed and round to the nearest dollar.

	Current Year Budget	Prior Year Actual (if appropriate)
Sources of Cash:		
Your organization		
Town of Franklin TDA		
Sponsorships	9000	
Booth fees	1,625	
Entry / other fees		
Sales		
Other - specify		
Total Sources of Cash		
Uses of Cash:		
Salaries, wages, taxes & benefits <i>Bands</i>	2000	
Contracted services	400	
Cost of merchandise sold	2600 .	
Rental of facilities (sanitation)	? 1200	
Rental of equipment	200	
Expendable supplies	? 300	
Printing	400	
Print media	500	
Radio media	400 .	
Other advertising – specify (digital marketing)		
Other expenses - specify <i>Volunteer food</i>	\$1000	
Total Uses of Cash	8900	
Net Cash Flow	0	0

Photo / Sound

Dunster

— food truck vouchers and snacks

I certify that any significant alterations in the project will be reported to this committee as soon as possible and that I will provide TDA with the required Project Report within thirty (30) days of the completion of the project.

Signature:

Godwin

Title: President/ VP

CEO

Date:

5/ 4/6/26



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 4-D

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Special Liberty Project Healing Hope Retreat.

The Special Liberty Project (SLP) submitted an application for consideration for funding on March 5, 2026. The request was heard at the March 9, 2026 meeting. The request is for \$7,500.00 for the Healing Hope Retreat for Widows. SLP was awarded \$2,000 last year for this event.

Suggested Motion: If favorable - vote to approve and determine funding amount.

Attachments: Yes X No

Action Taken: _____



Town of Franklin

Funds Request

Tourism Development Authority

P.O. Box 1479 • Franklin, North Carolina 28744 • (828) 524-2516

Due two months prior to the regularly scheduled meeting where the request will be considered.

The Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin allots funds for the purpose of **PROMOTING TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN.**

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- Applicant utilizes the TDA/Franklin logo or tagline on all print media.

Only funding requests received two months prior to monthly TDA meetings will be considered.

For billboard requests, copy ready electronic proof must be submitted with request.

Billboard (s) Request Yes/ No	Number of Billboards Date of Event
-------------------------------	------------------------------------

Name of Organization	The Special Liberty Project	
Street or PO Box	635 Berry Cove Rd. City, ST Zip Franklin NC 28734	
Representative	Jessica Merritt Phone 619.726.9240	
E-mail	jessica@speciallibertyproject.org	Web Site www.speciallibertyproject.org
	t.org	

Project Title	Healing Hope Retreat for Military Widows	Project Date(s) 2026
	Additional Cash Sources Fundraisers, raffle, private donors, corporate sponsors, grants	TDA Request \$7,500

TDA Funding Application Page 1

The Project

June 2026 Military Healing Hope Retreat for Military Widows

Special Liberty Project • Franklin, NC

The Event or Purchase

The June 2026 Military Widows Retreat offers a healing and empowering experience for military widows at the Special Liberty Project's Farm and Retreat Center in Franklin, NC. This retreat fosters connection, renewal, and resilience through a carefully designed program including:

- **Nature-Based Healing** – Equine-assisted learning, guided hikes, and mindfulness exercises rooted in the natural beauty of Western North Carolina.
- **Support & Connection** – A compassionate community of widows who understand the journey of loss and can provide genuine peer support.
- **Wellness & Empowerment** – Yoga, meditation, and workshops focused on self-care, personal growth, and building resilience.
- **Local Experiences** – Farm-to-table meals featuring regional ingredients, artisan craft activities, and guided outdoor adventures showcasing Franklin's natural resources.

This retreat honors military widows by providing a peaceful space for healing, connection, and renewal—bringing meaningful national attention to Franklin as a premier destination for wellness and restorative travel.

Marketing

To promote the June 2026 Military Widows Retreat, we will implement a multi-channel marketing strategy designed to reach both local and national audiences. Our primary marketing advantage remains our established partnership with the Department of Defense's Survivor Outreach Services (SOS), which actively promotes our retreats nationwide at no cost to our nonprofit.

Our 2026 marketing efforts will expand across the following channels:

- **Social Media Campaigns** – Targeted content on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube featuring participant testimonials, retreat highlights, and behind-the-scenes videos.
- **Dedicated Retreat Webpage** – An updated landing page with 2026 retreat details, registration links, local travel resources, and photo galleries from past events.
- **Word-of-Mouth & Alumni Advocacy** – Past retreat participants serve as our most powerful ambassadors, sharing their stories across personal networks and veteran community groups.
- **Community & Business Partnerships** – Collaborations with Franklin-area businesses, Macon County tourism organizations, and veteran support groups to cross-promote the event.
- **Digital Advertising & Direct Outreach** – Paid digital ads and direct outreach to Gold Star family organizations ensuring

maximum visibility among our target audience.

- **Airbnb Listing Visibility** – Our glamping accommodations at the Special Liberty Project Farm and Retreat Center remain listed on Airbnb, attracting travelers who may discover and support our programs organically.

Tourism Enhancement

The June 2026 Military Widows Retreat will bring visitors from across the country to Franklin, contributing directly to local tourism and the broader Macon County economy. Our past retreats have consistently attracted widows from nearly every U.S. state, including long-distance travelers from Alaska, Washington, and California.

The economic and cultural benefits of this event for Franklin include:

- **Increased Visitor Spending** – Participants stay in local lodging, dine at area restaurants, and shop at Franklin businesses before, during, and after the retreat.
- **Extended Stays** – Many attendees extend their visit beyond the retreat dates to explore Western North Carolina, amplifying their economic contribution.
- **Destination Awareness** – By introducing Franklin to a nationwide audience of military widows and their networks, we build long-term awareness of Franklin as a wellness and outdoor adventure destination.
- **Repeat Visitation** – Participants who fall in love with Franklin often return with family and friends, creating a lasting tourism pipeline from a loyal, appreciative demographic.

Measurements

To measure the success of the June 2026 Military Widows Retreat, we will track both quantitative and qualitative data across multiple dimensions:

- **Attendance & Demographics** – Total number of participants, states represented, and distance traveled.
- **Participant Surveys** – Pre- and post-retreat surveys evaluating personal growth, emotional well-being, retreat satisfaction, and connection to the Franklin community.
- **Social Media Metrics** – Post reach, impressions, shares, comments, and follower growth across all platforms.
- **Local Economic Impact** – Data on local spending by participants including lodging, dining, and retail.
- **Repeat Visitation Tracking** – Monitoring attendees who return to Franklin for future retreats or personal trips.
- **Media & Press Coverage** – Any earned media, features, or press mentions resulting from the retreat.

Improvements

Each year, we refine our military widows' retreats based on participant feedback and evolving best practices in trauma-informed care. For June 2026, we are implementing the following key improvements:

- **Expanded National Outreach** – Deepening our partnership with the DoD's Survivor Outreach Services and broadening direct outreach to additional Gold Star family organizations.
- **Enhanced Accommodations** – Ongoing upgrades to glamping amenities including more comfortable lodging, improved relaxation spaces, and enhanced accessibility features.
- **Expanded Program Offerings** – New equine-assisted learning sessions, guided nature experiences, and specialized wellness workshops tailored to the unique needs of military widows.
- **Deeper Community Integration** – Strengthened partnerships with Franklin-area businesses, artisans, and guides to offer more immersive local experiences including farm-to-table dining and guided hiking excursions.
- **Improved Volunteer & Staff Training** – Enhanced preparation for retreat facilitators and volunteers to ensure a consistently high-quality, trauma-sensitive experience.

Net Cash Flow

Any net cash flow generated from the June 2026 Military Widows Retreat will be reinvested directly into future retreat programming, facility improvements, and community outreach initiatives. Specifically, funds will be allocated toward:

- **Expanded Marketing Reach** – Growing our national promotional efforts to attract more military widows to Franklin for future retreats and events.
- **Equine-Assisted Learning Program** – Enhancing equipment, training, and facilitation resources to ensure a transformative therapeutic experience for every participant.
- **Lodging & Facility Improvements** – Ongoing investment in glamping accommodations and retreat amenities.
- **Community Partnerships** – Supporting local businesses, artisans, and guides who contribute to authentic Franklin-centered experiences.
- **Scholarship & Accessibility Fund** – Ensuring financial barriers do not prevent eligible military widows from attending future retreats.

By reinvesting in the program and the Franklin community, we ensure the long-term sustainability and continued growth of this retreat—further positioning Franklin as a premier destination for healing, connection, and outdoor adventure for Gold Star families nationwide.

Budget Summary

The following budget reflects the Special Liberty Project's 2025 actuals, 2026 approved budget, and 2026 year-to-date actuals. Grant funds received will be applied to program expenses, personnel, and facility costs directly supporting the June 2026 Military Widows Retreat and associated programming.

- I was having some formatting issues, please see the attached 2026 SLP Annual Budget for your review.

Budget Notes

Salaries: The Executive Director (Merritt) is allocated 80% to program activities (15% of which supports fundraising) and 20% to administration.

In-Kind Contributions: The 2025 in-kind total of \$72,600 (program services, fundraiser supplies, and administrative support) is excluded from the cash budget but reflects significant donated value to the organization.

Rent: The 2026 budget reflects increased facility investment (\$18,000) compared to 2025 actuals (\$6,000), supporting expanded retreat programming at the Special Liberty Project Farm and Retreat Center.

Animal Care: Ongoing investment in equine care (\$15,000 budgeted for 2026) supports the cornerstone equine-assisted learning component of all retreat programming.

	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget Draft	2026 Actuals TD
Income			
Donations			
Donations- Individuals			\$3,000.00
Donations- Corporations			
Donations - Other			
Total · Donations	\$96,952.81	\$100,000.00	\$3,000.00
Sponsorships			
Sponsors- Program 1 SERVS			
Sponsors- Program 2 MAK			
Sponsors- Program 3 Gold Star Mothers			\$5,000.00
Sponsors- Program 4 VET/Roots of Resilience			
Sponsors- Program 5 Widows Retreat			
Sponsors- Program 6 Roots in Resilience			
Sponsorships - Other			
Total · Sponsorships	\$9,524.72	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00
Total · Registration Fees			
Fundraising Income			
Fundraiser- 1 Boots & Barrels			
Tickets/Tables			
Sponsors			
Silent Auction Sales			
Other Revenue Activations			
Live Auction Sales			
Cash Call/Fund A Need			
Fundraiser - Other			
Total · Fundraiser- 1		\$50,000.00	\$0.00
Fundraiser 2			
Tickets/Tables			
Sponsorships			
Revenue Activation			
Fundraiser 2 - Other			
Total · Fundraiser 2			\$0.00
Fundraising Income - Other			
Total 504.00 · Fundraising Income	\$35,772.79	\$50,000.00	
Apparel Income			
Special Event			
Miscellaneous Income			
Grant Income			
Grant- Restricted			\$19,250.00
Grant- Unrestricted			
Grant- Other			
Total · Grant Income	\$50,500.00	\$50,000.00	\$19,250.00
Memorials			
In- Kind Donation			
In-Kind Donation- Fundraiser			
In-kind donation- program	\$50,000.00		
In-kind Donation - Admin	\$12,000.00		
In- Kind Donation - Other	\$10,600.00		
Total · In- Kind Donation	\$72,600.00		\$0.00
Total Income	\$265,350.32	\$210,000.00	\$27,250.00
CASH Income	\$192,750.32	\$210,000.00	\$27,250.00
Advertising/ Promotions			
Program- 1 SERVS			
Program- 2 Mini Acts of Kindness			
Program- 3 Gold Star Mothers			
Program- 4 VET/Roots of Resilience			
Program- 5 Widows Retreat			
Program 6 Roots in Resilience			
Advertising/ Promotions - Other			
Total · Advertising/ Promotions	\$17.61	\$50.00	
Website			
Apparel			
Awards/ Recognition			
Bank Charges	\$23.29		\$35.00
Education, Training & Conferenc			
Dues & Subscriptions	\$674.04		\$700.00
Event Sponsorships			
Rennovations			
Equipment			

	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget Draft	2026 Actuals TD
Program 1 SERVS			
Program 2 Mini Acts of Kindness			
Program 3 Gold Star Mothers			
Program-4 VET/Roots of Resilience			
Program 5 Widows Retreat			
Program 6 Roots in Resilience			
Equipment - Other			
Total · Equipment			
Fees			\$100.00
Fundraiser Expense			
Fundraiser Contract Fees			
Fundraiser- Fees/Permits			
Fundraiser- 1 Boots & Barrels			
Fundraiser 1- Auction			
Fundraiser 1- Printing			
Fundraiser 1- Rent			
Fundraiser 1-Insurance/ Security			
Fundraiser 1- Supplies/Equipment			
Fundraiser 1- Meals/Drinks			
Fundraiser 1- Transportation			
Fundraiser 1- Decor			
Fundraiser 1- Entertainment			
Fundraiser 1- Fees/Permits			
Fundraiser- Fundraiser 1 - Other			
Total · Fundraiser- 1			
Fundraiser 2			
Fundraiser 2- Printing			
Fundraiser 2- Auction Expense			
Fundraiser 2- Insurance/Security			
Fundraiser 2- Supplies/Equipment			
Fundraiser 2- Meals/Drinks			
Fundraiser 2- Decor			
Fundraiser 2- Entertainment			
Fundraiser 2 - Other			
Total · Fundraiser 2			
Fundraiser Expense - Other			
Total · Fundraiser Expense	\$9,274.52	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
Memorial Expense			
Liability Insurance	\$5,977.29		\$6,000.00
Workers Comp Insurance			
Auto Insurance			
Contract Fees	\$25,148.99	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00
HR Fees			
Legal Fees	\$689.79		\$700.00
Accounting Fees	\$1,175.00		\$2,000.00
Financial Audit/ Review			
Payroll Fees	\$829.72		\$900.00
Licenses & Permits	\$150.00		\$150.00
Vehicle Expenses	\$1,282.95		\$1,500.00
Maintenance & Repairs			
Merchant Fees	\$2,315.09		\$2,600.00
Office Supplies			
Program Supplies/ Outside Services			
Program 1- SERVS	\$5,832.13		\$6,000.00
Program 2- Mini Acts of Kindness			
Program 3- Gold Star Mother's	\$1,359.86		\$3,000.00
Program-4 VET/Roots of Resilience	\$830.52		\$1,500.00
Program 5- Widows Retreat	\$5,906.42		\$8,000.00
Program 6 Roots in Resilience			\$0.00
850.00 · Outside Services - Other			
Total · Outside Services	\$13,928.93		\$18,500.00
Postage & Delivery	\$0.00		\$150.00
Rent	\$6,000.00		\$18,000.00
Salaries & Wages			
merritt	\$59,999.94		\$65,000.00
STAFF MEMBERS	\$20,307.76		\$22,000.00
Bonuses	\$0.00		\$0.00
Salaries & Wages - Other	\$0.00		\$0.00
Total · Salaries & Wages	\$80,307.70		\$87,000.00
Mileage Reimbursement			
Travel Expenses			
Veterinary Fees			

	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget Draft	2026 Actuals TD
Animal Care		\$12,071.92	\$15,000.00
Animal Feed/Grain			
Small Equipment & Furniture			
Supplies			
Supplies- Volunteers			
Meals			
Taxes- Payroll		\$6,118.62	\$7,000.00
Taxes- State/Federal			
Taxes- Sales			
Telephone/ Utilities			
Uniforms			
Uniforms- Staff & Board Members			
Uniforms - Other			
Total - Uniforms		\$0.00	\$0.00
Miscellaneous			
Charity Registration Expense			
In-Kind donation			
812.01 - In-Kind- Program Supplies			
812.02 - In-Kind- Program- Service		\$62,000.00	
812.05 - In-Kind- Fundraiser Supplies		\$10,600.00	
812.06 - In-Kind- Auction			
812.13 - In-Kind- Service			
812.14 - In-Kind- Supplies/Equipment			
812.00 - In-Kind donation - Other			
Total 812.00 - In-Kind donation		\$72,600.00	
Total Expense		\$238,585.46	\$195,385.00
TOTAL NET EXPENSE		\$165,985.46	\$195,385.00
Other Income			
901.00 - Other Income			
902.00 - Interest Income			
904.00 - Gain/Loss			
890.00 - Depreciation			
Total NET Income		\$26,764.86	\$14,615.00

I certify that any significant alterations in the project will be reported to this committee as soon as possible and that I will provide TDA with the required Project Report within thirty (30) days of the completion of the project.

Signature:

Title: President/ VP

Date:

Jessica Minutt

executive director

3.3.26



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 4-E

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Review of Application

Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center (SMPCC) submitted an application for consideration for funding on February 25, 2026. SMPCC presented to the TDA at the March 9, 2026 meeting. The request is for \$8,000.00 for the Sweet Carolina Music Festival. This is the second year for this event. The event is scheduled for May 2, 2025 at the Macon County Recreation Park. There will be live music, food and specialty vendors.

Funding for the previous event was \$3,000 in 2025.

Suggested Motion: If favorable – vote to approve and determine funding amount.

Attachments: Yes X No

Action Taken: _____



Town of Franklin

Funds Request

Tourism Development Authority

P.O. Box 1479 • Franklin, North Carolina 28744 • (828) 524-2516

Due two months prior to regularly scheduled meeting where the request will be considered.

The Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin allots funds for the purpose of **PROMOTING TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN.**

Conditions of all funds allotments include:

- Subject to approval and availability of funds.
- Applicant recognizes the contribution made by the Tourism Development Authority of the Town of Franklin through the use of the TDA/Franklin logo in all print media.
- Applicant utilizes the TDA/Franklin logo or tagline on all print media.

Only funding requests received two months prior to monthly TDA meetings will be considered.

For billboard requests, copy ready electronic proof must be submitted with request.

Billboard (s) Request Yes/ No	Number of Billboards	Date of Event	
Name of Organization	Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center		
Street or PO Box	226 E. Palmer St.	City, ST	Franklin, NC 28734
		Zip	
Representative	Pam Bowen	Phone	828.349.3200
E-mail	bookkeeper@mysmpcc.com	Web Site	Smokypartners.com
Project Title	Sweet Carolina Music Festival	Project Date(s)	5/2/2026

Total Budgeted Cash Sources	\$66,300.00	TDA Request	\$5,000.00
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The Project

Please describe your project and include the following paragraph headings:

- The event or purchase – what are you proposing to do?
- Marketing – how will you market the project (be specific)?
- Tourism Enhancement – how does the project enhance tourism in the Town of Franklin?
- Measurements – what tools will you use to measure the effectiveness / success of the project?
- Improvements – if you have done it before, what are you going to do to make it better?
- Net Cash Flow – how will you put to use any net cash flow generated by project?

EVENT: Our project once again is the Sweet Carolina Music Festival. We are excited to provide this exciting event to the residents of Macon County.

MARKETING: We will use every avenue of advertising and promotion we can, to maximize its full potential.

TOURISM: As we saw last year, people attended for all over the state of North Carolina, but South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Florida. Holding this event in the beautiful Veteran’s Memorial Park will give visitors a great family activity while here and looking for what is happening.

MEASUREMENTS: Through ticket sales, input from those attending and social media involvement we will be able to gauge the success of this project.

IMPROVEMENTS: This being our second year, we learned a lot, what went well, what needs a little tweaking. We will work together to resolve the parking, and handicapped accessibility to those with mobility issues.

NET CASH FLOW: Whatever the net cash flow is from this event, it will go directly to the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Center, allowing them to continue providing much needed medical services to our county along with the many other programs we offer, FREE of charge!

Project Budget

Insert or delete lines / columns in the table as needed and round to the nearest dollar.

	Current Year Budget	Prior Year Actual (if appropriate)
Sources of Cash:		
Town of Franklin TDA	5,000	3,000
Sponsorships/YTD still coming in	40,450	58,500
Booth fees / Food Trucks	1,300	1,300
Entry / other fees	20,000	16,000
Sales / Hats & T-shirts	10,000	
Other - specify /TDC	TBD	8,000
Total Sources of Cash	\$76,750	\$86,800
Uses of Cash:		
Salaries, wages, taxes & benefits	500.00	400.00
Contracted services / Artists	20,000.00	19,800.00
Cost of merch sold / Hats/T's	5,000.00	4,500.00
Rental of facilities (sanitation)	1,800.00	1,710.00
Rental of equipment / Stage	12,791.00	7,242.00
Expendable supplies	1,000.00	500.00
Printing /Stage banners/Signs	4,000.00	3,039.00
Print media	500.00	500.00
Radio media /FPSN	600.00	600.00
Other advertising – specify (digital marketing)billboards/social media	15,000.00	11,703.00
Other expenses/ Hotel/Artists	2000.00	1,906.00

Total Uses of Cash	\$63,191.00	\$49,544.00
Net Cash Flow	\$13,559.00	\$37,256.00

I certify that any significant alterations in the project will be reported to this committee as soon as possible and that I will provide TDA with the required Project Report within thirty (30) days of the completion of the project.

Signature: Pamela Bowen

Title: Finance Director

Date: 3/09/2026



Agenda Item – Tourism Development Authority

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 5-A

Department/Agency: Stewart Communications

Subject Matter: Marketing Report

There will be a monthly marketing report provided by Stewart Communications to the TDA Board related to activities each month.

Suggested Motion: Received for information only.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 5-B

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Proposed River Stewardship Charter/Pledge

TDA Board Member Angela Martin has spoken previously about development of a River Stewardship Charter/Pledge illustrating the Town's commitment to environmentally conscious practices related to development, tourism and conservation. Ultimately, the Town Council will review for approval.

Suggested Motion: Received for information.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____

TOWN OF FRANKLIN RIVER CHARTER

Preamble:

Positioned within the heart of the Little Tennessee River, whose headwaters fall from the shoulders of the Blue Ridge, Cowee and Nantahala Mountain ranges sits the town of Franklin, North Carolina.

Called Noquisi yi by the Cherokee, meaning "star place" due to the high amount of glittering mica dotting the shores of the river, - Franklin as it is now known is built around the ancient platform mound that was the center of this once Cherokee village. We are rich in geology (gemstones), culture (Cherokee, Appalachian and immigrant) and well-documented biological diversity. Given these many historical attributes, our town today finds itself less of an agricultural and industrial as it once was and more of a tourist destination with each passing season.

The cultural and geological histories of the Little Tennessee River Valley call to the human spirit in many ways. For those of us who call it home, we love the natural beauty and live here because of it. Therefore it is incumbent on us, its human inhabitants and local leaders, to interpret and convey its infinitesimal value to the visitor. As such, we could say it is our duty to appeal to the most discriminating of nature lovers.

We sit at the front porch of the ridges that comprise so many distinctions from the southernmost range for native Brook trout (thought to have declined by 80% over the last century) and alpine spruce forests extending from Cowee to the Maritime provinces of Canada. We are on the receiving end of the annual journeys of tiny migrating songbirds each spring. When they build their nests among us, on the ground and in trees, we are their erstwhile neighbors until autumn. The Town of Franklin, without hyperbole, is

humanity's concierge of the higher elevation
Appalachian temperate rainforests.

Our river is the most continuously studied river in
southern Appalachia with over 30 years of aquatic
research and data collection to it's name.

"Since 1990, Biomonitoring Program Director Dr.
William O. McLarney and thousands of volunteers have
been monitoring the Little Tennessee River basin. In
those 30+ years, monitoring has occurred on more than
150 sites, generating the largest fish-based
biomonitoring database in the world for any
comparable sized watershed." ~Mainspring Conservation
Trust

Therefore we, the Town of Franklin, adopt a charter
by which we conduct our affairs in a way that
reciprocates and enhances this landscape which
provides for and enhances our lives. Too many people
believe in compartmentalizing the adjacent lands into
retreats for animals and trails for humans,
relegating the city center as nature's sacrifice
zone. We instead choose to harmonize with the
adjacent countryside and to work to make our
municipality a connection and representation of the
surrounding landscape.

In closing, be it at meetings, permitting offices,
and in halls where decisions are made, we must speak
for the protection of our town's most valuable
resource - nature.

GOAL: When visitors come to Franklin, we want them to
witness enhancements that respect the integrity of
our freshwater, the stream sides, and an aesthetic
that reflects the bounty of the surrounding mountain
ranges, not just an interpretation of it. We want
them to leave knowing who lives here, including the
Brook trout.

Charter/Pledge:

Town of Franklin River Stewardship Pledge

The Town of Franklin, recognizes that our community's greatest assets—our pristine mountain waters, working landscapes, and quality of life—depend on thoughtful stewardship. We pledge to uphold the following principles:

Water Quality & Floodplain Protection

We commit to:

- Maintain and enforce existing floodplain regulations that prevent inappropriate fill operations, recognizing that floodplains provide critical flood storage, water filtration, and aquatic habitat
- Oppose exemptions or variances that would allow large-scale fill projects for commercial development in flood-prone areas
- Support regular monitoring and enforcement of erosion and sediment control standards to protect the headwaters that feed our national forests and downstream communities
- Advocate for riparian buffer protections along streams and wetlands, following best practices from Western NC counties

Independent Planning & Public Input

We commit to:

- Support the establishment or maintenance of an independent planning board with advisory authority to the County Commission
- Ensure planning board appointments represent diverse community interests including environmental, agricultural, business, and residential stakeholders
- Require meaningful public notice and comment periods for land use decisions that significantly impact natural resources or community character

- Base land use decisions on professional planning recommendations, environmental data, and community input rather than political considerations

Strategic Growth & Affordable Housing

We commit to:

- Prioritize infill development and "brownfield" redevelopment over sprawl into undeveloped or agricultural lands
- Zone appropriate previously developed sites for higher-density, workforce housing while maintaining environmental safeguards
- Support mixed-income housing strategies
- Encourage adaptive stormwater run-off mitigation on vacant commercial properties and underutilized parcels in existing service areas
- Pursue funding opportunities for affordable housing infrastructure (water, sewer, transportation) that reduces development pressure on sensitive areas such as floodplains and forests

Balanced Environmental Protection

We commit to:

- Recognize that environmental protection and economic vitality are complementary, not competing goals
- Support steep slope development restrictions (following models from Buncombe, Henderson, and Jackson Counties) to prevent erosion, landslides, and downstream sedimentation
- Advocate for tree canopy preservation standards in new developments to maintain air and water quality
- Consider adopting viewshed protection measures for ridgelines visible from scenic corridors
- Support agricultural land preservation programs that maintain working landscapes and green space

Forward-Thinking Conservation Policies

We commit to exploring and supporting:

- Stormwater management standards requiring Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in new construction
- Stream buffer ordinances protecting riparian zones (following NC Division of Water Resources recommendations)
- Groundwater protection overlays for karst terrain and wellhead protection areas
- Wildlife corridor mapping to guide development away from critical habitat connections
- Green infrastructure incentives (pollinator waystations, rain gardens, permeable pavement, native landscaping) in public and private projects
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs allowing landowners to preserve sensitive areas while maintaining property value
- Sustainable tourism strategies that protect the natural amenities that attract visitors
- Collaborate with local conservation non-profits, ecotourism outlets and wildlife stakeholder organizations
- Climate resilience planning addressing increased flooding, wildfire risk, and extreme weather events

Implementation Principles

We pledge to:

- Base decisions on sound science, professional expertise, and long-term thinking rather than short-term political expediency
- Treat the watershed and stakeholders—property owners, developers, conservationists, and residents—with respect while prioritizing community-wide benefits
- Be transparent about the trade-offs involved in land use decisions

- Learn from both successes and failures in other mountain communities
- Remember that we are temporary stewards of resources that belong to future generations

Notes for Implementation:

This pledge is designed to be:

- Politically viable in a conservative rural area (emphasizes "stewardship," "property value," and "economic vitality")
- Specific enough to be meaningful but flexible enough to allow for legitimate variation in approach
- Grounded in successful models from neighboring NC mountain counties
- Balanced between environmental protection and development needs
- Forward-looking without being preachy or alienating to moderates

We might also want to:

- Get early endorsements from respected community leaders (not just environmental advocates)
- Frame this as "protecting what makes the Town of Franklin special" rather than "anti-development"
- Have specific examples ready of how other counties have implemented these policies successfully
- Prepare a one-page "myth vs. fact" sheet addressing common concerns about regulation (see separate attachment)

Environmental Stewardship Pledge: Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: "This pledge is anti-development and will kill economic growth."

FACT: Communities that protect their natural assets attract more investment, not less. Asheville, Brevard, and Cashiers have thriving economies *because* they preserved what makes them special. Property values are higher in communities with clean water, scenic views, and quality of life amenities. This pledge simply ensures development happens in the right places, in the right way.

MYTH: "Floodplain rules are government overreach that hurt property rights."

FACT: Floodplains are nature's sponge—they store floodwater and protect downstream properties. When someone fills a floodplain, they push floodwater onto their neighbors' land. Current regulations protect *everyone's* property rights. After Hurricane Helene, we saw what happens when water has nowhere to go. Ask folks in Marshall and Spruce Pine whether floodplain protection matters.

MYTH: "We don't need a planning board—the commissioners can handle it."

FACT: Independent planning boards are standard across successful North Carolina counties. They provide professional review and citizen input *before* commissioners vote, leading to better decisions that directly affect the Town of Franklin. Commissioners still have final authority—

planning boards are advisory only. This isn't radical; it's how Henderson, Jackson, Transylvania, and most counties operate.

MYTH: "Zoning for affordable housing will bring crime and lower property values."

FACT: The lack of workforce housing is already hurting our economy—teachers, nurses, law enforcement, and service workers can't afford to live here. Strategic infill development on already-disturbed land (old commercial sites, vacant lots in town) keeps housing near jobs and services while protecting rural areas. Mixed-income neighborhoods are actually more stable than concentrated poverty *or* exclusive wealthy enclaves.

MYTH: "Environmental regulations will prevent farmers and small landowners from using their property."

FACT: This pledge focuses on *large-scale commercial development*, not family farms or individual home sites. Agriculture is already exempt from most regulations, and small-lot development isn't the issue. We're talking about preventing industrial-scale RV parks in floodplains or ridgetop subdivisions that cause erosion problems for everyone downhill. Good stewardship protects your neighbor's well water and property value too.

MYTH: "We can't afford to worry about the environment—we need jobs and tax revenue now."

FACT: Our environment *is* our economy. Tourism brings \$300+ million annually to Macon County because people want to fish our trout streams, hike our mountains, and breathe clean air. One bad development can

contaminate a watershed for generations. Meanwhile, cleanup costs and flood damages come out of taxpayer pockets. Prevention is cheaper than remediation—just ask coal country what it costs to restore poisoned streams.

MYTH: "Other counties that adopted these policies are too liberal/different from us."

FACT: Jackson County—home to Western Carolina University and conservative rural communities—has steep slope ordinances, planning boards, and floodplain protections. So do Haywood, Henderson, and Polk Counties. These aren't "California regulations"—they're mountain common sense, adopted by Republican and Democratic commissioners alike because the laws of gravity and hydrology don't care about politics.

MYTH: "This is just about stopping growth."

FACT: This is about *smart* growth. We want development—in the right places. Reuse that empty strip mall on 441. Build affordable housing near existing water and sewer lines. Encourage businesses in town centers. Just don't bulldoze mountaintops, fill floodplains, or pave prime farmland when better options exist. Growth and stewardship aren't opposites; short-term thinking is the real threat to both.

MYTH: "These regulations are complicated and will create red tape."

FACT: Clear, consistent rules actually make development *easier* and more predictable. Developers and property owners know what's expected upfront instead of fighting case-by-case political battles. Professional planning staff can guide applicants through the process efficiently. The alternative—no rules, every decision a commission fight—wastes everyone's time and money.

MYTH: "We've never needed these protections before."

FACT: Franklin in 2025 is not Franklin in 1975. We have more people, more development pressure, more extreme weather events, and less margin for error. Our grandparents could get away with things we can't because the watershed could absorb it. Now we're at capacity. The choice is: plan proactively or deal with crises reactively. Helene showed us what "reactive" costs.

The Bottom Line:

This pledge asks us (Town of Franklin) to commit to what successful mountain communities already do: protect the natural assets that make this place worth visiting and living in while allowing responsible growth. It's not radical—it's prudent stewardship that honors the river, its forests and animals, property rights and community responsibility. We speak for the Brook trout.



Agenda Item – TDA

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Agenda Item #: 5-C

Department/Agency: TDA Board

Subject Matter: Budget Discussion

Every year, the TDA Board, as a component unit of the Town, must set a budget and provide that budget to the Town to incorporate into their budget. The budget numbers must be provided to the Town in April for this to occur.

A listing of budget considerations including projections has been included in the packet for review and discussion.

Suggested Motion: If favorable – recommend a budget to the Town Council for the TDA activities.

Attachments: Yes No

Action Taken: _____

TDA BUDGET ORDINANCE FY 2026 - 2027

	Total Budgeted	Expenditures	Encumbrances	Balance
Advertising & Marketing	\$ 148,500.00	\$ -	\$ 0	\$ 148,500.00
Audit & Bond	\$ 3,950.00	\$ -		\$ 3,950.00
Martin Starnes - audit Quarterly payment	\$ 3,600.00			
Bond for Finance Officer - annual payment	\$ 350.00			
Festivals & Events	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 0.00		\$ 30,000.00
Undesignated/Miscellaneous	\$ 42,550.00	\$ 0.00		\$ 42,550.00
Totals:	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 225,000.00
Timothy Crabtree, Chair				
Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk				

Budget Considerations:

1. The audit contract is \$3,600.
2. Budget and Fund Balance Appropriations since 2022

TDA Budget in FY 2021/2022 - \$140,000 with no fund balance appropriation = \$140,000

TDA Budget in FY 2022/2023 - \$140,000 with a \$125,000 fund balance appropriation = \$265,000

TDA Budget in FY 2023/2024 - \$190,000 with a \$75,000 fund balance appropriation = \$265,000

TDA Budget in FY 2024/2025 - \$180,000 with \$0.00 fund balance appropriation = \$180,000

TDA Budget in FY 2025/2026 - \$180,000 with \$0.00 fund balance appropriation = \$180,000

Placeholder for TDA Budget FY 2026/2027 with \$45,000 fund balance appropriation = \$225,000

3. Current Year Statistics and Projections

FY 2025-2026	Comments
\$ 16,844.68	Above Avg; below previous 4 yrs
\$ 17,023.38	2nd highest; above average
\$ 16,927.28	2nd highest; above average
\$ 19,631.27	3rd highest; above average
\$ 18,458.96	Includes late payment from Oct - \$4,261.56; above average
\$ 12,027.75	2nd highest; above average
\$ 10,838.80	3rd highest; above average
\$ 10,042.76	Highest on Record
\$ 11,813.87	Projected based on \$2K above 10-yr avg
\$ 13,665.75	Projected based on \$2K above 10-yr avg
\$15,328.57	Projected based on \$2K above 10-yr avg
\$16,938.69	Projected based on \$2K above 10-yr avg
\$177,541.94	

4. Are there any additional items that need to be included in the upcoming budget? New advertising opportunities? Infrastructure?

5. Evaluation of Marketing Services – continue for another year or RFP?

If no RFP in the upcoming year, will plan for one in the FY 2027/2028 to ensure on a three-year cycle.