

**TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**November 12, 2024**

Present: Chairperson Connie Grubermann, Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Hannah Edwards, Tim Crabtree, Rob Reale, Kevin Covell, Guy Gooder and Angela Martin.

Absent: Members Matt Holland

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

**1. Call to Order- Chair Connie Grubermann**

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

**2. Annual Audit Report – Via Zoom Tommy Harkey, Staff Accountant, Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A.**

Tommy Harkey presented the TDA Audit Report for FY 2023-2024. He noted that the audit was an unmodified opinion and there were no findings. He stated that revenues decreased from prior year due to the decrease in occupancy tax and expenditures increased from prior year due to marketing cost.

There are no questions from the TDA Board.

**3. Approval of the October 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

*Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Member Angela Martin to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2024 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.*

**4. Financial Reports- ending September 30, 2024**

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of September 2024. She noted that the amount of occupancy tax collected in September was \$15,903.02 (2<sup>nd</sup> highest September to date and above the 10-year average). Total expenses thus far \$33,534.06 leaving the balance of \$146,465.94 and \$170,044.63 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

*Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to approve the financial report ending September 30, 2024. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.*

**5. New Business**

**A.) Vote on Application**

The Town of Franklin submitted an application for funding to replace banners throughout the Town. The requested amount was \$13,000. The request will allow the purchase of 62 new banners.

Town Manager Owens noted that she had also requested \$13,000 from TDC for new hardware to hang the banners.

Member Angela Martin asked if the banners could be consistent with the Experience Franklin website. Town Manager Owens said the banner designs could be modified. She also received a request from the Chamber of Commerce to include their "Visit Franklin NC" website.

**Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to approve the funding of \$13,000 for banner replacement as presented. Motion carried by a vote of 7-0. (Town Manager Amie Owens recused herself from voting.)**

Discussion was held on the timeline for the banner replacement. Town Manager Owens noted that due to the cost of the banners, informal bidding would need to occur.

B.) Vote on Application

Jim Adkins, Scottish Tartan Museum Owner, submitted an application for funding. The request is for \$10,000 to help with advertising in multiple publications and at various festivals and events.

Member Angela Martin asked about the advertising company. Town Manager Owens said that they did the marketing in-house. Member Hannah Edwards asked if it was a private business and Town Manager Owens said it's a non-profit. Member Guy Gooder said he was okay with the funding of print advertisement. Member Tim Crabtree said Mr. Adkins could come back in the spring to request funding for the Tartan Day event.

**Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve the funding of \$3,000 for print media. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.**

C.) Application for Consideration

Crabtree Family Enterprises submitted an application for funding for their annual New Years Eve Ruby Drop on December 31, 2024. The requested amount is \$4,000. Tim Crabtree presented this item. He noted the increase from last year. They plan to add an additional band and once again hold 2 ruby drops (9 p.m. and 12:00 a.m.) He also noted there was an increase cost for equipment rental (stage/lights).

Town Manager Owens asked Mr. Crabtree if he would like to extend the Social District hours for this event. Mr. Crabtree was going to think on that.

This request will be voted on at the December 9, 2024 meeting.

**6. Items from the Board**

- A.) Chairperson Connie Grubermann said she received a call from Eric Haggart to discuss the cost split for the Our State Magazine videos. The original agreement was for the Franklin TDA, Macon County TDC and Nantahala TDC to split the cost three ways. Mr. Haggart said the he video that was released included more from Franklin and Macon County. Member Tim Crabtree said there was a second video to be released that will include more on the Nantahala area.

Additional discussion was held on cost splitting and all the B-Roll/videos that the TDA would receive.

- B.) Chairperson Connie Grubermann announced that Josh Drake had submitted his resignation letter for his seat on the TDA Board to Town Council.

C.) Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications, gave the marketing update:

- Experience Franklin website has launched

- The website contains new videos and photos
- 100 new logos and businesses/attractions have been added
- New pages for businesses
- 947 new images added
- Adding attractions, businesses, events, venues and churches
  - Looking to draft an event policy for event advertisement
- Email Campaign included 382 people
- Discussed the Social Media Marketing Report and Google Analytics Report
- Discussed Media relations
  - Press release for new website launch
- Next Steps: surveys, strategic planning for the year, attend travel writers conference, agreement with Macon Sense on publications, possible use of outdoor billboard on 441 in Georgia (\$450 per month)

**7. Announcements**

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, December 9, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

B.) The TDA vacancy will be advertised and the new member will need to collect occupancy tax in the town limits.

**8. Adjourn**

***Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.***

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**Connie Grubermann, Chairperson**

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**Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk**