



Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area

Regular Board Meeting  
Thursday, May 23, 2019

Members Present: Bonnie McPeake, Tom Beddow, Tom Pashley, Kelly Miller, George Little, Andy Hofmann, Caroline Xiong, Pat Corso, Bobbie Rollins

Members Absent: Frank Quis, Linda Parsons, Wayne Vest

Staff Present: Phil Werz and Beverly Stewart

Guests: Craig Phifer

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairman McPeake.

At 4:05pm Chairman McPeake asked for a motion for the board to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Member Little made the motion. Member Miller seconded. The motion passed.

At 4:22pm Chairman McPeake asked for motion to end the Executive Session. Member Little made the motion. Member Rollins seconded. The motion passed.

Chairman McPeake asked for approval of the March 28<sup>th</sup> minutes and the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 Special Board minutes. Member Miller moved for a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Little. The motion was passed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** – Secretary/Treasurer Beddow reported:

**A. Room Tax Collections:**

With the 2018-19 fiscal year coming to a close, room occupancy collections through March remain historically high. In March 2019, we were up 17.6% compared to the same month last year. For the fiscal year, July 2018 through March 2019, we are up 13.2% in collections. We anticipate similar, if not better numbers in April and May due to peak golf season and a variety of large impactful events, and we continue pace for what will likely be a record year for the CVB.

**B. Expenditures:**

Through May 20, 2019, we have maintained a favorable financial position of +\$263,260 to budget.

**C. Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):**

Also, emailed to you was a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position through May 16, 2019 (unaudited).

Does anyone have any questions about the Financial Statements or Financial Position? Motion to approve the Financial Statements. Member Miller made the motion to approve the financials. Member Little seconded. The motion passed.

## President & CEO Report – Phil Werz

### Occupancy Collections Update

- We were up in occupancy collections 17.6% year-over-year for March and up 13.2% for the entire fiscal year compared to last FY. March was the third highest collections month of this FY. Every month this FY has been a record with the exception of September which was only down 1.5% mainly due to the impact of Hurricane Florence. Based on events in the destination in April and May and reports from hotels in the market, we anticipate setting new all-time marks for those months. Belief is we should complete the fiscal year anywhere from 13-15% up in collections over last FY.

Member Little noted that he asked Member Quis to move forward with raising the occupancy tax to 6%.

### Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Update

- After the last board meeting, Bill Geist, worked with Phil and Beverly to review numerous TPDF plans from a variety of destinations that have found success in this area. Instead of tasking the TPDF committee with analyzing and boiling down the best aspects of each of these plans, the CVB created a working document with a baseline idea for developing a TPDF plan for our destination. Those ideas, a proposed grant application and FAQs were provided to the TPDF committee to review in advance of our meeting to discuss further. We plan to meet in June at a date TBD as peak season and many events such as Epicenter and the USSWO prevented us from convening.

Also, Frank Quis requested that the CVB reach out to mayors of county towns to communicate to them our consideration of raising the occupancy tax and creating a fund for tourism product development. This would be an effort to have those mayors understand the process and what could potentially come to bear in the destination. We would invite our TPDF committee to attend this “town hall” meeting, so in general, the towns can understand that an occupancy increase is no burden to the residents, to their towns, or the county. We’d likely seek to schedule this meeting after the next TPDF committee meeting, so we are aligned with a general plan we feel comfortable sharing.

### VisitNC Farms App

- CVB is working with N.C. Cooperative Extension Service to Promote: Farms/fisheries, farmers markets, local restaurants, shopping, tours and trails, special events, farm stays and lodging. Moore County is only the 4th county in the state to activate this app and the Extension Service wants in all 100 counties, if possible, so we are at the forefront of this experience. Media Interest: In NYC, interest from Southern Living, Martha Stewart Living, Real Simple and T+L are just a few to discuss farm to table concept. The app will be launched with an integrated marketing campaign in the coming days.

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Misty Morning Ranch will host a Farm to Table dinner outside on their property and we have received confirmations from Elizabeth Hudson, editor-in-chief, Our State magazine and Jenn Rice who writes for Food & Wine, Vogue, GQ, Food Network, Tasting Table and other notable publications to be in attendance. Our local paper, The Pilot, will be there as well. In addition, we will have our new CVB director of video (Destination Storyteller) in attendance to document as part of a video we are producing for the NC Cooperative Extension. The CVB is being paid \$1,500 for the video production which will be repurposed to our budget.

The CVB sees this app as a unique and innovative way to entice day-trippers to stay overnight, a way to provide additional commerce to a part of the county that needs it and provide another PR mechanism to promote the destination. Some of the farms and restaurants to be found on the app include: Pinehurst Brewery, Ashten’s, EOL, Priest Farms, Misty Morning Ranch, Happy Goat Ranch, Southern Pines Brewing Co., Railhouse Brewery. Pik n’ Pig and many more. 50 were needed to activate the app and the download is free at the Apple Store.

## High Falls Tourism

Member Corso reported that a meeting was held in Robbins to discuss tourism options for the Northern Moore Area. A water amenity such as kayaking or white water rafting might be an option according to the new owner of the Highfalls Dam Dr. McDuffy. Plans are to remove the dam to allow an open flow of water, so these options could be considered. Member Corso also stated that the NC Wildlife has funds available to assist with ingress and egress to the water.

## Recent Events Update – Beverly Stewart

- Epicenter Event, Rugged Maniac and the US Senior Women's Open – Beverly surveyed area hotels May 9th thru May 19th and most hotels in the area were booked. The only hotel listing a significant amount of rooms available was the Holiday Inn Express. They were undergoing renovations and didn't pre-book with any of the events.
- 2019 Sandhills Motoring Festival will be in Moore County May 23-26<sup>th</sup> with a Concours style show in the Village of Pinehurst on Sunday May 26th.
- 2019 NC State Shooting Clay Championships will be at DeWitt's Outdoor Sports May 30th to June 2<sup>nd</sup> in Ellerbe, NC. Over 300 participants are expected to attend. The CVB provided accommodations rates and will provide area welcome packets.
- 2019 Dixie Soft Ball District Championships will be held at Hillcrest Park in Carthage June 21 -23rd. Over 500 people are expected to attend.
- Working with the USGA on the 2019 US Amateur at Pinehurst Resort August 12-18th. The CVB is providing area accommodations info and social media promotion of the event. Also working on accommodations for the 2021 US Jr. Amateur at County Club of NC.
- Phil and Bev will be attending the International Association of Golf Tour Operators – North American Conference June 23-26, 2019 in Woodlands, Texas. We will meet with the golf tour operators in one-on-one appointments. We are securing contracts, pictures and videos from area to present to the tour operators during the appointment sessions. Phil will also be meeting with International Media during the event to promote the area.
- US Teens and US Kids – Working with Tar Heel Communications on room inventory during the events. The CVB with the help of Moore County GIS provides a map of the tournament locations and main events for US Teens/US Kids. A registration area is operated by CVB staff and volunteers for both events allowing participants and families to receive information on Restaurants, activities, transportation, etc.

## PR/Marketing Update – Phil Werz

- PR event with VisitNC Farms app rollout June 5-7, 2019. Annette Thompson will be in the destination to provide content as part of our Play with a Southern Accent ad campaign. Full range of experiences (women's golf, spa, dining, breweries, unique shopping, pottery and more. Ms. Thompson used to work for years at Southern Living and Phil has known her since his days at The Grove Park Inn in Asheville.  
Member Corso noted that the Moore County farmers really appreciate the CVB's help with the new App.
- We are selling the 2020 Destination Guide Ads as a way to simply offset our costs. Ad sales are already off to a good start with a pair of Ad sold to date. We are one-third of the way to our goal and we feel with the unique offerings that address modern day marketing, we will meet or exceed our goal.
- Photo shoot – just completed one with VisitNC and preparing for a more detailed and stylized shoot with a photographer TBD (getting bids) which will allow us to complete the new ad campaign and launch as we enter the new fiscal year in July 2019.
- The New website is in development and we will be seeing the initial wire frames very soon.
- Webcams – Pinehurst and Southern Pines. Phil spoke with Tom Pashley and Reagan Parsons to see if locations can be found. The CVB will provide the server and examine costs to maintain. We feel there is some PR value - branding, name recognition with these which we can provide access to stations in the Triangle mostly, but in other markets as well.

- New CVB staff member, Dan Dreyer, -Destination Storyteller, will be on board May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Dan brings web content and video production skills and 10+ years of experience. He will produce a laundry list of videos for the destination. Phil discussed this during the interview and from what he understands, we will be one of the few CVBs in North Carolina with this capability. Game-changer! Video is huge, and we plan to capitalize on this critical marketing asset. It is also part of our destination guide offerings, so this will be a revenue-generating stream for the CVB. Those funds will be repurposed to execute the mission of the CVB and once we fulfill our goal revenue-wise based on the approved budget ordinance, we can use the funds to offset expenses like our destination guide and even possible increase in our rent to maintain the CVB.
- CVB offices in the BB&T building in the Village of Pinehurst. The building has been vacant for over 2 years and the owner is willing to offer the CVB a good rental rate which includes all up grades to the building for free.

Discussion transpired, and the board decided to not to pursue any options in the Village of Pinehurst. Member Pashley felt the village should be for retail, not the CVB. Member Miller felt the lease was too expensive. Member Little said it was a good option and a good lease amount. The board asked President & CEO to continue looking for other sites. The current CVB lease is good through October 2020.

### **Travel Update**

- Charleston, May 31 – 2019-20 Media Plan Review and U.S. Women’s Open
- IAGTO, Austin, TX, June 23-26
- Great opportunity to meet with golf tour operators and “sell” this destination
- DR Golf Travel Exchange, Dominican Republic, Sept. 15-18, 2019. Guest speaker on destination marketing and success in The Home of American Golf. Referred by Jason Deegan, Golf Channel

### **CHAIRMANS REPORT - Chairwoman McPeake reported:**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman McPeake noted that the CVB nominating committee sent a list of officers out earlier and asked if there were any nominations from the floor. None were presented.

Tom Beddow – Chairman  
Tom Pashley – Vice Chair  
Kelly Miller – Secretary/Treasurer

Chairman McPeake then called for a vote on the new officers. Member Little made a motion to accept the slate of officers as presented. Member Hofmann seconded. The motion passed. Member McPeake welcomed the new officers and turned the meeting over to Chairman Beddow.

Chairman Beddow reminded everyone of the next scheduled CVB Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

There being no further business to bring before the Board, Chairman Beddow asked for a motion to adjourn. Member Little made the motion, seconded by Member Miller. Chairman Beddow adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly Miller, Secretary/Treasurer