



**Convention & Visitors Bureau
Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area**

**Zoom Board Meeting
Thursday, August 6, 2020**

Members on the call: Tom Beddow, Tom Pashley, Kelly Miller, Bonnie McPeake, Andy Hofmann, Bobbie Rollins, Linda Parsons, Caroline Xiong, George Little, Wayne Vest, Pat Corso

Not on the call: Frank Quis

Staff on the call: Phil Werz, Donna Garner, Beverly Stewart

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chairman Beddow.

Chairman Beddow entertained a motion to approve the June 4, 2020 minutes. Kelly Miller made the motion, Tom Pashley seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Secretary/Treasurer Miller

Room Tax Collections:

We closed the 2019-20 FY with total occupancy tax collections of \$1,480,708.75, which reflects a 21.4% decrease from the previous fiscal year of almost \$1.9 million. In the final month of the 2019-20 FY, we collected \$118,516.27 a 31.8% decrease compared to the previous June. In March, the CVB forecasted a \$400,000 shortfall to the budget by the end of the FY. By cutting all advertising after March 15th and controlling spending within the operating budget, this shortfall was mitigated with a little more than \$20,000 to spare.

Expenditures:

Through June 2020, we have maintained a positive financial position of +309,204 to budget. Based on the deep losses year-over-year in occupancy tax collections due to COVID-19, especially from April through June, that financial position allowed the CVB to absorb the financial hit to the annual budget and essentially break even for the 2019-20 FY.

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):

Also, we emailed to you a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of July 1, 2020. This document showed \$896,591.01 in total assets, \$486,359.40 in total liabilities for a total fund balance of \$410,231.61.

Member Miller entertained a motion to approve the Financial Report. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Parsons seconded it and the motion passed.

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz

Phil opened by introducing Moore County Manager Wayne Vest to brief the Board regarding an article that was in the Pilot about the CVB receiving \$115,000 in funding from monies received by the County, from the Cares Act.

Wayne advised the Board that even though the article stated that the CVB would receive \$115,000 for tourism recovery, it hasn't exactly been determined how the money will be distributed. There have been some conversations with key people such as Phil Werz, Linda Parsons, Pat Corso and others regarding what type of marketing, activities, etc. that needs to be supported with these funds. Further discussions will be ongoing, before final determination is made. He also stated that there is a chance that there may be more than \$115,000 that can be used for tourism recovery.

Phil showed a power point presentation as he went through the items on the agenda. With regards to Room Occupancy Tax, Phil reported that our June numbers, while down considerably from last year's collections, exceeded what we anticipated they were going to be. Therefore, we were able to mitigate the anticipated shortfall and finish the FY on the plus side. He also stated that even though the proposed budgeted collections for July is \$70,000, with the US Kids Golf tournaments, we should easily top that. And while not at the record amounts we were seeing last July it will help bring up our collections, to where we shouldn't need to take any money from the fund balance.

Based on data received from the STR report the numbers for April, May and June are progressively getting better each month, and we are rebounding. The occupancy numbers look good compared to the national and southeast region. Phil stated that according to research he's read, 51% of people said they don't plan to travel at all for the remainder of 2020. Which may be a result of larger metropolitan areas mandating people quarantine for 14 days after traveling. Also, mandatory mask wearing may be a deterrent from travel for some. Further research indicates that around 70% are willing to travel between 6-8 hours away, so we are currently marketing to a tighter circumference around the Carolinas, between Atlanta and Washington DC.

Phil introduced Martin Armes, with Media One, to update the Board on the current media plan, and wanted him to show that we are not marketing just golf, but weekend getaways, buddy trips, etc. Martin said he thought it would be helpful for everyone to see the creative matrix of all the different ads and went through slides of each type, showing what they look like. Many different media platforms are being used to maximize our advertising budget this FY. Martin gave Karin Toomey praise for her work on these social ads, and to Lisa Long for her work on our print ads.

Phil briefly touched on NCTTC potential funding. The funds that are available through VisitNC are subject to benefit all 100 counties, but they want everyone to use their co-ops, which is done by their advertising agency in Charlotte. These co-ops are alright, but Phil stated it's his wish to have the autonomy to spend the funds at his own discretion. He will keep the Board updated on this matter.

Another item Phil mentioned was concerning web stats and Google analytics. In comparing July 2020 to July 2019, all the stats are up. In the top 10 metro areas, Washington DC was the only one that showed a decrease in users. The new website, which was launched in January has helped with the increased traffic as it is more efficient, has more valuable content, and better linkage to social accounts. All this data shows our efforts are working and paying off.

Phil gave a quick shoutout to Pinehurst Resort, and Eric Alpenfels, Director of Pinehurst Golf Academy with their partnership on a cool project we did in partnership with VisitNC. On July 21st we did a Zoom broadcast with 150+ Canadian golf writers and travel agents. This was a virtual golf lesson, along with an opportunity to discuss other features of the destination such as shopping and dining. There was a Q & A session at the end, and it has received very positive feedback.

Phil's last slide showcases Jeremy & Felicia Lee as our new "Faces of the Destination". This is a project he has been trying to do for some time, which will consist of doing short videos showing Jeremy & Felicia as a cool, hip and fun 30's couple out and about doing different things around the destination. There will be posts for social media and You Tube.

The numbers for AirBNB and VRBO have stayed relatively flat during the pandemic. Some have come on and some have dropped off, but the totals are virtually the same as the last update in November 2019. Some of the municipalities are beginning to take up the issue of these short-term rentals, to try and put some type of regulations on them.

Phil also gave an update on the potential of new office space for the CVB. Karen Dulmage, from next door, has approached Phil numerous times wanting to take over the entire building for her growing staff. But has basically said she needs to know by October, or she'll have to find other options. There has been some talk of a possibility of us moving into the Theatre Building. The caveat of that would be the opportunity of us assuming operation of the welcome center. The Village of Pinehurst currently staffs the welcome center and negotiations would need to be made with them, to turn that over to us to run.

Beverly Stewart Executive Vice President – Activities Update:

- Gathered rates and availability for Hurricane Isaias from area hotels in case of evacuation.
- US Kids Golf
 - Assisted Tarheel Communications with Red, White & Blue Tournament.
 - Provided maps for the US Teens and US Kids World Championships.
 - Sent Rebate Contracts to all hotels, motels and resorts participating in the US Kids rebate program. Gathered the info and sent on the Chris Vonderkall.
- PGA – 2020 High School National Golf Invitational Tournament
 - Provided rates from local hotels for overflow.
 - Determined items and assembled 400 Welcome Packets.
 - Setup Video options for them with Phil and Dan as incentive for future business.
- Association Executives of NC (AENC)
 - Attended the AENC Annual Meeting August 3rd, 2020 vis Zoom.
 - Coordinated CVB Sponsorship of AENC – Meeting Planners Round Table on August 20th, 2020. Attending if possible!
 - Attending and Sponsor of the AENC Golf Tournament at Pinehurst No. 6 on September 14th, 2020.
 - Planning to be an exhibitor at the AENC Annual Tradeshow December 9th, 2020.
- Met with MC Parks & Recreation Director to determine which groups we can target for tournaments at the new Recreation center in Carthage when it opens. Looking at Wrestling Tournaments and Volleyball in December, January and February low season for hotels.
- The CVB will also produce a video to promote the sports facilities in Carthage, Aberdeen and other venues to enhance efforts to bring a variety of tournaments to Moore County.
- Met with new airport manager to discuss events and options at the Moore County Airport.
- Provided updated hotel rates for the Sandhills Motoring Festival Sept. 3-7, 2020.
- Working with Ederville - 100 Years of Progress 11th Annual Event November 6-8, 2020. Providing hotels rates and assisting with promotion for the event.
- Provided updated hotels rates for Festival d' Avion new dates Oct. 2-3, 2020. Assisting with sponsorships.
- Provided hotel rates for the 2020 Quality Improvement Through Accreditation Workshop October 13-15, 2020.
- Collecting hotel rates for the SCC Fire College January 27-31, 2021.

- Continue to maintain close contact via email and calls with meeting/event planners for future business. All Association Executives of NC planners, Meeting Professionals Intl.- Carolinas Chapter, Defense Alliance of NC, Society of Government Meeting Planners and CVB Clients have been contacted.
- Continued constant contact via email, individual calls and site visits to area hotels, motels and resorts. Talked with Director of Sales or General Manager to find out what they need and to make sure they are connected to CVB resources. Provided Visitors Guides and Essentials Guides during the visits.
- Working with VisitNC to book the 2023 365 Conference at Pinehurst.
- Continue gathering average daily rate information as requested by President and CEO.

Chairman's Report-Tom Beddow

Chairman Beddow reported that there is an increase in memberships and property transactions in CCNC, which he likely attributes to people leaving larger cities and moving here or returning here to live. Where there used to be 40 rental houses there, it's down to 17 now, due to houses being sold. Secondly, he is the Board Chairman of a charter school in Aberdeen and stated that after 3 days of being back in school things are very hectic and stressful for both teachers and parents alike. He noted that the upcoming school year will be a very difficult one and stated that it will be best when we can fully open schools again and parents can return to work. Finally, he stated there is a pivotal election coming up, and noted that requests for absentee ballots are off the charts. Early voting is going to be huge this year, and he said that we are required to have a site for every 20,000 voters, which means we will need 4 sites this year.

Allied Reports-Linda Parsons, Pat Corso

Member Parsons reported that they closed on their new building in July and hope to be in it by October. Also, they have canceled all programming for the rest of the year. They halted all invoices for 3 months and extended all memberships to 15 months. One important thing they are working on is finding resources for working parents with school age children.

Member Corso reported that they are seeing more interest in expansion opportunities that they haven't seen before, aerospace which would be new to us. They are working with a company here. The first steering committee meeting for the entrepreneurship study was held to determine how much interest we have here in Moore County. Also, they are working with First Health to showcase their clinical trials program.

Chairman Beddow then entertained a motion to go into executive session. Member Little made the motion, Member Miller seconded it, and the motion passed. The Board then went into executive session.

Unfinished Business:

Chairman Beddow brought up the 8-1 vote to request the Board of Commissioners to take up the matter of raising the Room Occupancy rate. He gave the members an opportunity to confirm if they still felt the same on this issue, or if they had changed their mind. Each member indicated that they had not changed their stance. He then indicated he wanted to broach the subject with Member Quis again, to try and get it put before the entire Board of Commissioners. Member Miller stated maybe coming up with a campaign to try and get the word that this is something the hoteliers want and need. Member McPeake made a motion to allocate \$10,000 for Phil to research and hire a PR firm to accomplish this task. Member Miller seconded it, and the motion passed.

New Business:

Member Miller made mention that a member of the National Golf Course Owner's Association would be contacting some members of the Board, to try and garner support, as well as funding, to highlight golf travel.

Chairman Beddow stated the next meeting would be held on October 15, 2020.

With no further business Chairman Beddow adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kelly R. Miller". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Kelly Miller, Secretary/Treasurer