



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

**Board Meeting
Thursday, January 20, 2022**

Members present: Andy Hofmann, George Little, Matt Hausser, Linda Parsons, Frank Quis, Bonnie McPeake, Kelly Miller, Natalie Hawkins

Not present: Tom Pashley, Warren Lewis, Caroline Xiong, Wayne Vest

Staff present: Phil Werz

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Miller, who was filling in, during Chairman Pashley's absence.

Vice-Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the November 18, 2021 minutes. Member Parsons made the motion, Member McPeake seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Secretary/Treasurer Hofmann

Room Tax Collections:

After the first five months of the fiscal year (July-November), \$1.3 million in occupancy tax has been collected. All five months were over \$200,000 in occupancy tax collections, and each month set an all time record. We are now 57% ahead of pace from the record-breaking fiscal year of 2020-21. Currently we are on pace for a \$2.7 million year on a budget of \$2.1 million.

Expenditures:

We ended the month of November in a positive and strong financial position of +\$88,047 to budget. Please note, the last financial statement available was for November and did not reflect the \$325,000 budget amendment approved in December. The majority, of those expenditures was dedicated to digital marketing, as approved by the CVB board, at our last meeting.

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):

Also, you were provided a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of January 3, 2022. The balance sheet showed slightly more than \$2.1 million in total assets, \$614,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of nearly \$1.5 million. The fund balance was \$1.3 million at our last meeting.

Vice-Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the Financial Report. Member McPeake made the motion, Member Parsons seconded it, and the motion passed.

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz

Phil opened by mentioning the USGA's recent announcement to host back-to-back US Open Championships, at Pinehurst, in 2029, as well as awarding a record \$10 million purse for the 2022 US Women's Open at Pine Needles.

To reiterate the financial report that Secretary/Treasurer Hofmann gave, the destination is doing exceptionally well, and we continue to break records in terms of occupancy collections. The first 5 months, of this fiscal year, have been record months, and we're up 57% over the same period last year. For the month of December, our occupancy was up 46% year over year.

Phil then presented a budget amendment request to the board for \$200,000 from excess collections, over the forecasted budget. It will be divided into the following budget lines: Digital Marketing-\$60,000; Event Management-\$50,000; Promotions-\$37,500; Media Production-\$20,000; Public Relations-\$17,000; Printed Materials-\$15,500. Some of the key elements, of what the money will be used for include:

- **Sandhills Pour Tour Passport** -This is a booklet that looks like and the size of a real passport. It will include pages for 4 breweries, Cider House, and Growler Company. People can go to each location, make a purchase, and get that page stamped. Once they have a completed stamped passport, they will get a 16 oz logoed mug, from the CVB office.
- **Commemorative Ross/Olmstead Coins**-These will be two separate, limited edition, collector's item coins, that the CVB is going to have made. In addition, to receiving the mug, people who complete the passport, will also have the opportunity to buy one of these coins, at a discounted price. They will also be available for sale at the CVB office, to benefit the Landscape Design program at SCC, and the Tufts Archives.
- **Spring Photo Shoot**-A comprehensive photo shoot of the destination.
- **PR (Golf FAM & Leisure FAM)**-visiting media to write about the destination.
- **SkyNav 360**-Virtual Reality 360-degree tours
- **Partnership Marketing**-We are looking at potential opportunities with GolfPride, Shady Rays Sunglasses, Golden Flake and/or Donald Ross Sportswear.
- **Ticketed Event during the week of the US Women's Open with Aberdeen, Carolina Western Railroad**-This is an opportunity for a planned trip, somewhat similar in nature to the Polar Express train ride, in Bryson City.
- **Additional US Women's Open/USGA inserts**-ordered additional inserts for the US Women's open in June to distribute to local hotels and businesses.
- **Promotional items**-restock our promo items to give away in welcome packets.
- **VisitNC Media Missions in Nashville and Atlanta**
- **Digital Marketing**-Additional Marketing with Media One

Vice-Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the proposed budget amendment of \$200,000. Member Little made the motion, Member McPeake seconded it and the motion passed.

Peter Stilwell, with Tarheel Festivals, is going to do research and prepare a market analysis of future large-scale events. The goal is to identify another large-scale, annual event, that attracts visitors to the destination and increase overnight stays. The findings of this analysis will be presented to the CVB this spring. The funds to cover this research are already in the FY 21-22 budget.

The latest travel trends indicate that nearly 80% of Americans plan to travel this year and on average, they plan to take 3 trips in 2022. Family trips, romantic getaways, foodie adventure, and historic sites tend to be most popular. Research shows that 72.8% of Americans are more excited about travel, than prior to the Omicron wave.

Our AirDNA data report, which is occupancy data for AirBNB's in Moore County, shows that from December 2020 to December 2021, we had a 54% increase in available listings. There was a 72% increase in booked listings and 49% occupancy rate which is up 10%. The average daily rate, for AirBNB's, is \$259 and estimated revenue is \$1.3 million.

Our Paradise in the Pines podcast series launched on January 4, 2022. The first episode featured Chairman Pashley and the second one on January 18th featured Janeen Driscoll of the USGA. Both were filmed prior to the USGA announcement, of back-to-back US Open Championships in 2029. Vice-Chairman Miller, Ashley Van Camp and Gerry Bateman, will be featured on future podcasts.

Allied Reports-Linda Parsons

Member Parsons updated us on the workforce development committee she's on. They are working on a survey, to be sent out to employers, in the coming months. The Chamber staff is busy starting a new year and hopes it will be a great one.

Allied Reports-Natalie Hawkins

Member Hawkins stated we've had some really good press, as of late, with articles in Business NC, and Triangle Business Journal. She will be attending the PGA show next week, to start making some contacts with golf cluster businesses. There is a site selectors conference coming to the resort in March, with 28 site selectors from across the country attending. Member Hawkins is on the Digital Inclusion Task Force and they are trying to get as many residents and businesses, as possible, to complete the digital survey, regarding broadband expansion. There have also been some discussions regarding sports recreation tourism in northern Moore County, which includes paddling on deep river, and "revolution rail", which is riding bicycles, on abandoned railroad tracks.

Member Quis reported that FirstHealth is covid testing approximately 1,500 people per day, with a 40% positivity rate. The Health Department will open an additional testing site, starting on Monday, with no appointment necessary.

With no further business, Vice Chairman Miller stated that the next meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2022, location TBD. He entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Little made the motion, Member Parsons seconded it, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Hofmann, Secretary/Treasurer

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