



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

**Board Meeting
Monday May 1, 2023**

Members present: Tom Pashley, Kelly Miller, George Little, Matt Hausser, Frank Quis, Andy Hofmann, Bonnie McPeake, Natalie Dean-Hawkins, Linda Parsons, Caroline Xiong

Not present: Warren Lewis, Wayne Vest

Staff present: Phil Werz, Donna Garner, Dan Dreyer, Lisa Long, Ashley Baker, Melissa Holt

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Chairman Pashley.

Chairman Pashley entertained a motion to approve the February 16, 2023 minutes. Member Parsons made the motion to approve the minutes, Member McPeake seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Andy Hofmann

Room Tax Collections:

Through the last reporting month of March, collections for the first nine months of the fiscal year totaled \$2.1 million. The month of March marked 25 straight months of increased collections over the previous year. Compared to last March, we saw an increase of 3.8%. Year-to-date for the first nine months of the fiscal year, we are pacing 7.1% ahead of last year. If the months April through June produce exactly what they did last year, we will end up close to \$3.2 million in collections. However, based on current trends, we anticipate surpassing \$3.2 million for the year.

Expenditures:

We ended the month of February nearly \$100,000 to the positive side of YTD budget. Overall, CVB financials are very strong, as we are pacing toward a \$3.2 million collections fiscal year on a budget of \$2.6 million.

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):

Also, you were provided a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of April 14, 2023. The balance sheet showed \$2.7 million in total assets, \$956,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of more than \$1.7 million.

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

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz

Phil began by asking the CVB staff members in attendance to come stand at the front of the room. He then introduced each member and recognized each one for their respective duties and accomplishments.

The Pinecone Pathways Program has been an overwhelming success. Phil played a short video that gives a synopsis of pictures from our social media outlets, as well as comments from the public, as the "Coneheads" as they have deemed themselves, continue to search for the treasured pinecones. We initially began the program with 100 pinecones, but have bought an additional 100 due to the success the program has had. We've heard of several outside visitors coming to the area to look for them, some from as far away as Ohio. Also, in comments from the public, there has been praise for the program getting people out on the trails to look, which is exactly what the program was intended to do. This program has exceeded our expectations, in getting people out, exploring the many beautiful Moore County trails.

Sandhills Story Trail Adventures kicked off on April 11th at Nicks Creek. Dan wrote and produced the story, as well as cutting out and painting all the characters and scenes along the trail. The event was well attended by approximately 100 people, including several children. There were live owls and a butterfly release. We've had hundreds of shares on social media about this project. This is another great program to get people out on our trails.

On May 12, 2023, the CVB will hold a media event to launch the Carthage Murals Digital Video Trail. There will be 5 bronze plaques unveiled, one for each mural. Each plaque has a unique QR code that when scanned will take you to a video link, which describes the story behind that particular mural. There will also be an exciting announcement made by Duke Energy, at this ceremony.

Room Occupancy collections for July-February total \$1,860,219. February is up 16.2%, and we're up 8.3% for the fiscal year. We're pacing for a \$3.2 million year and anticipate a fund balance rollover of approximately \$600-\$700 thousand.

The next item discussed is the One Time Project Fund, which, as you will see when we discuss next year's proposed budget, we plan to take 1 million dollars from the fund balance and designate it specifically for this grant program. There will need to be a \$50,000 investment level by the applicant, with up to a 50/50 match, depending on the scoring of the application. The proposed application period will run from May 15th-August 18th, 2023. Then the review committee will consider the applications and make recommendation of awards, for the board to consider and approve at the October meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of managing this program.

Prior to today's meeting, Phil sent out the proposed FY 23-24 budget materials, to each board member, for review. The proposed budget was given preliminary approval by the Finance Committee, which met on March 27th. There is a new line for the One Time Project Fund Grant Program which is \$1 million. This makes the budget reflect that it is \$4.1 million, when in actuality, it is really only \$3.1 million. Phil went over the lines that had significant increases in spending, from last year's amounts and explained the reason for the increase. The line with the largest increase of 22% is digital marketing, and that is purely by reason of us having a much larger budget, due to the amount of revenue, from room tax we are expecting. Chairman Pashley entertained a motion to approve the 2023-24 proposed budget, as presented. Member Miller made the motion, Member McPeake seconded it and the motion passed.

Next, Phil turned the floor over to Martin Armes with Media One to give a detailed overview of the 2023-24 Marketing Plan. The Marketing Committee met and was given this information prior to today's meeting. Martin gave a lot of statistical information regarding how our current plan has been working.

Then he talked about upcoming year's plan. Some of the strategic goals for 2023-24 include:

- Leverage all the earned media created by USGA, Golf House Pinehurst, and 2024 US Open.
- Roll out new website, better utilize SkyNav 360, Wander's Interactive maps and other tools.
- Increase quality website traffic.
- Amplify new videos.
- Build awareness of Pinehurst, Southern Pines & Aberdeen area measured by increases in keyword search volumes.
- Grow organic traffic through the increased search volumes.
- Database growth.
- More research and insights.

Phil mentioned two additional items, the first one being that we donated 3 of the glass pinecones to the new FirstHealth Cancer Center for their quiet room. Also, we are working on a Peach week program to go hand in hand with the Candor Peach Festival. There will be several peach themed activities during the week of July 13-22, 2023.

Board Member Reports

Member Hawkins stated that they have launched their new brand, and new website. Also, on November 14th they are coordinating an entrepreneurship summit at the Fair Barn from 5:30-8:30. They have put together a task force made up of about 14 local entrepreneurs. They continue to see historically high numbers of business interest in Moore County, and they include every sector of businesses. Member Little said with his work in the economic development area for the state, there are significant numbers of new businesses locating in NC. Lee County just landed 3 new plants in the last 90 days, and it is expected that those employees will spill over into areas of Moore County to live.

Member Parsons piggybacked off of Member Little's remarks by adding that they are working closely with Sandhills Community College to ensure that we continue to have quality workforce supply now and in the future. The Chamber is sponsoring a day on May 19th to do new head shots if anyone is interested.

Member McPeake announced that the Hilton Garden Inn has been awarded the 2022 Connie ward by Hilton Corporation. The Connie Award is the highest award for all brands across Hilton, and marks the "Best of the Best" for each brand within Hilton Worldwide.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

There was no new business, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m. The next meeting will be held June 22, 2023

Respectfully submitted,



Andy Hofmann, Secretary/Treasurer