

Graham County Travel & Tourism Regular Board Meeting

May 9, 2019

4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Attending: Dale Wiggins; chairman, Billy Brown, Mary Griffin, Meredith Jenkins, Jessica Wehr

Absent: Robin Turner, Michelle Redmon

Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Wiggins asked if there were any changes needed in the minutes for April 11, 2019 and asked for a motion to approve the minutes for April 11, 2019. Billy Brown made a motion to approve the April 11, 2019 minutes. Meredith Jenkins second the motion. **Vote Unanimous**

Becky Garland, financial officer, was not present. Daniel Allison, director, gave the financial report and distributed the accommodation tax sheets. Total cash Available for Expenditures is \$349,922.62, there is \$46,204.66 in Capital Reserve, and 39% remaining in the budget.

Chairman's Remarks: Chairman Wiggins stated that we are still waiting to see what will happen with the occupancy tax bill, that has passed the NC House and is waiting to be considered in the NC Senate. He also stated that all ideas for increasing tourism in Graham County are welcome and that we especially need everyone's thoughts and ideas (like rowing) for attracting people here for the off months.

Erin Emmons, representing the Robbinsville Garden Club, presented two beautification projects. The first project was to make the entrance to the Visitor Center more attractive. This proposal was to design and assemble large container flower arrangements for the front entryway of the office. The estimated cost for this would be \$100.00. The second proposal was for hanging baskets installation along Five Points Rd. fencing. The estimated cost would be \$480.00. The Garden Club will commit to water the plants four times a week thru October 1, 2019. Chairman Wiggins asked for a motion to approve the \$580.00. Billy Brown made a motion to approve this proposal. Mary Griffin second the motion. **Vote Unanimous.** Chairman Wiggins requested that the Garden Club send Becky Garland, finance officer, the invoices to be paid. He also thanked Erin for the Garden Club's work on these projects.

Director's Report: Daniel Allison, See attached sheet

Daniel Allison asked Bob Wehr to give an update on his research about Robbinsville being designated an A/T Trail Town. Bob has met with several different people to get information. He explained that if all the documents are put together by October, this can be considered by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Mr. Wehr is also updated the Board about his efforts to attract Rowing teams/clubs to our county.

Chairman Wiggins mentioned Our State magazine and thought Graham County could benefit by advertising in it. Daniel, director, said that he would contact and follow up on that idea.

Chairman Wiggins stated that it would help us if we could build a good relationship with the horseback people. Some of them are certified with the Forest Service to use chainsaws, etc. and they could get in there with pack horses. It would be good to get them to help us and in turn we could help them when they are doing something.

Jessica Wehr pointed out that encouraging people to use the Santeetlah Lake trail would make it easier to maintain it on an ongoing bases.

Public Comments: Bob Wehr briefly spoke about the sport of rock climbing. He also suggested that the Denton Museum on Little Snowbird should be considered for one of the places for people to see.

Beth Fields, Stecoah Valley Center, shared a video of the Jam Camp camping week- end at Stecoah Valley Center. The video was narrated by Julie Nelms. Julie talked about how the Jam Camp had helped her in life and how proud she was of the players that came to Stecoah Valley Center. Beth pointed out that this is one of the activities that Travel & Tourism helped fund. She commented that the camping week- end went very well and everyone enjoyed the time. She also stated that there were 37 total campers, 27 which were overnight campers and that the camp brought in 3 families which stayed overnight in Graham County.

Beth Fields asked about the retail items and was told that the initial order had been placed.

New Business: Chairman Wiggins asked if the Board members would be interested in having a workshop to discuss the budget. Some of the members are interested and Commissioner Wiggins said if anyone had something they would like to see in the budget to let Daniel know.

Chairman Wiggins stated that he is willing to change the meeting time if it would be more convenient for the Board members.

Chairman Wiggins asked if any other Board members had any new business to discuss.

Jessica Wehr mentioned that the pole banners around town are looking worn and there was a discussion and some ideas about what could be done with them to make them last longer. This was a project of the Town of Robbinsville and GREAT.

Mary Griffin made some suggestions about things to do during the off season for visitors, including an activity done at Jekyll Island, Ga. She also suggested adding some features to Travel & Tourism facebook. She then asked about sending the accommodation owners the meeting minutes after they had been approved. Chairman Wiggins asked if the minutes were on the website. Daniel Allison explained that the website would soon be set up to add the minutes. Chairman Wiggins asked Daniel to go ahead and get the minutes on the website, so the accommodation owners can read them if they are interested.

Commissioner Wiggins stated that we would need to continue this meeting Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 5:00 P.M. in the Travel & Tourism office to discuss the budget. Jessica Wehr made a motion to continue the meeting as stated. Billy Brown seconded the motion. **Vote Unanimous**

