

## Graham County Travel & Tourism Regular Board Meeting

March 5, 2020

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Attending: All Board members were present

Call to order: Chairman Wiggins

Chairman Wiggins asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2020 regular meeting. Billy Brown made a motion to approve the minutes. Robin Turner second. Vote unanimous

Becky Garland, financial officer, gave the financial report and budget update. Total Cash Available for Expenditures is \$404,086.85 with \$64,811.26 in Capital Reserve, and 65.73% remaining in budget.

Mr. Turner asked if he could ask Ms. Garland a question. Chairman Wiggins said that he could. Mr Turner then asked Ms. Garland what would be the best way to pay for a monument sign if the Board decides on what kind they are interested in. Ms. Garland explained to the Board her assessment of paying cash verses taking on debt by financing the purchase.

Chairman's Remarks: Chairman Wiggins commented that there was a lot of things in the works and that things are starting to happen. He then explained that this Board meeting would need to be continued until next week in order to reconvene and open the proposals for the re-construction of the Santeetlah Lake Trail.

Lisa Gonzalez, representing EmPOWERing Mountain Food Systems, addressed the Board and explained what the organization did and what it has to offer. It is committed to assist local food and farm businesses, restaurants, vineyards, breweries & value-added producers to grow their business. Some of its program offerings are: Scholarships for training & workshops to help get the knowledge needed to improve business and produce an excellent product. The organization also offer grants and lending services to purchase equipment and expand food based business, and seeks to develop agri-tourism.

Committee Report: Welcome Center/Office: Mr. Turner reported that Daniel got a quote from Savnac Canvas & Signs Inc. for a new sign on the front of the building. Savnac's quote for a 5ft. by 24ft. aluminum sign including installation is \$2493. Jessica Wehr made a motion to buy the sign. Billy Brown second the motion. Vote unanimous.

Robin Turner continued his report by showing the Board an illustration of a monument sign that could be put near the highway. This sign would be double sided, digital, 4ft by 8ft and 10ft high. After much discussion, questions and answers; Billy Brown made a motion to proceed and obtain quotes for the cost of the sign and installation. Rick Davis second the motion. Vote unanimous

Mr. Turner showed a picture of the final design of the wall covering to be put on the Historical Association's walls after the Plott Hound display is taken down.

Director's Report: Please see attached sheet

**Public Comments:** Diana Simon, Town of Lake Santeetlah TDA, commented on the amount of traffic on the Foothills Parkway. She feels that Graham County will be getting a lot of this traffic from those not going on into Gatlinburg.

Beth Fields, Executive Director, Stecoah Valley Center, stated that Stecoah Valley Center did not have a grant to do the Friday Night event for the Graham County Azalea Festival. She asked if any plans had been made for the event. Daniel Allison, Travel & Tourism Director, asked her if they could keep the date open. He is working on finding an event for that night. She said they would keep the date open.

Ms. Fields then talked about the Stecoah Valley Center Jam Session in May. She requested a grant of \$1000 from this fiscal year's budget to help sponsor this event. Jessica Wehr made a motion to give the \$1000 for the Jam Camp. Meredith Jenkins second this motion. Vote unanimous

**New business:** Chairman Wiggins began a discussion about a cigar box guitar mini festival that would include a swap meet, a workshop to teach people how to build cigar box guitars and cigar box guitar performances. He explained that he had been in touch with a prominent cigar box guitar performer/promoter who was interested in meeting with him about coming to Graham County. Chairman Wiggins asked Meredith Jenkins if Fontana Village Resort would be interested in possibly being the venue for this type of event. Ms. Jenkins assured him that they would and offered to host the performer/promoter at Fontana Village in order to discuss this idea further. Chairman Wiggins explained that the next step was a meeting between himself and the performer/promoter to further discuss the possible festival, and that he would keep in touch with Ms. Jenkins.

Chairman Wiggins asked Rick Davis about the ownership of "Your Natural Destination" logo and brand. Mr. Davis said that he thought the logical ownership should be Graham County Travel & Tourism. Since it now belongs to GREAT, Mr. Davis said he will discuss passing the ownership of the logo and brand to Graham County Travel & Tourism with the GREAT Board of Directors at their next meeting.

Mary Griffin stated "We are asking for \$289 to replace the flowers along the fence at Five Points leading to Robbinsville Main Street." She added that she hopes the Garden Club will help water these flowers.

Ms. Griffin then asked for \$2200 to help fund the Farmer's Market so they can hire a part time Farmer's Market Manager for 22 weeks. The Project Manager will work with Graham County Organizations to teach classes such as canning, cooking with available local produce, and other activities for our community members and visitors. These classes will be held at the Graham County Library and will run consecutively with the Farmer's Market. The Market Manager will also handle the promotion and advertising of The Graham County Farmer's Market.

Chairman Wiggins suggested they give \$1100 out of this year's budget and \$1100 out of next year's budget and fund the flower request. That would make the total from this year's budget with the flowers \$1389. Robin Turner made the motion to do so. Billy Brown second. Vote unanimous

Chairman Wiggins asked for a motion to continue the meeting until next Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. Robin Turner made a motion to continue the meeting. Billy Brown second. Vote unanimous.

Meeting will not be continued. Chairman Wiggins ADJOURNED meeting.