

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Tourism Development Authority
October 10, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Chairman Randy Swanson, Jack Harnatkiewicz, Preston Patterson, and Linda Thornley. Michael Diehl and Commissioner Joseph Brown were absent.

Call to Order

Chair Randy Swanson called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

Business

Financial Report-(1st QTR-FY 24-25)

Finance Director Sonia Johnson reviewed the Financial Report for the first quarter, sharing that the beginning fund balance was \$215,760.91. Revenues for the first quarter (July through September 2024) totaled \$46,621.72, and expenditures amounted to \$17,545.36. The available fund balance was reported at \$244,837.27, reflecting a \$15,950 budget amendment. It was noted that \$30,000 had been committed to the visitor center, but this amount had not yet been billed or spent; it remained recorded as committed in the budget, with no changes to the available balance until the commitment was finalized.

Marketing & Advertising Status Update/Discussion

Ann Marie Bass of Front Row Communications, LLC presented updates on marketing efforts, highlighting the growth in social media engagement through timely, relevant content aligned with Swansboro's tourism branding. She reviewed successful advertising initiatives, including the distribution of the restaurant and merchants' guide to state welcome centers, which received positive feedback. She also proposed purchasing 200 small tote bags as swag for visiting groups, emphasizing their practicality and potential for including QR codes linking to the town's website, with an estimated cost of \$310 before tax and shipping. Additionally, she discussed strategies for sourcing photography, collaborating with local partners, and improving event promotion guidelines to maintain a focus on tourism. The presentation concluded with an emphasis on off-season digital advertising, maintaining partnerships like Coast Host, and fostering teamwork and thoughtful planning to support Swansboro's visibility and branding.

Grant Application Revision

Vice Chair Linda Thornley shared with the board that she did not have the Applications available to provide for review as planned today. She would email the 2 options to board members to review only then the board would address and provide feedback and discuss the applications at the next meeting.

Consideration to hire a consultant

Finance Director Johnson expressed discomfort acting as the sole liaison for resolving questions related to the TDA and their expenditure of funds allowances and requested permission to hire an external consultant. The board discussed hiring a consultant to provide clarity on the resolutions governing the TDA board and funding parameters. Concerns were

raised about differing interpretations of what the board and commissioners are permitted to allocate funds toward. The board agreed to explore bringing in a consultant, potentially someone like Glen Hargett, to facilitate a joint meeting between the TDA and the Board of Commissioners. The consultant would help ensure all parties have a consistent understanding of the resolutions and provide guidance on both the TDA and Board of Commissioners on funding responsibilities. The board approved the plan to move forward, with follow-up actions to confirm the consultant's involvement and schedule the meeting.

2025 Regular Meeting Schedule

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that pursuant to NCGS 143-318.12 a public body may establish a schedule of regular meetings, showing the time and place, and copy of the schedule shall be filed with the Town Clerk. A quarterly regular meeting schedule for the following dates was provided for consideration.

- Thursday, January 9, 2025, 2:30pm
- Thursday, April 10, 2025, 2:30pm
- Thursday, July 10, 2025, 2:30pm
- Thursday, October 9, 2025, 2:30pm

On a motion by Ms. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Swanson, the proposed meeting schedule was adopted unanimously.

Board Comments

Ms. Thornley shared that she felt it would be helpful if the board could have a meeting to review and discuss the TDA by-laws and state legislation before they have a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Swanson, seconded by Ms. Thornley, the meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm.