



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

**Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

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

Not present: Bonnie McPeake, Wayne Vest

Staff present: Phil Werz, Donna Garner

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairman Miller.

Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the 12/11/23 minutes. Member Hausser made the motion to approve the minutes, Member Hofmann seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Matt Hausser
Room Tax Collections:

Through seven (7) months of the 2023-24 FY, the CVB has collected nearly \$1.9 million in lodging occupancy tax. This represents an increase of nearly 9% in occupancy tax collections compared to the previous first seven months of last year. Collections have shown an increase year-over-year for each respective previous month, for the last 37 months.

Expenditures:

The CVB is in a strong financial position as we ended the month of January about \$127,000 in expenditures to budget. Overall, the CVB is positioned well for the rest of the fiscal year with heavy concentrations on multiple golf and non-golf digital campaigns, U.S. Open promotions and partnership marketing opportunities, to elevate the destination brand.

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):

Also, you were provided a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of March 12, 2023. The balance sheet showed nearly \$2.3 million in total assets, \$742,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of \$1.6 million.

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

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz

Phil opened with presenting the FY24-25 budget. He stated that the Finance Committee met on March 11th, and unanimously approved it. It is a \$3.8 million budget, but leaves flexibility for decreasing it, if necessary, by \$500,000. There is \$500,000 that we won't encumber until later in the year, to determine how room tax collections are coming in. Phil pointed out some line items that had significant changes, one of which was the Event Management line. This decreased significantly, as in the current FY we had to make a large payment to the USGA in support of the US Open. Chairman Miller asked for a motion to approve the FY 24-25 budget as presented. Member Lewis made the motion, Member Little seconded it, and the motion passed.

Room Tax collections for July through January are at \$1.86 million, which is pacing 9% ahead of last fiscal year. November through January, typically the slowest months of the year, were 15% higher than normal. Our estimates for the total collections for this FY are \$3.6-\$3.8 million.

A 5-year contract for our audit firm, Mauldin and Jenkins, needs to be approved by the Board. Both County and the Moore County Airport have already approved their respective contracts. Phil presented a slide with our fee, for each year of the contract. Chairman Miller asked for a motion to approve the contract. Member Parsons made the motion, Member Little seconded it, and the motion passed.

The CVB and Moore County Economic Development Partnership have recommended to the Airport Board to fund a feasibility study to examine returning commercial flight services to the airport. This Study is ongoing and the findings are to be reported by June 30, 2024. The new Airport Director, Rick Cloutier, has experience in this field and we're looking forward to maybe being part of getting this service started up, here again, from a tourism perspective.

Dr. Gene Brothers, of NC State University, did an economic impact study of the 2014 Men's US Open, which gave great statistical information that Member Hawkins, used in a presentation recently. Phil and Martin Arnes of Media One, have had conversation with Dr. Brothers regarding him doing another study for the 2024 US Open, to compare apples to apples. Discussions regarding this are ongoing.

In our marketing update, Phil relayed that we recently launched our new website, and we're looking to begin using a new booking engine, on the website, to bundle hotel stays with select destination major events. We also have plans to partner with Johnnie-O apparel brand for a US Open promotion between April 8th to May 5th. This will give us access to the Johnnie-O email database which is around 250,000. Pinecone Pathways is underway again and as popular as ever. We'll be hiding 100 pinecones along the various trails, throughout Moore County, and it will end on April 22nd. We have refurbished our Sandhills Pour Tour Passports to include BHAWK Distillery and Sandhills Brewing Co Buggy Factory locations. Plans for 2024 Peach Week are in full progress. It will run from July 18th-28th. Wee Pines will host an event this year as well as some of the favorite events from last year. Phil mentioned that Southern Living recently listed Southern Pines as the 6th best small town in NC.

For the One Time Project Fund Grant Program, all monies have been paid out, except to the Southern Pines Skate Park, as they are still trying to raise their share of the funds. We anticipate carrying forward the \$200,000 to be paid to them next FY. It was mentioned that if they don't raise the required match, then only pay them an amount equivalent to the amount they do raise.

Board Member Reports

Member Parsons stated that Moore County was selected as a county to pilot the Tri Share Child Care Program. We have also received a grant in partnership with Sandhills Community College and the Southern Pines Land & Housing Trust to upscale people of color, and will be working on a credential ladder approach over the next 18 months. The Chamber space will be open for use during Thursday through Saturday, of the US Open, for anyone coming into the area that may need space to do some work.

Member Hawkins said they were dealing with an unprecedented demand and there are a lot of business leads. There is a lot of focus on site identification and site development, trying to figure out where all the people moving here are going to work. Discussion ensued regarding the explosive growth here and in the surrounding areas.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Old Business

Chairman Miller and Phil have been talking to Chris Cavanaugh, to develop a plan on how to use a proposed Room Occupancy Tax increase. Member Pashley is chairing a committee to meet with Chris and develop this strategic plan, and hopefully at the June meeting there will be information presented regarding this.

Chairman Miller stated that the next meeting will be June 26, 2024, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Note: Member Pashley arrived at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Hausser, Secretary/Treasurer