



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

**Board Meeting  
Monday, June 24, 2024**

Members present: Kelly Miller, Andy Hofmann, Matt Hausser, Tom Pashley, George Little, Linda Parsons, Bonnie McPeake, Warren Lewis, Frank Quis

Not present: Natalie Dean-Hawkins, Caroline Xiong, Wayne Vest

Staff present: Phil Werz, Donna Garner

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Miller.

Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the 03/20/24 minutes. Member Pashley made the motion to approve the minutes, Member Little seconded it, and the motion passed.

**Financial Report-Matt Hausser**  
**Room Tax Collections:**

Through ten months of the 2023-24 FY, the CVB has collected nearly \$2.84 million in lodging occupancy tax. This represents an increase of 10.3% in occupancy tax collections compared to the previous first ten months of the last fiscal year. The April collections were up 23% from the previous April.

**Expenditures:**

The CVB is in a strong financial position, as we ended the last documentation month of April \$268,000 ahead of budget. Overall, the CVB is positioned well to close out the 2023-24 fiscal year. Last FY we closed with an all-time high of \$3.2 million. If collections from May and June are as high as anticipated, especially June with the impact of the US Open, we could hit the \$4 million mark in collections to close the 2023-24 FY.

**Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):**

Also, you were provided a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of March 12, 2024. The balance sheet showed a little more than \$2.7 million in total assets, \$743,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of \$2 million.

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

### President & CEO Report-Phil Werz

The first item on the agenda was a presentation by Rick Cloutier, Moore County Airport Director, on a feasibility study of getting commercial airline service back at the Moore County Airport. The study conducted by Volaire Aviation Consulting, was funded by the CVB, due to the impact this would have on tourism, in this destination. The outcome of the study found that it is feasible to move forward with the process of trying to obtain a commercial airline for the airport. The first step would be to apply for a Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) Grant. This would need to be approved by the Airport Board of Directors. Local funding would also be needed. This was more of an informational presentation than a request for any type of funding. More information will be forthcoming.

Martin Armes, from Media One provided the board an overview of our marketing plan for the 2024-25 fiscal year. His presentation outlined statistics that they use to determine the effectiveness of our current marketing efforts. Going forward into the 2024-25 fiscal year, some of the marketing strategies include: lean into golf, invest more in video, cast a wider net, activate visitor dispersal tactics, connect visitors to outdoor activities, support niche interests and non-golf pursuits, invest in market intelligence, engage visitor retention tactics to offset increased competition, build off and shoulder season business, and embrace destination marketing to foster all forms of economic development. Several promotional campaigns are planned with marketing partners such as Under Armour, GoPro, Stitch and Brumate.

Room Occupancy collections for FY 2023-24 are \$2.84 million through the month of April, which is up 10.3% over last year. The month of April was an all-time record high of \$492,000 in collections and occupancy was at 71%. With the anticipated impact of the US Open, it's possible we may end the FY with \$3.8 to \$4 million in collections.

Phil gave some brief statistics from the US Open. Julia Pine of the USGA said it was the best performing US Open Championship on social media ever, with every tracked social metric up significantly. There were huge ratings numbers with Sunday's final round on NBC/Peacock reported as the most watched US Open for East Coast viewers since 2013. Peacock said it was the most watched golf event ever. There were more than 1,600 flights at the airport, with 95,000 gallons of fuel sold, and pilots gave high marks for airport efficiency. The CVB hosted non-credentialed media from golf and leisure sectors including Golf magazine, Golfweek, LINKS, Our State Magazine, Garden & Gun, The Local Palate and Johnnie-O. EDPNC/MCEDP hosted dozens of important stakeholders including investors, clients, numerous state and local dignitaries including the Governor, as well as site selection advisors from across the country, in an effort to get them to choose NC or Moore County.

Some of our upcoming events and promotions include:

- Peach Week (July 18-28)
- U.S. Kids (July 24-Aug 4)
- Pinehurst Barbecue Festival (Aug 30-Sept 1)
- Ag + Art Tour (October)
- Great Trails Day (Oct 19)
- ACWR Holiday Train

Next, Phil introduced Chris Cavanaugh, to give a presentation to the board regarding what we could do with the extra revenue generated from raising the occupancy tax to either 5 or 6%, as authorized by the General Assembly, as well as developing a Destination Enhancement Fund. This action would need to be approved by the commissioners. In his presentation, he stated that Moore County is alone among the topmost popular destinations in NC to only have a 3% occupancy tax rate. The others are all at least 6%. Objectives of the DEF include to grow incremental overnight visitation, enhance both the

destination and the community, compete with other destinations that are adding new assets, and collaborate with Moore County tourism's local partners. After the presentation, discussion ensued among the board members. Member Pashley, as head of the Destination Enhancement Committee, spoke to their approval and support, to move forward with it. Member Little, directly asked of Member Quis, as a Moore County Commissioner, if he thought the Board of Commissioners would approve this request, to which Member Quis stated he could not answer, as they have not discussed the matter in any detail. Member McPeake stated that she felt this matter has been discussed enough and action needed to be taken. She made a motion to move forward with a formal request, to the Board of Commissioners, to increase the occupancy tax to 6%, Member Lewis seconded the motion, and the motion passed. A letter will be drafted to send to the Commissioners outlining this request.

#### **Board Member Reports**

There were no Board Member Reports.

#### **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

#### **New Business**

There was no new business.

Chairman Miller stated that the next meeting will be September 19, 2024, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Hausser", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Hausser, Secretary/Treasurer