



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

**Board Meeting
Wednesday March 19, 2025**

Members present: Kelly Miller, Tom Pashley, Bonnie McPeake, Andy Hofmann, Matt Hausser, Linda Parsons, Natalie Dean-Hawkins, Nick Picerno, Warren Lewis, Caroline Xiong

Not present: Wayne Vest

Staff present: Phil Werz, Melissa Holt, Donna Murphy

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

Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the January 6, 2025, minutes. Member Pashley made the motion to approve the minutes, Member Lewis seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Matt Hausser

Room Tax Collections:

For the first seven (7) months of the 2024-2025 fiscal year (July-January), lodging occupancy tax collections are slightly more than \$2.0 million. This represents an increase of 7.2% from the same seven month period as last fiscal year. Based on past collections from February through June last year, we can safely forecast completing the fiscal year between \$3.6 million to \$3.7 million.

Expenditures:

Based on the latest financial report for January, the CVB remains in a strong financial position. Blending in the unencumbered sum of \$500,000, the CVB is \$183,000 ahead compared to forecast and budget.

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):

Also, you were provided with a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of March 10, 2025. The balance sheet showed a little more than \$2.8 million in total assets, \$656,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of a little more than \$2.2 million.

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

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz:

Phil introduced Martin Armes, of Media One, to give the board an overview of the FY 25-26 marketing Plan. Martin's presentation gave insight into visitor inquiries, with the most popular search terms. We continue to invest in the YouTube channel featuring our podcast series as well as other longer form videos. He also gave information regarding how his team collects visitor data by using mobile tracking methods. We continue to lean into our five destination pillars which are: own all things golf, promote outdoor activities, celebrate small towns, leverage authenticity, build the appeal of non-golf activities. Some of the new strategies in FY 2025-26 will be a new "Home" campaign using the Clean agency, an Our State campaign: Make Moore Memories, extended Meta retargeting, GoPro and Play Campaign, interactive streaming ads on Amazon Prime, and an enhanced email strategy.

Next, Phil stated that each board member was given a copy of the proposed budget for review prior to the meeting. The Finance committee met on March 12th and gave preliminary approval of the budget. He went through and pointed out some key items that had changed and the reason for the change. Some discussion ensued. Chairman Miller entertained a motion to approve the budget. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Hausser seconded it, and the motion passed.

Room Occupancy Tax Collections for the first seven months of the fiscal year are up overall, however August was relatively flat, and January was down 8.52% from last year. However, Phil attributes that to a very cold January. He foresees that spring will more than make up for it. He said that our team along with Media One plan to try and come up with some type of event or campaign to draw people here during the winter months. We're still up 7.2% year to date.

The Pinecone Pathways program kicks off tomorrow on the first day of spring. We held a kickoff event at Weymouth Center last evening, that was a great success. We had live music, vendors, food trucks, and the event was attended by approximately 300 people. Everyone is very anxious to get back out and look for the pinecones. We have created a set of 3 patches for each year, of the program, that will be for sale, at Against the Grain on Broad Street, with \$10 of the price being donated to Weymouth Center.

The next item Phil discussed was a potential regional music festival. Natalie Dean-Hawkins was actually contacted and went to the preliminary meeting regarding this idea. Former Governor Roy Cooper formed the NC Music Office, and they are wanting to plan this music festival to include Moore, Lee and Chatham counties. It would be held in 2026, and several potential venues are being considered.

Phil mentioned two additional items of interest. One is a State Equine Trail that would encompass eight counties including Moore County. This is in the very preliminary planning stages, and could take 10-20 years to complete. Also, there has been a proposal presented at the Board of Commissioners Public Hearing on March 18, 2025, regarding building a National Special Forces Green Beret Memorial Park here in Moore County. Land has been acquired off Airport Rd near Whispering Pines, and a 5+ year timeline has been developed. This would be a world class National Park and would rival any monument in our nation's capital. This would definitely be a tourism drive to our destination.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Miller stated that at the Commissioner's public hearing held last evening, March 18, 2025, the Commissioners were supportive of increasing the room occupancy tax an additional 3% and voted unanimously to do so. He thanked Member Picerno, who is the Commissioner representative on our board, for his support. Member Picerno commented that he doesn't like taking other people's money and because of this was a holdout on increasing the rate, until he saw that the board intends to do some great things for the community, with the additional funds. Member McPeake asked about the amount we currently have in the fund balance, and suggested that we go ahead and use some of that money, to do another round of grants. Discussion ensued, and it was decided to amend the FY 25-26 budget to incorporate \$1,000,000 from the fund balance for this purpose. Chairman Miller entertained a motion to rescind the earlier approved budget. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Hausser seconded

to rescind the earlier approved budget. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Hausser seconded it, and the motion passed. Chairman Miller then asked for a motion to amend the budget to \$4.6 million, which will incorporate \$1 million from the fund balance for the grant project. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Lewis seconded it and the motion passed. As a side note, to the Commissioners increasing the room occupancy tax, they have requested that the CVB Board sign a Memorandum of Understanding which states that the CVB will not provide funding to the Moore County Airport for a commercial airline, and if they do, then the Commissioners may repeal the additional 3% tax. Member Picerno stated that it's the Board of Commissioners' view that a private business should be able to stand on their own, and public funds should not be used to subsidize them. Discussion ensued, and it was some board members feelings that the Commissioners were trying to control how the CVB's money is spent. The general consensus, was that the grant funding should be used for municipalities and non-profits, so the airline service wouldn't align with those parameters anyway. It was finally decided that if the wording of the document was changed to read Final Memorandum of Understanding, the CVB Board would agree to sign it. Chairman Miller asked if there was a motion to agree to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the word Final added. Member Pashley made the motion, Member Hausser seconded it, and the motion passed with a vote of 6-1.

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 June 24, 2025, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Matt Hausser, Secretary/Treasurer