

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

August 10, 2026

Present: Members: Chair Tim Crabtree, Town Manager Amie Owens, Steve Crabtree, Heather Childress
Heather Dombroskie, Guy Gooder, Hannah Edwards, Daniel Lawton, Colin McGinnis, and Rob Reale.

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk

Stacy Guffey, Mayor

Robbie Tompa, Councilman

Mia Overton, The Franklin Press

Daryna Thiemann, Macon Sense

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications

Jodi Moses – Mountain Roots Bluegrass Festival

Kellie Burns, Sweet Carolina Musica Festival Organizer

Devon Dupuis, Macon County Farmers Market

Rob Gasbarro, Outdoor 76

Bobby Fuqua, Visit Smokies

Kim Gambo – Uptown Gallery, Plein Air Art Festival

Cheryl Ledford - Plein Air Art Festival

Christine Brown - Plein Air Art Festival

1. Call to Order- Chair Tim Crabtree

The meeting was called to order at 5:29 p.m.

2. Approval of the July 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Heather Dombroskie to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2026 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10 -0.

3. Financial Reports- ending June 30, 2026

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of June 2026. The total collections for June were \$18,025.91 (4th highest June on record and above the 10-year average). Total expenses for FY 2025/2026 were \$152,820.48 leaving a balance of \$36,036.43 and \$182,300.70 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to approve the financial reports ending June 30, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

4. New Business

A.) Follow Up Report from:

1. Mountain Roots Bluegrass Festival

Jodi Moses gave an update on this event. She showed their Facebook recap video. She noted that the weather wasn't the best; lots of rain. The biggest problem they ran into was the muddy field parking. She thanked the Cullasaja Fire Department for this assistance with parking. She estimated they had approximately 1,000 people in attendance and overall, the event was a success. She stated that next year they would not sale t-shirts. They plan to look for additional banner sponsors and might possibly look for a new location. They do plan to change the date of the event to June 1st in hopes to avoid the rain.

2. Macon County Transit

Darlene Asher submitted her follow up report. In the report she noted that the Hiker Route gave rides to 1729 hikers.

There was discussion on future funding of this route. Several hikers had said they only came into Franklin because the ride was free. There was also discussion of investing in marketing of Macon Transit.

B.) New Application for Consideration – KIDS Place – 828 Treasure Quest – Saturday, October 10, 2026 – Requested amount \$2,500

Kellie Burns, event organizer, submitted an application for funding. The event will take place on October 10, 2026 at the Macon County Recreation Park and in Downtown Franklin. The requested amount is \$2,500. She noted that last year the event raised \$21,872 for KIDS Place. They had 75 teams to participate and this year are opening up the event to 200. They do encourage teams to come to downtown Franklin to visit. This year they are lowering the cost to participate to \$100. This item will be voted on at the September meeting.

C.) New Application for Consideration – Macon County Farmer's Market – Saturday's – May through November 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Requested amount \$2,500

Devon Dupuis, Market Manager, submitted an application for funding of the Macon County Farmer's Market. She noted that this is their third year, but the second year in the Town Hall parking lot. They have seen an uptick in customers and a rise in the number of participating vendors. Each Saturday they have anywhere from 20 to 45 vendors and can accommodate up to 58. She stated that this year they did increase their marketing efforts with the funding that they had received. The plan for next year is to increase their digital marketing to outside areas. This item will be voted on at the September meeting.

D.) New Application for Consideration – Outdoor 76 – The Naturalist 25/50K – Saturday, October 3, 2026 – Requested amount \$1,600

Rob Gasbarro, event organizer, presented their application for funding. This is the 12th year for this event. They typically have over 100 racers. To date they have already had 96 racers registered. After the race on Saturday, they will have "festival" with music and food behind O76. He also noted the approximately 500 to 600 folks come to downtown for this event. This item will be voted on at the September meeting.

E.) New Application for Consideration – Plein Air Art Festival - October 22-24, 2026 – Requested amount \$1,600

Kim Gambo, Mountains & Main Committee member, presented this new event application for funding. She gave an overview of what a Plein Air Art Festival entails. After the event, the paintings will be on display at the Uptown Gallery and will be available for purchase. The event is open to 35 painters. They will advertise the event on social media, print media and via radio ads. This item will be voted on at the September meeting.

5. Items from the Board

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Social Media Post and Ads
 - 11 Social Media post and 3 Paid Ads
 - Facebook – 58 new followers
 - Instagram – 41 new followers
- Website
 - More than 13,000 users
 - Top Pages for views
 - Home Page & 80s Flashback
 - Top Pages for engagement
 - Things to Do & Places to Stay
- Google Searches (4.18K Clicks & 253K Impressions)
- Email/Newsletter Performance
 - 21.7 % Open rate & 6.05% Click rate
- Media Relations
- Next Steps
 - Fall Advertising
 - Videos (The Naturalists & Museums)
 - Follower sweepstakes
 - Travel Guide
 - Chatbot

B.) Report from TDA Subcommittee

Chair Tim Crabtree and Morgan Stewart presented Town Council with the TDA's 1, 3, 5-year plan at the August Town Council meeting.

There was discussion on the new application process and downtown murals.

Next steps: Member Colin McGinnis will breakdown the 1-year project plan. He would like each subcommittee member to pair with a TDA non-subcommittee member on these projects and then report back to the group.

Mayor Stacy Guffey stated that Town Council is thankful to the TDA for going above and beyond and doing all this work.

6. **Announcements**

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, September 14, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7. **Adjourn**

Member Colin McGinnis made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

Tim Crabtree, Chair

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk