

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

June 09, 2025

Present: Chairperson Connie Grubermann, Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Kevin Covell, Rob Reale, Hannah Edwards, Guy Gooder, Tim Crabtree and Heather Dombroskie.

Absent: Members Angela Martin and Matt Holland.

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Robbie Tompa, Town Councilman
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Devon Dupuis, Stewart Communications
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Pam Bowen, Pregnancy Care Center

1. Call to Order- Chair Connie Grubermann

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Introduction of New Member- Heather Dombroskie

Heather owns an Airbnb on Hillcrest Ave. She and her husband also own a repair shop and have two young children.

3. Approval of the May 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Hannah Edwards to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2025 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

4. Financial Reports- ending April 2025

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of March 2025. She noted that the amount of occupancy tax collected in April was \$15,576.98 (2nd highest April to date and well above the 10-year average). \$1,125 was moved from the Undesignated Funds line item to Festivals and Events line item following the vote at the May meeting. Total expenses thus far \$146,010.62 leaving a balance of \$1,402.10 and \$174,362.43 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to approve the financial report ending April 30, 2025. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

5. Continued Business

A.) Vote on Application

The Taste of Scotland Society, Inc. submitted an application for funding for \$3,000 to assist with their 26th Annual Taste of Scotland Festival June 14, 2025.

Member Tim Crabtree made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to fund \$1,500 for The Taste of Scotland Festival. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

B.) Post- event Report from Sweet Carolina Musica Festival

Pam Bowen, Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center Board Member, gave an update on the Sweet Carolina Music Festival. She stated that they sold 867 tickets, but due to the weather there were approximately 670 in attendance. The one complaint they received was for better handicapped parking/entrance. They plan to make this an annual event and would like to add more things next year. They would like to add a kid's area with face painting and pony rides. They have sent the proposal to John Morgan for him to perform once again.

6. New Business

A.) New Application for Consideration

TribalVibe Promotions submitted an application for consideration for \$1,000 for their Come Together Festival to be held on September 25, 2025. This will be voted on at the July meeting.

7. Items from the Board

A.) Annual Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications, gave an annual marketing update:

- Community Relations
 - Held Stakeholder meetings
- Rebranding
 - Experience Franklin
- New website
 - Experiencefranklinnc.com
- Media Relations
- Outreach (emails)
- Strategic Partnerships
 - TDC & Visit Smokies
- Paid Media
 - Billboards, Smoky Mountain Host Guidebook, Facebook & Social Media
- Event Planning

B.) Classification of Membership

Town Manager Owens noted that 1/3 of the TDA membership should be made up of members who collect occupancy tax within town limits. Hannah and Heather both run Airbnb's, so that leaves one vacancy for someone that collects occupancy tax. There is also one vacancy for a tourism related member. The two vacant positions have been advertised.

C.) Elect New Chair

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve Tim Crabtree as the new TDA Chairperson. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

Tim Crabtree accepted the nomination.

D.) Project Suggestions for FY 2025/2026

Town Manager Owens noted that in FY 2024/2025 the TDA funded the purchase of new banners for the Town. In the FY 2025/2026 budget, there are \$16,150 in undesignated funds that can be used for infrastructure projects/ branding of the Town. Town Manager Owens asked the TDA members to think of projects they would like to see these funds used for and bring suggestions to the July meeting.

E.) Councilman Tompa presented Chairperson Connie Grubermann with a certificate of appreciation from the Town for her years of service to the TDA Board.

8. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, July 16, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

9. Adjourn

Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

Connie Grubermann, Chairperson

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk