

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2025

Present: Chairperson Connie Grubermann, Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Hannah Edwards, Rob Reale, Angela Martin, Matt Holland, and Guy Gooder.

Absent: Members Kevin Covell and Tim Crabtree

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Robbie Tompa, Town Councilman
Jim Adkins, Scottish Tartan Museum Owner
Jessica

1. Call to Order- Chair Connie Grubermann

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of the March 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2025 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

3. Financial Reports- ending January 31, 2025

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of January 31, 2025. She noted that the amount of occupancy tax collected in January was \$11,129.64 (highest January to date and above the 10-year average). Total expenses thus far \$105,504.29 leaving the balance of \$1,916.04 and \$172,521.49 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to approve the financial report ending January 31, 2025. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

4. New Business

A.) New Application for Consideration

Jessica Merritt, Executive Director, Special Liberty Project submitted an application for funding for their Healing Hope Retreat. This is a free event for military widows and will take place July 8-11, 2025. The requested amount is \$10,000. This item will be voted on at the April meeting.

B.) Vote on Application

Macon County Transit submitted an application for funding for \$6,000 for their Hiker Route.

There was discussion about if the Macon County Transit did any advertising since the request was to cover the costs to provide the service and was not allowed under current TDA funding guidelines.

Member Angela Martin made a motion to approve the \$6,000 funding request. The motion died for lack of a second.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to not fund the request. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

C.) Vote on Application

Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center (SMPCC) submitted an application for funding for their Sweet Carolina Music Festival Fundraiser on May 3, 2025. This funding request was for \$35,000.

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Town Manager Amie Owens to fund \$3,000 for advertising. Motion carried by a vote of 6-1 (Member Angela Martin voted in opposition).

D.) Vote on Application

Jim Adkins, Scottish Tartan Museum Owner, submitted an application for funding for National Tartan Day on April 5, 2025. The funding request is for \$1,525 to be used for a bagpipe band and axe throwing.

Member Angela Martin made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve the funding of \$1,525 as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

E.) New Application for Consideration

Hannah Edwards, Yonder owner, submitted an application for funding of their 2025 Summer Concert Series. The concerts take place on the lawn of Yonder Community Market the last Sunday of the month, May through October 12th. The requested amount to be used for advertising is \$3,000. This item will be voted on at the April meeting.

5. **Items from the Board**

A.) Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications, gave the marketing update.

- Email survey results (490 emails sent)
- Website update
 - New events posted
 - 3500 active users
- Media Relations
 - Promoting Women’s History events, Spring Break and Hikers
 - “FAM” Tours
- Social Media
- Email opens/click rates
- New Annual Destination Plan

6. **Preliminary Budget Discussion – TDA Board**

Town Manager Owens went over several budget considerations for the 2025/2026 FY. She said that annual audit contract would have a \$200 increase. She went over current year statistics and projections. She asked TDA members to think about additional items that would like to include in the budget, new advertising opportunities or infrastructure projects. She asked TDA members if they wanted to continue with the current marketing service or do another Request for Proposal (RFP). The consensus was to stay with Stewart Communications.

Member Angela Martin inquired about landscaping and holiday decorations in Town. She suggested potentially using TDA funds for these projects.

7. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, April 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

8. Adjourn

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

Connie Grubermann, Chairperson

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk