

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2026

Present: Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Heather Childress Custer, Heather Dombroskie, Hannah Edwards, Guy Gooder, Angela Martin, Colin McGinniss, and Rob Reale (arrived at 5:35).

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Robbie Tompa, Town Councilman
Jeff Berry, Town Councilman
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Darlene Asher, Macon County Transit
Cory McCall, Appalachian Trail Community Council

1. Call to Order- Town Manager Amie Owens

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Presentation of the Annual Audit Report – Martin, Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA

Lutchia Johnston presented the TDA Annual Audit Report for FY 2024-2025, via Zoom. She noted that the audit was a clean, unmodified opinion with no findings. The audit report has been submitted and received by the Local Government Commission.

There were no questions by the TDA Board.

3. Approval of the December 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2025 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8 -0.

4. Financial Reports- ending November 30, 2025

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of November 2025. She noted that for the month of November 2025 \$18,458.96 was collected in occupancy tax (includes \$4,261.56 in late payments from October; above average). Total expenses thus far \$68,071.77 leaving a balance of \$111,928.23 and \$178,570.74 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Heather Dombroskie to approve the financial report ending November 30, 2025. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

5. New Business

Follow up Report from Macon County Transit – Darlene Asher

Darlene Asher gave an update on 2025 Macon Transit Hiker Route. They transported 726 hikers to and from the Appalachian Trail. The total cost incurred for the Hiker Route was \$20,504. The TDA funds were used for advertising. She did note that they have secured sponsorships for fares for the 2026 hiker season; there will be no charge for hikers.

There was additional discussion on marketing: AT Hiker guide and the app (FarOut) used by hikers.

A.) Approval of Meeting Schedule for TDA for 2026

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the 2026 TDA meeting schedule.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Heather Dombroskie to approve the 2026 TDA meeting schedule, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

B.) New Application for Consideration – Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council – 2026 Celebration March 20- April 22, 2026 – Requested amount \$1,200

Cory McCall, Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council, presented an application for funding for their 2026 AT Celebration. The requested amount is \$1,200. This item will be voted on at the February meeting.

There was additional discussion on developing a nice illustrated map of Downtown Franklin with a QR code. The QR code could be placed at the trail heads.

6. **Items from the Board**

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Ad renewal in Visit Smokies guide
- Media Relations update
 - Ruby Drop news story/interview
- Refresh of Georgia Billboard
- Social Media
 - 1 million views
 - Followers
 - #1 ad Winter/Holiday Magic
- Website update/followers

B.) Planning Subcommittee Volunteers

The following TDA Members volunteered for the Planning Subcommittee: Hannah Edwards, Colin McGinnis, Angela Martin and Tim Crabtree. They will set a meeting date when Chairperson Crabtree is back in Town.

7. **Announcements**

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

8. **Adjourn**

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Angela Martin to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

Amanda W. Owens, Town Manager

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk