

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

June 8, 2026

Present: Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Kevin Covell, Heather Childress Custer, Heather Dombroskie, Guy Gooder, Hannah Edwards, Colin McGinnis, Rob Reale and Angela Martin.

Absent- Chair Tim Crabtree

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Shelby Powell, The Franklin Press
Daryna Thiemann, Macon Sense
Robbie Tompa, Councilman
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Mary Guercio, Tribal Vibe Promotions
Dave Linn, Tracy Griffith and George Young, 80's Flashback Weekend

1. Call to Order- Town Manager Amie Owens

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

2. Approval of the May 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Kevin Covell to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2026 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 9 -0.

3. Financial Reports- ending April 30, 2026

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of April 2026. The total collections for April were \$19,107.03 (Highest April on record). Total expenses thus far \$129,386.29 leaving a balance of \$22,930.50 and \$181,221.23 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to approve the financial reports ending April 30, 2026 as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 9-0.

4. New Business

A.) New Application for Consideration – 80's Flashback Weekend – Friday, July 31 and Saturday, August 1, 2026- Requested Amount 7,500

80's Flashback Weekend submitted an application for funding and George Young, 80's Flashback Board Member, gave a recap of last year's event promotions and advertisement. He then discussed this year's promotions, including a new website, addition of 4 billboards located in surround counties, Facebook and Instagram posts, additional reels, and an Ingles Open Road segment. He also discussed the two-day event, including performers and

food/alcohol vendors. The requested amount is \$7,500 and this item will be voted on at the July meeting.

B.) New Application for Consideration – Come Together Recovery Festival- Friday, September 25, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.- Requested Amount \$1,000

May Guercio, Tribal Vibe Promotions, submitted an application for funding for the Come Together Recovery Festival. She gave a recap of last year's event and discussed this year's upcoming event. She plans to have live music, speakers and activities for children. She will be advertising on billboards. She stated last year they had approximately 250 attendees. The requested amount is \$1,000 and this item will be voted on at the July meeting.

C.) Report from Visit Smokies – Tom Overton, Membership Coordinator

Tom Overton, Visit Smokies Membership Coordinator, gave an overview on what Visit Smokies does for the region. He talked about their marketing efforts and upcoming events. He noted that Visit Smokies services the 7 most western counties in Western North Carolina.

5. **Items from the Board**

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Social Media Post and Paid Ads
 - Organic Post
- Website
 - More than 14,000 followers
 - More than 27,000 page views
- Google Searches (2.45K Clicks & 199k Impressions)
- Email/Newsletter Performance
- Media Relations
 - Current Pitches – Smoky Mountain Storytellers, July 4th and 80's Flashback Weekend
- Update on new Travel Guide
- New Naturalist Trail Race Video

B.) Report from TDA Subcommittee

Member Colin McGinnis created a template for the 1-, 3- and 5-year TDA plan. The goal is to have a draft plan at the July meeting.

Town Manager Amie Owens discussed the new funding application recommendations. The proposed new application will review funding request twice a year, includes a section on expected attendance, eligibility grant requirements, project narrative, and certification/signature page. She encouraged others to think about these changes and make additional suggestions.

C.) Additional Items from the Board

- Angela Martin presented her Green Event Checklist.
- Councilman Tompa stated he was excited for the subcommittee's 1-, 3-, 5-year plan.
- Kevin Covell reminded the board that his last TDA meeting. He said he was also excited for the 1-, 3-, 5-year plan. He noted that this board was a great group of people.
- Heather Childress Custer gave a tourism update and asked board members to complete a tourism questionnaire (she will email the questionnaire).
- Town Manager Owens gave an update on the Main Street Transformation Workshop. She noted that there will be a follow-up meeting with NC DOT on June 23.

6. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, July 13, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7. Adjourn

Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Member Angela Martin to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 9-0.

Amanda W. Owens, Town Manager

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk