

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

July 13, 2026

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

Absent- Chair Tim Crabtree and Heather Custer Childress

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Daryna Thiemann, Macon Sense
Robbie Tompa, Councilman
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Pam Bowen, Pregnancy Care Center Finance Director
Kellie Burns, Sweet Carolina Musica Festival Organizer

1. Call to Order- Town Manager Amie Owens

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

2. Welcome and Introduction of New Members

Steve Crabtree introduced himself and stated he cares about the Town and the Community and he wants to make good things happen.

Daniel "Dan" Lawton introduced himself as the local chimney sweep and stated he wants to make Franklin a better home for his kids and grandkids.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to excuse Chair Tim Crabtree and Member Heather Custer Childress from the July 13, 2026 meeting. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8 -0.

3. Approval of the June 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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

4. Financial Reports- ending May 31, 2026

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of May 2026. The total collections for May were \$18,514.21 (2nd highest May on record and above the 10-year average). Total expenses thus far \$134,936.29 leaving a balance of \$35,894.71 and \$181,750.69 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Rob Reale made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to approve the financial reports ending May 31, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

5. New Business

A.) Follow Up Report from Sweet Carolina Music Festival

Pam Bowen, Pregnancy Care Center Finance Director, and Kellie Burns, Sweet Carolina Music Festival Organizer, gave a report on the 2026 Sweet Carolina Music Festival. They thanked the TDA for their support and stated they had a great turn out. They noted that with the ticket scanned plus vendors, artists and their supporters they had approximately 1,200 people in attendance.

Pam Bowen discussed what the Pregnancy Care Center does and noted they are relocating to 244 Porter Street.

Member Colin McGinnis inquired about the ticket sale revenue. Kellie Burns explained why the sales didn't equal the number of tickets sold. She stated that sponsors are given tickets as part of sponsorships.

There was discussion about the date flexibility since several events took place on that date.

Member Rob Real asked how many billboards they had and it was noted they had 5. Member Steve Crabtree inquired on the stage cost increase and it was noted that the stage cost more this year.

B.) Vote on Application- 80s Flashback Weekend – Friday July 31 and Saturday August 1, 2026 – Request Amount - \$7,500

Member Rob Reale made a motion, seconded by Member Daniel Lawton to approve the 80s Flashback Weekend request of \$7,500, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8 -0.

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

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to approve the Come Together Recovery Festival request of \$1,000, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8 -0.

6. Items from the Board

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Social Media Post and Ads
 - 9 Social Media post and 2 Paid Ads
 - Most viewed – July 4th and WLOS Scottish Heritage
- Website
 - More than 17,000 users

- Top Pages for views
 - Independence Day & Home Page
- Top Pages for engagement
 - Things to Do & Places to Stay
- Google Searches (3.39K Clicks & 233K Impressions)
- Email/Newsletter Performance
 - 23.5 % Open rate & 8.5% Click rate
- Media Relations
- Travel Guide Update
 - Waiting on print quote

FY 2025/2026 End of Year Marketing Report

- Social Media
 - 34 Paid Ads
 - 5.4 million views
- Website
 - 182K Users
 - 334,769 users
- Google Search
 - 26.3K Clicks
 - 2.46M Impressions
 - AI Chat Bot coming soon
- Newsletter
 - 14 Sent
 - 17.9% – 23.8% Open Rate
 - 3.6% -12.5% Click Rate
- Media Relations

Mr. Stewart gave information on where people visit from and how long they stay. There was also discussion about Heritage Tourism.

Mr. Stewart let the TDA Board know that the Society of American Travel Writers Conference will be held in Haywood County in October. He noted it is a four-day event and invited all to attend.

B.) Report from TDA Subcommittee and recommendation to Town Council

Member Colin McGinnis gave a recap/update from the subcommittee. They looked at infrastructure, application process and type/size of events.

They created a draft 1,3,5-year plan. The plan includes Guiding Principles (Accountability, Collaboration and External Influences), How We Engage (Event Funding, Event Optimization, Infrastructure and Marketing). He asked Board members for feedback.

Daniel Lawton volunteered to replace Angela Martin, who did not seek Board reappointment, on the subcommittee.

Town Manager Owens discussed the new proposed application. The application will include an attachment for environmentally friendly event considerations.

The subcommittee will present their strategic plan to the Town Council at their August meeting.

C.) Resolution from Town Council – Attendance to Meetings

Town Manager Owens discussed the Resolution on Board Member Attendance that was passed by Town Council at their July meeting. She noted that the Resolution follows the current TDA by-laws on attendance.

D.) Contact Information for TDA Membership 2026-2027

7. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, August 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

8. Adjourn

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Colin McGinnis to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

Amanda W. Owens, Town Manager

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk