

**The Cascade Highlands Board of Directors Minutes  
Northwest North Carolina / Southwest Virginia  
Regional Tourism Initiative  
Jonesville Visitor's Center, I-77, Exit 82, Jonesville, NC  
1:00 PM, Friday, August 15, 2008**

Jim Harrell welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

**Board Members**

Present:

- Ken Richardson, Alleghany County
- Donnie Turner, Carroll County
- Gary Larrowe, Carroll County
- Chuck Riedhammer, City of Galax
- Felicia Nash, Grayson County
- Jimmy Walker, Stokes County
- Jim Harrell, Surry County
- Macon Sammons, Surry County
- John Yates, Wilkes County

Others Present:

- Tom Holder, NC Heritage Tourism
- Helen Ruth Almond, NC Heritage Tourism
- Barbara Debord, Smyth County Tourism
- Bobby Todd, Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce
- Laurette Leagon, Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Chris Knopf, Surry County Tourism
- Randy Arno, University of Virginia Southside

Introductions were made by every one in attendance.

Finance Report

Macon presented the Finance Report. There were no questions.

New Membership

Smyth County, Virginia has requested membership into The Cascade Highlands Regional Tourism Initiative. Felicia motioned that the Board of Directors accept Smyth County, VA as a ninth member of The Cascade Highlands; seconded by Jimmy. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

Grant Funding

Donnie and Chris updated the Board on all of the funding that has been secured for the next two years as follows: EDA, \$128,500; NC Rural Center, \$75,000; VA Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, \$27,800; The Cascade Highlands, \$25,700. The Board agreed that a working budget needs to be developed for the organization.

Vehicle Donation

Jim informed the Board that Surry County has offered to sell a 2002 Volkswagen Beetle for \$1.00 that can be used by the Director for travel purposes. Jimmy motioned that the Board of Directors purchase the Volkswagen Beetle from Surry County in the amount of \$1.00; seconded by Jimmy. All

present were in favor. Motion carried. It was questioned whether Surry County would retain insurance on the vehicle on behalf of The Cascade Highlands. Macon said he would report back on this issue.

#### Additional Memberships

The Board discussed at length about asking Ashe, Floyd, Patrick, and Wythe counties to join The Cascade Highlands prior to beginning the work program. The matter of when membership should be open was discussed in regards to expenses that would be incurred with changing printed materials as well as the investments made at the beginning of each fiscal year by each existing member. It was discussed that approaching Wytheville and the Town of Floyd may be beneficial as well since they have significant existing tourism efforts. Chuck motioned that the Board send a letter signed by Jim and Donnie to Ashe, Floyd, Patrick, and Wythe counties inviting them to join The Cascade Highlands with a membership fee of \$7,500, with a deadline of November 1, 2008 to make their decision, the next window for open membership will be April of 2010; the letters should be carbon copied to businesses in these counties that have attended previous RTI functions or meetings; seconded by Ken. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

#### Director of Tourism and Communications Hiring Process

The Board reviewed the resumes of the applicants for the Director's position. It was decided that each member jurisdiction would submit their top five names whom they would like to see interviewed. The Board will use a ranking system where their top choice would receive 5 points and their last choice would receive 1 point. Each member jurisdiction will submit their choices by August 29<sup>th</sup>. Jim will develop a set of interview questions. The Board will consider a structure for the interview process between now and the date of the interviews. Interviews will be conducted in either Dobson or Galax on September 19<sup>th</sup> at noon.

#### Office Location

The Board reviewed the lone RFP that was submitted for office space by the Business Development Center in Sparta. Ken stated that he sits on the Board at the Center and that they are willing to negotiate on a lease for the space. The Board will wait until the next meeting to allow any additional proposals to be submitted.

#### Employment Contract

The Executive Committee will be tasked with developing an employment contract. The committee members are as follows: Zach Henderson, Barbara DeBord, Macon Sammons, Dallas Garrett, and Mike Maynard.

#### Website

The Board desires to launch the website at the same time they announce the appointment of key staff; therefore, the completion of the website is a priority. Macon volunteered Chris to serve as a liaison between the marketing firm and the web developers. Chuck motioned for the Board to appoint Chris to serve as a liaison between Professional Networks and Vintage Marketing on preparing the website, seconded by Jimmy. All present were in favor. Motion carried. Discussion followed and it was agreed that each member jurisdiction needed to forward a list of assets and digital photographs to Chris to assist him with this project.

#### Marketing Strategy Execution

The Board agreed to begin execution of the marketing strategy once a Director is hired. The Director's participation in this process from the beginning is important.

Articles of Incorporation

The Board agreed that the The Cascade Highlands needs to file Articles of Incorporation in Virginia. These have already been filed in North Carolina.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Chris Knopf  
Surry County Tourism