

RTI Board of Directors Minutes
(formerly known as the RTI Steering Committee)
Northwest North Carolina / Southwest Virginia
Regional Tourism Initiative
Hampton Inn, I-77, Exit 93, Dobson, NC
1:00 PM, Friday November 16, 2007

Jim Harrell welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer at 1:10.

Board Members	Ken Richardson, Alleghany County
Present:	Donnie Turner, Carroll County
	Mike Maynard, Grayson County
	Stanley Smith, Stokes County
	Bryan Steen, Stokes County
	Jim Harrell, Surry County
	Macon Sammons, Jr., Surry County
	Jessica Icenhour, RTI Tourism Advisory Committee

Others Present:	Randy Arno, UVA Southside
	Tom Holder, NC Heritage Tourism
	Chris Knopf, Surry County Tourism
	Dennis Thompson, RTI Consultant

Minutes

After consideration, the minutes of the October 19, 2007 meeting were declared approved with no corrections offered.

Financial Report

The monthly financial report showed total receipts of \$56,908.05, disbursements of \$15,345.18, leaving a cash balance of \$41,562.87.

Bylaws

Randy guided the RTI Steering Committee through a review of the Bylaws, which have been revised several times since the RTI Steering Committee was formed. After discussion of many sections and additional revisions to Sections 2.1 and 5.1, the bylaws were adopted on motion by Ken, second by Donnie and unanimous vote. It was noted that by this action the RTI Steering Committee will hence forth be known and identified as the RTI Board of Directors. (See Bylaws as adopted. Attached.)

The Board thanked Randy for all of his work on the bylaws.

EDA Application

Dennis and Macon then briefed the RTI Board on the draft EDA pre-application, noting that the total scope is \$257,000. Following review and discussion, it was moved by Mike, seconded by Stanley and unanimously voted by the RTI Board to authorize the submission of the application to EDA, the NC Rural Center and other state, regional and foundation funding source as deemed appropriate by the RTI executive committee. It was further moved by Mike, seconded by Ken

and unanimously voted that the scope of the application for the marketing plan development would be \$257,000.

Macon agreed to send out a draft grant application endorsement letter to the RTI Board members.

FY 08 Work Program

Dennis then reviewed the revised draft FY 08 work program. After review and consideration, on motion by Mike, seconded by Donnie, it was unanimously voted that the revised work program prepared by Dennis be approved.

Grants Search

A chart showing the current status of the RTI grants search was also acknowledged and made available to Board members.

Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

Donnie and Jessica then gave a summary to the RTI Board on the November 9th TAC meeting and the notes from the meeting were distributed. Donnie reported that the recommendations of the TAC were to:

- 1) Set an organizational structure for Tourism (e.g., Section 501 (c) (6), etc)
- 2) Hire a marketing person
- 3) Develop business and marketing plans

Host Organization Consideration

The RTI Board then reviewed and discussed in detail findings concerning several host organizations in our region of NC and VA, from a survey conducted by Tom. These include Blue Ridge Travel Association, Heart of Appalachian Tourism Authority, High Country Hosts, Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau and one unidentified organization. Donnie expressed interest in the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau as a model because it incorporates a private / public partnership. It was agreed that additional effort needed to be given to identifying one or more best models for a host organization.

Donnie noted that after the marketing program / plan roll out, we must have vendors buy in by the tourism vendors and that we would have to sell our name. Jim stated we would have to state how much it will cost the vendors to participate and specifically what they will get.

Support Services from Community Colleges

The RTI Board discussed a call for a dialogue among community colleges to support regional tourism, perhaps coming from Jim as our chairman, focusing on hospitality training and business plan development. It could be addressed to Wytheville Community College, Surry Community College, Wilkes Community College, and Forsyth Technical Center, but might also include universities and 4-year college specialists.

Next Meeting

It was the consensus of the RTI Board to meet from 10 AM to 3 PM on Friday, December 14 in work session to devise the framework of a business plan to present to vendors. Mike suggested that we ask the vendors what they want from the RTI. Jim suggested that the executive committee commence work on the vendor business plan as soon as possible so that substantial progress can be made on December 14. He also suggested a roll out of the marketing plan in

January, a membership meeting in February, followed by the RTI Board finalizing the plan in March.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Macon C. Sammons, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

MCS/th