

**The Cascade Highlands Board of Directors Minutes
Northwest North Carolina / Southwest Virginia
Regional Tourism Initiative
Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce, Elkin, NC
9:00 AM, Friday, October 31, 2008**

Jim Harrell welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Present:

Don Adams, Alleghany County
Donnie Turner, Carroll County
Dr. Tom Littrell, Carroll County
Barbara DeBord, Smyth County
Charles C. Clark, Jr., Smyth County
Bryan Steen, Stokes County
Stanley Smith, Stokes County
Jim Harrell, Surry County
Chris Knopf, Surry County
Zach Henderson, Wilkes County
Bobby Todd, Yadkin County
Jessica Icenhour, Tourism Advisory Committee

Others Present:

Brandon McCann, Director of Tourism and Communications
Randy Rose, Virginia Tourism Corporation
Dennis Thompson, Surry County
Susan Medlin, Vintage Marketing

Jim called the meeting to order. The Minutes of the September 19, 2008 Board meeting were approved.

Finance Report

Chris presented the Finance Report. There were no questions.

Director of Tourism and Communications

The Board discussed the candidate for the Director of Tourism and Communications. A starting salary of \$42,000 was offered and accepted. The Board determined that the Director will primarily focus on tourism development and communications. The Director will have a Committee comprised of Board members who will meet or speak on a regular basis with the Director. The Committee's membership will be as follows: Jim, Barbara, Donnie, Linda Cheek, and Chris. Linda Cheek is tentatively until her selection can be confirmed with her. Jim conveyed to the Board Surry County's willingness to treat the Director as a Surry County employee until such time employment can be handled by The Cascade Highlands. This would allow for insurance coverage and other benefits, time sheets, and an account of activities, and will work well since Surry County serves as the fiscal agent for The Cascade Highlands. Donnie motioned that The Cascade Highlands allow Surry County to hire the Director as a Surry County employee for the foreseeable future, not to exceed two years, seconded by Stanley. All present were in favor. Motion carried. The Board discussed the need for each member jurisdiction to have a plan for how the Director will engage businesses and organizations in each respective community.

Office Location

The Board discussed and agreed to allow the Director to evaluate where the office location for The Cascade Highlands should reside.

Brandon McCann, the Board's selection for the Director of Tourism and Communications, entered the meeting at this time.

Budget Overview

Chris presented a base budget for The Cascade Highlands and stated that if the Director's salary and benefits were paid from the dues paid in by the member jurisdictions that no grant funds would be required for these purposes. However, this was dependent on each member jurisdiction continuing to pay their dues. Zach motioned that the salary and benefits expenses for the Director's position be paid from the dues paid by each member jurisdiction, seconded by Charles. All present were in favor. Motion carried. Jim motioned that The Cascade Highlands leave the dues payments as they are for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, seconded by Donnie. All present were in favor. Motion carried. Jim motioned that the Board adopt the tentative budget as presented, seconded by Stanley. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

Cascade Highlands Website

Information for the website is being compiled by Chris from each member jurisdiction. The Board instructed the Tourism Advisory Committee to develop a strategy for selling ads on the website as well as the fees associated with these ads. The Board decided that in order to cut costs associated with the hosting and maintaining of a website that we would request that Professional Networks host the site for us and allow the Director to make changes and updates as needed. The look and feel of the website is being designed by Vintage Marketing. The Board decided to go live with the website on January 1, 2009 with the updated inventory.

Brochure/Map

The Board authorized \$10,000 for the development of a brochure and \$5,000 for the development of a map.

Marketing Overview

Susan Medlin with Vintage Marketing presented an overview of how the Marketing Plan will come together. She touched on printed materials and having a call center. To move forward, The Cascade Highlands will need a marketing budget solidified, information packets compiled, and the Director on board. The Cascade Highlands is a new identity for the region so these materials will be crucial to introducing ourselves to our target markets as well as the people who live in our region. Developing a one page marketing piece that could be distributed by the Director during visits to businesses and local organizations was discussed.

Director's Objectives

The Board desires for the Director to begin visiting the various communities in the region and meet business owners. The Tourism Advisory Committee is asked to initiate these meetings and provide the Director with introductions as needed. Their assistance will be important in the Director becoming familiar with the region. The Tourism Advisory Committee was instructed to develop a three-month plan of action for the Director and benchmarks for success and review these with the Executive Committee who will be corresponding with the Director regularly.

General Membership Meeting

The Board decided to hold a General Membership Meeting to introduce the Director to the region in mid-January which would also announce the roll-out of the website.

Don motioned that the Board hire Brandon McCann as the Director of Tourism and Communications at an annual salary of \$42,000, seconded by Stanley. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Chris Knopf
Surry County Tourism