



**Ocracoke Township Tourism Development Authority
Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, March 24, 2023 9:00 am

The meeting was held virtually via Facebook Live Stream

Present (Voting): Kenny Ballance (Chair), Susie O'Neal Rockel, Lisa Landrum, Jennifer Esham

OTTDA Staff: Helena Stevens, Sharon Brodisch, Jeff Dippold, Angela Hatfield

Avenir Bold: Scott Scaggs, Tom Hickey
Bob Chestnut, on behalf of 3% tax board

I. Call to Order

Chair Kenny Ballance called the meeting to order at 9:00 am

II. Approval of February 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Jennifer moved to approve, and Lisa second. Motion passed.

III. Financial Discussion/Hyde County

a. FY22/23 Occupancy Tax Collection Projection

Collections for Feb 2023 were about \$100 less than Feb 2022. The projection for the rest of the fiscal year, using 95% of the previous year for March/April and 100% for the remaining time, would be \$481,000 in total year collections would come to \$481,00, which is about even with the current year budgeted collections amount. Comparison of actual revenue and expenses through the end of Feb to what is budgeted for the full year. So far, expenses have been \$307,000; the budgeted amount for the entire year is \$580,000. Several categories have come in lower than budgeted amounts. As of February 28, 2023, there was \$310,940 available in the OTTDA Operating Bank Account maintained by the Hyde County Finance Team.

2. FY22/23 Proposed Budget Planning

The proposed budget for FY23/24 was reviewed and updated. Changes made: Revenue Collections were budgeted at \$500,000 and reduced to \$490,000. Amount to be awarded to OPS has been raised to \$21,000, an increase of \$3,500. Arrivalist program cost was going to increase from \$12,000 to \$19,000. It was decided not to utilize this program at this time. After all the budget adjustments, a pool of \$6,000 is available.

Kenny moved to approve the budget as presented, and Suzie seconded. Motion approved. A public budget hearing will occur on April 5, 2023, at 9:00 am at the Community Center.

IV. Old Business

a. Island Inn Update – Ken DeBarth

OPS has a crew working on fascia and soffit and will soon work on roof. The open house for Island Inn project was successful. There were 5 information stations on mortgage funding, restrooms, landscaping, building design, and other fundraising activities. The landscaping team is funding its project through donations and fundraisers. The mortgage balloon payment is due at the end of May at \$528,000. They put together a community-funded mortgage plan that offers 10-year notes, paying 5% interest annually. They amortized the notes over 20 years, making the monthly mortgage payment \$3,485/\$41,200 yearly. They need commitments of \$21,000 each from both tax boards. Seventeen investors have committed \$428,000. Four notes remain. The power pole near where the restrooms will be placed today funded by the landscaping committee. OCBA is doing the restroom project; the plan is to be completed by the end of 2023. Bob Chestnut reported that General Contractor is in place for the restroom project, and the septic permit is pending discussions with the prefab company about the pylons. The structure costs about \$130,000 and should be completed within six months. Ken asked about the status of the OPS funding request; they were granted the amount requested, pending approval of the draft budget. Helena asked if all events are listed on the website; Ken stated he thinks so but the website is currently being updated; he will check with Andrea to ensure all are added. Upcoming events: British Cemetery Ceremony, Fig Festival, Wassail Party, Art Auction. Art Auction brought in a little over \$4,500, which goes to the general fund. OPS was gifted a software system that will make access to archives easier, and once implemented, it will allow the public to access the information.

b. 2023 Lighthouse Parking Lot Contract – Parking Lot Renewal Terms

The Lighthouse Road parking lot contract is up for renewal. The board discussed changing the terms from a yearly increase in rent to a review every three years, with rent remaining at \$2,625.00 per month until the FY2027 renewal. Suzie motioned to change to secure the existing rental cost in the contract for 3 years, Jennifer second. Motion passed.

c. Office Space Voting Clarification

After Kenny and other board members searched unsuccessfully on the island for office space, Helena was approached to use space at her residence, a separate area with a private entrance. The board agreed, but it wasn't captured in the September minutes. The contract terms are month to month with a 60-day cancellation period by either party. The office is exclusively used for TDA purposes, with a separate phone line and internet. Suzie moved to approve formally, Lisa second. Motion passed.

V. Executive Director Report (see attachment for full report)

Weekly status call with Avenir Bold Ad Agency staff

Projects:

1. Advertising Campaign kicked off on March 20, 2023
2. New Bern Airport Wrap design. Avenir Bold is creating a new column wrap using elements from Spring Advertising Campaign. The wrap is expected to be installed in April.
3. Ocracoke Safety Tips Flyer
NPS recommended adding verbiage on Off-Road vehicle permits. The changes were made, and NPS is reviewing the revised flyer.
4. Public Relations
 - a. Partnering with VisitNC to host 6-7 top-tier German and Austrian journalists for a FAM trip including Hyde, Dare, and Carteret counties April 26-28. Helena is creating and executing the itinerary for the Ocracoke portion.
 - b. Coordinating the hosting for travel bloggers Caroline & Craig Makepeace from www.thisisraleigh.com the week of March 27 or April 3
 - c. Partnering with VisitNC to host a journalist and photographer from Le Figaro, the oldest national newspaper in France, which has a circulation of 26 million. This will be in the June 1-9 timeframe to produce a 10-page print/online feature on the Outer Banks regions, including Ocracoke and Currituck. Their interests are shipwreck lore, wild horses, lighthouses, charming inns, and seafood.
5. VisitOcracokeNC.com Website
 - a. Updated all business listings in the online business directory to match the walking map
 - b. Added "Services" section to the website with associated listings
 - c. Working on resources to add content to a "Blog" section
 - d. Refreshed website copy
 - e. Updated 2023 Ocracoke event information
6. Photography / Online Content
 - a. A new photographer has been identified and is scheduled to come and shoot the week of April 3, 2023.
7. 2023 Ocracoke Walking Map & Directory –
90K walking maps were produced. Maps have been distributed locally and to off-island distribution to NC Welcome Centers. 20 boxes of walking maps are left. The plan is to reprint 30,000 maps to replenish for the remainder of the season via OneBoat for \$5,406.00.
8. FY2023-24 Budget Prep
 - a. The Proposed FY23/24 Budget is in the board's meeting packets.
 - i. The final FY23/24 budget with a hearing date will be publicly posted and available to local media until the budget hearing.
9. Trade Show Attendance/Media Follow Up
 - a. IMM Media Marketplace

- i. Following up with the strongest leads from this event.
- b. VisitNC Washington DC Media Mission - Ocracoke is one of four partners selected to participate in late August 2023 to meet with staffers, editors, and freelancers. The cost to participate is \$1000 plus travel expenses
- c. 2023 Southeast Tourism Society Domestic Showcase - Huntsville, AL — April 17-20, 2023 I will pitch Ocracoke in a media marketplace with SE regional journalists/freelance writers.
- d. Washington D.C. Media Mission ~ August 2023. Ocracoke is one of four partners invited to participate in this trip to meet with staffers, editors, and freelancers. The cost to participate is \$2,000 (including travel expenses)

Other Activities

- Updating VisitNC Database with Ocracoke attractions and events
- Check OTTDA mailbox
- Receive/review/submit vendor invoices to Hyde County Finance Office for processing.
- Respond to TDA phone calls/information requests
- Respond to info@visitocracokenc.com emails
- Work with Kathryn Waldrop to manage content for the VisitOcracokeNC social media pages.
- Worked on Board report.
- Serving on Ocracoke Light Station 200th Anniversary committee. The event will take place on May 18, 2023 at 1 pm.

Public Input/Questions/Comments

No comments

VI. Next Meeting Date – May 19, 2023, at 9:00 am.

VII. Adjourn

Kenny moved to adjourn, and Jennifer seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:33 am.

FY22/23 Board Meeting Dates:

May 19, 2023