



**Ocracoke Tourism Development Authority  
Board Meeting Minutes**

**June 18, 2021, 9:00 am**

**Attendees:**

**Board:** Amy Howard, Daphne Bennink, Lisa Landrum, Martha Garrish, Jen Mongan

**Non-Board:**

Helena Stevens, Jeff Dippold, Sharon Brodisch, Kris Noble; Randal Matthews, Theorem Advertising Staff: Scott Scaggs, Stephanie Perri, Tom Hickey, Mary Webster

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Amy Howard called the monthly OTTDA meeting to order at 9:00 am

**II. Approval of May 21, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

Martha moved to approve minutes; Daphne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Advertising Update -Theorem Advertising**

Campaign Update: Spring Campaign (March 15 – May 31) just completed. Ads are active on social media (Facebook/Instagram) and added the new logo and targeted email campaign. Paid advertising.

*Asset Brochure: (Mary Webster)*

The brochure is in progress and includes a general map of the island, top 10 things to do, first-time visitor information, nature activities, Portsmouth Island, ferry and transportation information, and how to get around the island. The content is general and designed to drive visitation to the visitocracokenc.com website. The OTTD advertising committee has reviewed and will provide feedback today. The brochure will go to print as planned on July 2.

Helena added this would provide a piece that would give us more valued content to visitors from outside the Outer Banks. The asset brochure will be distributed to Welcome Centers/Visitor Centers around the state, providing information on what to do on Ocracoke, how to get here, things to do here.

*Arrivalist Data Overview: (Tom Hickey)*

Comparison from 2019 vs. 2021 (2020 skipped due to Covid-19 and Hurricane Dorian).

**YTDA 2021 Overview:**

**Daytrips:**

- Week of May 31: Up 3.6%.
- 2021 YTD Day Trips: Up 17.3%.



#### Overnight Trips:

- Week of May 31: Down 57.2%.
- 2021 YTD Overnight trips: Down 4%.
- Drop in overnights could be attributed to lower lodging inventory.
- May 2021 Top Origin Markets – Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland combine for 35.1% of all visitation May 2021.
- 2021 YTD: 69.7% of visitors on Hatteras Ferry to Ocracoke are day trippers. Average distance traveled from their home is 347.4 miles.

Tom noted that paid advertising caused website traffic to dramatically increase, which dropped off after that campaign completed. Site traffic is still higher than what it was prior to the start of the ad campaign.

Amy noted that the FY21/22 advertising contract with Theorem has been signed, will be sent to them soon.

#### IV. Financial Discussion/Hyde County

- a. Current Revenue Collections and Projection** – Jeff reported that the current total fiscal year collections are \$345,000, an increase of \$90,000 over last year. An additional \$35,000 is projected through the end of the year, for a total of \$380,000 which will support the budget put in place for FY21/22.
- b. FY19/20 adjustments and FY2021 Corrections** – Jeff has received the general ledger through May 2021, a lot of the corrections from the previous year have gone through. He has requested an updated ledger report for FY19/20 and 20/21 so he can prepare report on actual revenue and expense vs budget. As of May 31, the corrected cash balance is \$214,000. Adding the projected additional \$35,000 until the end of the fiscal year. \$104,000 was set aside towards next year's budget; this will still leave an excess of \$100,000 to the end of the next fiscal year.

Payroll funding of \$17,000 was requested for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter FY21/22 but has not yet been received. Kris will make sure this is approved and completed. Kris will bring the completed audit for FY19/20 for Amy to sign and the document that states that the audit was completed late due to a natural disaster. The county can then set up a time for the FY20/21 audit.

#### V. Old Business

- a. TDA Event Grant Funding Request Update** – Martha stated that only three applications were received, 2 for FY 20/21 from Ocracoke Alive and OCBA and one from OCBA for FY 21/22. Helena has received the invoice for reimbursement for the OCBA 20/21, and she will submit these to the county for reimbursement.

- i. **FY20/21 Accounting process timeline** - Helena has received the invoice for reimbursement for the OCBA FY20/21 request and will submit it to Hyde County Finance Office for reimbursement.
- b. **Bench Project Update** – Board reviewed the drawings submitted by Michael Kalna with Flow Designs. Board voted on preferred design. Martha will ask Michael Kalna if can also produce the benches. Kris said the Ocracoke Lighthouse will be added as a tram stop and NPS will provide the bench for that stop.
- c. **New Board Member Recruitment** – Randal Matthews has identified potential interested candidates in the industries that need to be represented as part of the board. The next step is for those candidates to attend the next scheduled (September) meeting.
- d. **Parking Lot Project (Martha Garrish)** – Martha reported that the Coastal Land Trust declined to partner on this project. Jesse reduced the rate to \$3,500/month. OTTDA will need a supplemental insurance rider on his insurance. The parking lot will have 20 parking places and some picnic benches. Jesse will maintain the area and pick up the trash, and there will be signage showing OTTDA funding of the parking lot. Board consensus is that the cost is prohibitive, but all agree the parking is needed. Martha will go back to him with a proposed rent of \$2,500 per month (\$30,000/year), as approved by the board. Funding is conditional on yearly budget approval.

Kris said there will be base dock signage to let visitors know that they can park and take the tram, and that tram will stop at the lighthouse. She wants to add this info to the asset brochure if possible. Tram service will start Monday, June 21. Amy suggested adding a scannable QR code for the Walking Map. The name of the tram is the “Ocracoke Express.” Helena asked about how late in the season the tram will run so she can add to the marketing piece (asset brochure). Previously we used Memorial Day to Labor Day. All information needs to be relayed to the OCBA; Kris is on their agenda for their next meeting.
- e. **Civil War Trails Program** – Helena is coordinating with OPS who is doing research and will provide the information/wording for the interpretive sign.

## VI. Executive Director Report

- a. Asset Brochure (covered in Theorem presentation)
- b. EWN advertising – EWN (New Bern airport) will provide at no cost for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, columns with visuals of Ocracoke as a destination accessible from EWN.

- c. Arrivalist Program (covered in Theorem presentation)
- d. Videography/Photography Update - The final photography date is scheduled for June 26.
- e. (addition to agenda) Visitor Center – OCBA is getting space ready for Visitor Center. Discussion took place on the importance of a viable visitor center, especially with the startup of the tram service.

**VII. New Business**

- a. **Interim Administrative Assistant Contract** – Daphne moved to pay \$16.00 for employee compensation, \$17.33 for contract employee to cover Social Security. Lisa second, unanimously approved.
- b. **Executive Director Annual Contract** – Contract will be adjusted to include the \$5,000 additional amount per approved budget. Jeff will complete and contract to be signed before the end of the fiscal year.
- c. **FY21/22 Board Meeting Dates/Location** – July/August meetings suspended. All meetings scheduled to be held at the Community Center, start time 9:00 am
  - Friday, September 17, 2021
  - Friday, October 22, 2021
  - Friday, November 19, 2021
  - Friday, December 17, 2021
  - Friday, January 21, 2022
  - Friday, February 18, 2022
  - Friday, March 18, 2022
  - Friday, April 22, 2022
  - Friday, May 20, 2022
  - Friday, June 17, 2022

- VIII. **Public Input/Questions/Comments** – A question was put on Facebook link. Karen Falk Sawyer: How can we get more waste receptacles throughout the village to help with all the litter. OTTDA does not provide trash service, the county no longer provides any trash collection around the village, the employees at the convenience center have a full schedule on site, but the county may be interested in partnering for a solution. Amy volunteered to be part of a committee to work on this.

- IX. **Next meeting** – September 17, 2021, 9:00 am Ocracoke Community Center

- X. **Adjourn** - Daphne moved to adjourn, Martha second. Meeting adjourned at 10:53 am