

 **Ocracoke Township Tourism Development Authority**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, July 14, 2023 9:00 am

**Present (Voting):** Kenny Ballance (Chair), Martha Garrish, Susie O'Neal Rockel, Lisa Landrum

**OTTDA Staff:** Helena Stevens, Sharon Brodisch

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Approval of May 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Martha motioned to approve the minutes, and Susie seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Financial Discussion/Hyde County**

**a. FY22/23 Occupancy Tax Collection Summary through May 31, 2023**

The OTTDA received a total of $486,289, which is $5,589 greater than the $480,650 amount budgeted for FY 2022/2023 and $31,403 greater than the $454,836 collected for the previous fiscal year. Jeff will provide an updated FY 2022/2023 actual vs. budget line-by-line revenue and expense comparison as soon as ledger information for June becomes available.

**V. New Business**

1. **Springer’s Point Signage**

The One Way sign at the end of Lighthouse Road was lost during Dorian. The board will request NC DOT to replace it. Additionally, the board will contact Coastal Land Trust regarding signage with directions to Springer’s Point off Lighthouse Road. Martha will take the lead on contacting Keith about a sign at the end of Lighthouse Rd.

1. **Highway 12 Electronic Board – Ferry Information**

A request was made to OTTDA about helping to update the electronic sign at the edge of town. It is currently done remotely by NC DOT. The board decided not to take on this project.

1. **Electronic Vehicle Charging Station Project**

The topic will be added to the September meeting agenda to discuss finding funding/grant money. Costs for installation and location will need to be researched. Kenny motioned to look for a grant writer to help with this project once the price is identified. Susie seconded. Motion passed.

1. **Hyde County Funding for Lobbyist**

Hyde County seeks $12,000 from OTTDA to support the FY 2023-24 lobbying contract. (See attachment for request). Martha moved to table this until OTTDA can get an

outline of what he has done since Feb and his past voting record on Ferry funding. Susie seconded the motion, and Helena will follow up with Kris Noble to update her on the board's decision.

1. **Letter to Governor from OTTDA regarding the funding of ferry division**

In coordination with Kris Noble and her team, Helena will draft a letter to the governor and Ocracoke’s state representatives to support funding for the ferry division. Bob Chestnut suggested coordinating with the Hyde County Lobbying Committee.

Main Requests:

* Fully fund and earmark operational funds for a Hatteras ferry schedule that mirrors the 2018 schedule.
* Fully fund and earmark operational funds for the sound class ferries to Ocracoke, including a four-boat schedule that mirrors the 2018 schedule.
* Guaranteed and continued funding of the Ocracoke Passenger Ferry each year.
* Remove all language regarding Ocracoke Priority Pass language to allow for public input sessions and bring it back in the short session.

Initially, the goal was to start the summer schedule as soon as possible. This has now turned to ensuring adequate funding in this upcoming fiscal year budget.

1. **NPS Beach Closures**

There are concerns about the amount of the beach blocked off, so visitors have no access.

**VI. Old Business**

1. **Island Inn Update – Ken DeBarth**

Progress continues with the Island Inn and Commons. The Landscaping Team will install a trench for water to the restrooms, irrigation, and electrical systems. Funding has been secured through sponsorships, fundraising events, and grants. Siding has been preserved for reinstallation on the Rt 12 side of the building, and plans are underway to build windows on-site to avoid plastic components.

1. **2023 Lighthouse Parking Lot Contract - Parking Lot Renewal Terms**

The parking lot contract on Lighthouse Road has been signed and executed for a 3-year term.

**i. Board Member Term Expiring**

 Martha’s term ends at the end of October 2023. Will need to find a replacement.

**VII. Executive Director Report**

**Avenir Bold/OTTDA**

Weekly status calls with Avenir Bold Ad Agency staff

FY23/24 OTTDA/Avenir Bold contract signed.

FY23/24 Planning in progress.

**New Bern Airport Wrap Design**

EWN is ready to prep the column when the graphics are done.

**Earned Public Relations**

*Southern Living ~ North Carolina’s Ocracoke Light Station Celebrates 200th Anniversary* SouthernLiving.com attracts 10.7 unique monthly visitors and earns a Barcelona Principles Score of 89.

*Coastal Living's* “The Best Places to Live on The Coast.” This coverage resulted from last October’s conversation with Tracey Minkin from Coastal Living at the VisitNC NYC Media Mission. Coastal Living’s circulation is 658,000, with a Barcelona Principles Score of 79.

Just Ocracoke: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pot8n3cg78ax2o2130pew/Spring2023_CoastalLiving_Ocracoke.pdf?dl=0&rlkey=p6hndhdz5rwliv7x470yki28t>

All 12 Places

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/if6rs4bsea5sp9mupy8we/Spring2023\_CoastalLiving\_ Ocracoke-ALL.pdf?rlkey=db8x3x43i02angaphrd6t3t0b&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/if6rs4bsea5sp9mupy8we/Spring2023_CoastalLiving_%20Ocracoke-ALL.pdf?rlkey=db8x3x43i02angaphrd6t3t0b&dl=0%20)

*Better Homes & Gardens* | Jun 2023 “Shore Things” ~ Jenn Rice discusses the entire Outer Banks as a road trip destination.

*Our State* | June 2023 “The Beach Road: A Stop-by-Stop Guide to Exploring NC Highway 12” <https://www.ourstate.com/the-beach-road-a-stop-by-stop-guide-toexploring-nc-highway-12/>

*Our State* – July 2023 – Fig Festival Mention

*NC Tripping* article featuring Blackbeard's Pirate Jamboree, June 2023 <https://www.nctripping.com/things-to-do-on-ocracoke-island/>

Scott Mason (*WRAL Tar Heel Traveler*) – June 14, 2023–Ocracoke Tram, free transportation service <https://www.wral.com/video/tar-heel-traveler-ocracoke-tram-free-transportation->

**Press Trips**

Le Figaro | May 28- June 1, 2023 – Hosted journalists from the French publication Le Figaro - Sarah Chevalley and Stanisias Fautre. Via a VisitNC collaboration and has a reported distribution of.370,193 copies/1.35 million readers.

**VisitOcracokeNC.com Website**

* Created a new Blog Section. The first four blogs include *First Time Visitors Guide to Ocracoke, RV/Camping, Dog Lovers, Ocracoke for the Retired Traveler*
* Ongoing monitoring of website copy

**2023 Ocracoke Walking Map & Directory**

a. 30,000 Walking Maps are being reprinted.

b. FY23/24 Contract with Dare Brochure Distribution is renewed for the new fiscal year—ongoing distribution coordination to Welcome Centers/Ferry Offices/Local Businesses.

3. **FY2023-24 Budget**

a. FY23/24 Budget Ordinance has been signed and filed with Hyde County.

4. **Upcoming Trade Show Attendance**

a. VisitNC Media Mission – August 14-16, 2023 – Washington D.C.

b. ESTO – August 19-23, 2023 – US Travel Association Conference, Savanna, GA.

Other Activities

• Updating VisitNC Database with Ocracoke businesses, attractions, and events

• Submitted grant reimbursement request for the 2023 British Cemetery Ceremony, allocated in 2022.

• Coordinating with NPS on new exhibits for the Ocracoke Discovery Center (orientation map on the patio outside the building.)

• Check the OTTDA mailbox

• Receive/review/submit vendor invoices to Hyde County Finance Office for processing.

• Respond to TDA emails/phone calls/information requests

• VisitOcracokeNC social media management with Kathryn Waldrop.

• Prepare Board report.

• Coordinating execution of FY23/24 Parking Lot Contract

• Classification of expenses relating to budgetary accounting and ongoing record keeping.

**VII. Public Input/Questions/Comments**

No comments

**VIII. Next Meeting Date** – September 15, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

**IX. Adjourn.**

Kenny moved to adjourn, and Martha seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

**FY23/24 Board Meeting Dates:**

Sept 15, 2023

November 17, 2023

January 19, 2024

March 22, 2024

May 17, 2024

June 21, 20244