



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

Friday, September 16, 2022, 9:00 am

*The meeting was held virtually via Facebook Live Stream*

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

**OTTDA Staff:** Helena Stevens, Catherine Thorne, Jeffrey Dippold

**Hyde County Reps:** Corrinne Gibbs

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Approval of July 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Adjustment to July 15, 2022, meeting minutes: Martha Garrish moves to remove from the Public Input section the verbiage "fines and legal repercussions." Susie, seconds, approved. Martha moved to approve the minutes as amended, and Susie seconded; minutes were approved.

**III. Financial Discussion/Hyde County**

**a. FY22/23 Occupancy Tax Collection**

In July 2022 (for the June 2022 occupancy period), Ocracoke's portion of the 2% tax was \$78,284. This amount is \$11,599 greater than the same period in 2021 (a 117% increase). In projecting the total tax collections for the full fiscal year, if the actual July 2022 collections are combined with the amounts collected in the prior fiscal year for the remaining months, the total collections would exceed the current FY 2022/2023 budget by \$15,785 for a total of \$466,435. If the actual July collections plus the remaining months in the fiscal year are included at 105% of the prior fiscal year collections, the total would exceed the current FY 2022/2023 budget by \$35,193 for a total of \$485,843.

**b. FY22/23 Proposed Budget Revision**

When the FY 2022/2023 budget was finalized, a contract was not in place to collect the trash from the tram stop trash cans. Since then, a contract has been executed, and the trash is being picked up daily through the remainder of the fiscal year at a projected cost of \$28,500. This cost was not incorporated into the original FY 2022/2023 budget. Because the occupancy tax collections continue to remain strong and exceed the budget, it was recommended that the OTTDA Board propose increasing the FY2022/2023 Budgeted revenue by \$30,000 and also increase the 2022-2023 Events - Visitor Enhancements Budget by \$30,000. This will cover the trash collection services

and the maintenance of the existing cans. The basis for the budget increase is higher projected tax collections, as detailed above. A revised drafted budget was shared with the Board, and the updated total revenue for the fiscal year is \$580,650 (which includes \$480,650 of current year collected revenue and \$100,000 of excess revenue collected in prior years). The revised total expenses are \$580,650 (which includes an updated budget amount of \$165,000 of funding for Ocracoke Events and Visitor Enhancements, including the Tram Stop Trash Pick-Up Services).

Jeff recommended increasing the revenue and expense to cover this. Martha motioned to approve the increase, and Lisa seconded. Motion passed; Corrinne Gibbs will make the budget revision.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **a. Board Member Terms**

Helena reported that the board member terms are included in the board packet. Lisa Landrum's term has expired, and she will take until the 27<sup>th</sup> to decide if she will continue. Board members will meet on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at NPS docks and ride the tram to review the work that has been done and what possible projects may need to be pursued.

Susie needs to be set up on the TDA email; Helena will help.

#### **V. Old Business**

##### **a. Island Inn Update – Ken DeBarth**

The first phase of the roof restoration on the Odd Fellows Lodge is complete. This phase included removing the dormer, all the existing roof, repairing/updating the roof structural members, replacing the roof with plywood, and installing ice guard on the west-facing half of the roof. This work used all the grant money received and a small amount from OPS reserves. The next phase of the roof restoration will be to do the same work on the east (Rt12) facing half of the roof and will be undertaken as soon as funds are available. The final phase of the roof portion of the restoration will be the installation of cedar shake shingles which will be done once the east portion work is completed and funds become available. OCBA continues to work on the restroom design and installation. OPS's Fund Raising Committee has been seeking input on ways to generate funds for the project. The OPS board has contracted with Keefe Communications LLC to 1) identify grant givers who are candidates for OPS grant applications and 2) recommend two grants to apply for at this time and then consult on the actual writing of the grant applications. These will be new sources. OPS will reapply to OBCF and Cannon again according to their deadlines.

Kenny asked about the restroom project: the original amount funded from the 2% board was \$150,000, they were given \$50,000 last year, and \$50,000 is budgeted this year. Why have the funds not been used, and why is the project at a standstill? Martha said she spoke with Bob Chestnut (3% board). Bob will research and get back to her. Randal

suggested hiring a project manager for the restroom project. The discussion was tabled until the November meeting.

(Addition) Walking Map:

Kenny wants to ensure the walking map is completed and set up before end of the year. Martha spoke with Bob Chestnut to see if OCBA had contracted with Michael McGowen for distribution. Distribution should include ferries, and NC visitor centers, as in the past. TDA should consider hiring someone to distribute the maps if the distribution is not included in the OCBA/One Boat contract. Bob will report back about this. Helena added that the maps were distributed locally to island businesses via OCBA but are not currently being put on sound side ferries or terminals.

**b. Tekniam update**

Randall Matthews said the project is running smoothly. A few island businesses have access to it. He needs access to the money that the legislature has appropriated. He could probably spend some of the tax board money to expand the project, but he feels that should be committed to the contract. The county is looking into how he can access the money.

**c. Potential new tram stop (Loop Road) to address foot traffic issues**

Kenny has committed to going to Elizabeth City to meet with Leigh Leidy and Mr. Goldman with Coastal Land Trust to discuss the tram stop on Loop Road for Springers Point.

**d. Safety Campaign for Visitors**

The ideas were collated and sent to Avenir Bold; they are on their way to layout, should have something back from them by next week.

**e. Office Space**

TDA office has moved from Blue Heron space and is set up with phone and internet at the Wahab House. Long term, the Board needs to look at a permanent solution—a discussion took place about potentially using the Community Center and repairs needed there.

f. (added) Joint 2/3 percent Tri-Board meeting in October needs to be scheduled.

**VI. Executive Director Report**

The Ocracoke promotional video wrapped up at the end of August. The next step is to record the voice-over with Rex O'Neal on Ocracoke. After editing, it will be posted organically via YouTube and social media and used for the Spring advertising campaign.

The tram work has been completed. Jason Daniels completed the signs saying "sponsored by OTTDA" for the tram stop benches. Pickup for the trash at the tram stops has been contracted and is working well. Discussion took place about purchasing



bonnets for the top of the trash cans to inhibit rain inside the cans. At this point, the contractor does not feel they are needed.

In July, asset brochures were sent to 14 NC Welcome Centers. There are 6 boxes left. Production of the new asset brochure is paused until those are depleted.

Public relations: Helena coordinated with VisitNC photographers for an on-island shoot and fact-checking for their 2023 Visit NC travel guide, which will include a 2-page spread on Ocracoke. Ocracoke will participate in the VisitNC Raleigh In-State Media Mission. Talley PR will represent Ocracoke at the mission, a meet and greet with NC writers and editors. Visit NC's TRAC (Tourism Resource Assistance Center) session is scheduled for October 13 from 10 am – 2 pm at the Berkley Barn. The event's purpose is for Visit NC to showcase its programs and resources for tourism-related businesses on the island. Helena has also prepared an Ocracoke itinerary for the 14 VisitNC staff members, as they haven't been to Ocracoke since 2018. Helena will attend the VisitNC New York Media Mission Oct 18-21. Ocracoke was one of seven NC tourism partners selected to participate. The mission offers the opportunity to meet with writers from NY publishing houses with VisitNC's PR staff and agency in NY.

Helena and Kathryn Waldrop are managing the Ocracoke social media channels. The hacked Instagram account was recovered, and the newly created Instagram will be phased out.

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

Debbie Leonard posted online during the meeting that the septic permit had been issued for the public bathrooms.

## VIII. **Next Meeting Date** – November 18, 2022, at 9:00 am.

Tri-board meeting. Tentatively set for Thursday, November 3, at 3 pm.

## IX. **Adjourn**

Martha moved to adjourn, Lisa second. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 am.

### **FY22/23 Board Meeting Dates:**

November 18, 2022

January 20, 2023

March 17, 2023

May 19, 2023