

McCurtain County Tourism Authority Minutes

Held Tuesday, March 26th, 2024 - 1:00 PM

Meeting held at Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce Board Room

Chairman Dave Smulyan called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

Members present: Dave Smulyan, Craig Young, Wenda Blankenship, Tommy Julian and Jerry Don Smith. **Absent Board Members:** Amy Keeling. Amy Keeling replaced Tereasa Mullins who resigned in February. Executive Director, Charity O'Donnell was also present. Guests in attendance were Shellye Copeland and Janet Cress. Adam Vossen arrived at 1:32,

Minutes: Wenda Blankenship made the motion to approve the January meeting minutes as presented. Craig Young seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Dave Smulyan, yes; Craig Young, yes; Wenda Blankenship, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; Tommy Julian, yes.

Financial Report: Charity O'Donnell presented the financial report. Tommy Julian made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented, seconded by Jerry Don Smith. Motion passed 5-0. Dave Smulyan, yes; Craig Young, yes; Wenda Blankenship, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; Tommy Julian, yes.

The issues with ABNB and VRBO were discussed in detail, and it was decided that Wenda Blankenship and Dave Smulyan would contact certain legislatures, and such in hopes of trying to make the situation better.

Purchase Orders: Purchase Order amounts for January and February were presented and reviewed. Tommy Julian made the motion to approve as presented seconded by Craig Young. Motion passed unanimously 5-0. Dave Smulyan, yes; Craig Young, yes; Wenda Blankenship, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; Tommy Julian, yes.

Advertising Update: Charity reported that Tiny Cabin Video, Waterfront Cabins video, Smokey Safety Fire Safety Eclipse Video, Park Ranger Pam video, lots of educational recourses and videos went out this month. She went on to state that she approved some emails, blogs, social media posts, and an Oklahoma Today ad for this month. She stated we did a big last minute spring break push. She stated that she had gotten that grant for the eclipse for \$14,000 she had the ad agency take \$11,000 and for them to use on the Smokey Video and assets for all tourism related businesses to utilize for eclipse. Assets created were two flyers, some social post graphics, a video, a blog, and email blast etc. And that she had used just under \$1,000 on all the

educational flyers that were distributed at all the county schools and circulated in other locations, public buildings, and businesses. Dave went on to explain that \$30,000 was spent to do a last-minute book now campaign stating we still have availability push for Oklahoma and Louisiana spring breaks. Occupancy seemed low for the non-Texas spring break weeks. Dave mentioned that Charity had mentioned when this push was running, she noticed lots of new likes and follows on Facebook. And that it would be interesting to see what the actual stats show in a few months. and it seemed like a good idea to try to get some last-minute bookings. The cabin owners in the room spoke about the Spring Break trends changing, there were a lot more last-minute bookings, and the visitors were much younger in demographics. The weather was good for the Texas Spring Break, it rained most of Oklahoma Spring Break. Charity also reported that after setting through the meeting with Datafy that the data is pulled from Master Card, car data, and app data. Dave had a question on the January reporting that he received earlier, in January on Instagram that skyrocketed what was different about these ads. Then Charity explained that these ads were listed a few more pages over in the report. Call to action ads. Book now ads, is what is the main message currently. Missing the lower market (not the lowest market) the next range up. There was discussion that people think we are very expensive, and they do not realize there are economical options. There is a void in the lower end options. Dave stated that he feels that the advertising is targeting a higher end customer. It was discussed, lead the consumers to the area and let them decide what price range they book in.

Review the three new policies, open records request, records destruction policy and public comments policy: Charity stated she just wanted the board to review the policies and make sure all changes were made and finalized before she put them online. Even though some of the board members didn't like open meetings act rules regarding public meetings and they would prefer open conversations, it was agreed that these policies were ready to go on our website.

Discussion and possible action of Trash project wording and policies: No action taken.

Discussion and Possible action on Trash project update: No action taken, Wenda, Craig and Adam spoke briefly about the meeting on Friday and what was discussed. Charity stated that she put her notes summary in their packets so they could be brought up to speed. She also mentioned that the next meeting is scheduled for May 3rd at 10am at Idabel City Hall.

Discussion and possible action of assisting McCurtain County Emergency Management with some money needed to feed the first responders helping with the eclipse: A motion was made by Craig Young that we approve to \$2,000 in reimbursements for food and drinks for the first responders that will be here helping for the eclipse. Receipts need to be turned in timely to us by May 15th for reimbursement to occur. Wenda Blankenship seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Dave Smulyan, yes; Craig Young, yes; Wenda Blankenship, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; Tommy Julian, yes.

Unscheduled New Business: None presented.

Adjournment: Wenda Blankenship made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Tommy Julian. Motion passed 5-0. Dave Smulyan, yes; Craig Young, yes; Wenda Blankenship, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; Tommy Julian, yes.

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 PM.