

# BANNER ELK TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Wednesday, Feb 3, 2021

Zoom

## MINUTES

Members Present: Mike Dunn, Shannon Maness, Tom McMurray, Lauren Foster, and Scott Garland

Staff Present: Rick Owen, Nancy Owen

Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 3:30pm

Chairman Dunn asked for the agenda to be amended to include the appointment of a new vice chair. Tom McMurray made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Shannon Maness seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Tom McMurray made a motion to approve the minutes of the May & June 2020 meeting as submitted. Lauren Foster seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Chairman Dunn welcomed new board member Scott Garland.

Rick Owen gave a brief financial report and stated that collections had already surpassed the budgeted amount for the year in 6 months. We are seeing record collection rates. Manager Owen reported the board needs to appoint a new co-signer for checks. The board selected Tom McMurray to be the new co-signer.

Manager Owen also presented the board with a budget amendment for \$21,500. This was a grant awarded to the TDA for Covid related advertising from the NC Economic Development Partnership. Shannon Maness made a motion to accept the budget amendment. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

### New Business

Manager Owen reported on the need for new snowflakes and banners that hang on the light poles for the Town. He would like to replace 36 snowflakes this year. Shannon Maness made a motion to grant \$18,000 to purchase snowflakes and \$10,000 to purchase banners. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Manager Owen also reported the Town's website ([townofbannerelk.org](http://townofbannerelk.org)) was in serious need of an update. He has been in contact with the company that handles the TDA website, and they have provided a quote for updating the towns. Tom McMurray made a motion to grant \$5000 for the update of the town's website. Shannon Maness seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Shannon Maness nominated Tom McMurray as Vice Chairman of the TDA Board. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Craig Distl, from Distl PR, updated the board on Google Analytics from our website. Website traffic us way up, with phenomenal growth in a pandemic. Sessions are up 82%, users are up, breaking a record for number of users. July 2020 had over 20,900 users, Oct 202 had over 24,400 uses and Dec 202 saw over 32,400 users to the website setting a record. Craig reported to the board on the first round of Covid grant monies received to be spent on tourism related advertising. We received another grant for \$21,500 and with this money a video was made, BE masks, photo shoots at wineries, and a reprint of the brochure were all done. Craig reported we are well within our budget and not spending just to spend.

Nancy has been approached by the Avery County Chamber of Commerce about becoming a Premier Sponsor of the Chamber. There are different levels of sponsorship. After discussion Tom McMurray made a motion to become Silver Sponsors. Scott Garland second the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

#### Grant Request

Gary Smith, representing Ensemble Stage came before the board asking for \$15,811 to help with operating expenses. This money would help keep Ensemble Stage alive and running while having to been closed for the past season due to Covid-19. They are planning on having a 2021 season, but all is contingent upon Covid restrictions. Shannon Maness made a motion to grant \$15,811 to Ensemble Stage for expenses occurred while closed. Tom McMurray seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

With no further business, Tom McMurray made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Owen