

# BANNER ELK TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 3:00 pm

## MINUTES

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

Staff Present: Rick Owen, Nancy Owen

Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

Tom McMurray made a motion to approve the agenda as stated. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Scott Garland made a motion to approve the minutes of the August & Dec 2021 meetings as submitted. Lauren Foster seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Rick Owen gave the financial report. He passed out a proposed budget and reminded the Board they need to call for a public hearing at the next Town Council meeting. They will also need to schedule a budget approval meeting. Manager Owen asked the Board to consider an audit contract with Misty Watson, CPA. She has been doing the audit for years now. Tom McMurray made a motion to contract with Misty Watson, CPA to do the audit. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

### New Business

Craig Distl, from Distl PR, updated the board on Google Analytics from our website. Website traffic is down but it is being compared to the busiest time in the High Country. Traffic is up compared to previous year 2019. Traffic is still strong just let off a bit. Craig asked for an increase in the trimester marketing money. He currently spends \$18,000 per trimester and would like to increase to \$20,000. The cost of advertising has increased significantly. Scott Garland made a motion to up the marketing budget. Tom McMurray seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Town Manager Rick Owen presented the Board with a consideration of switching the proportions of the distribution of occupancy tax. Town Council has already passed a resolution in support of switching the distribution. The switch would allow the 2/3 use to be used for capitol projects and the 1/3 for advertising. This was previously done from 2000-2010. Tom McMurray made a motion to adopt the resolution as drafted. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Nancy Owen asked the Board to consider their partnership with Avery County Chamber of Commerce again. We have been silver sponsors in the past and Mrs. Owen is recommending keeping the sponsorship the same. Lauren Foster made a motion to become a silver sponsor. Tom McMurray seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

### Grant Request

Lees McRae Summer Theatre came before the board asking for money to help with this year's production. Janet Speer presented the Board with 3 different funding options. The plays are back up to 100% occupancy and no mask requirements at this time. Scott Garland made a motion to grant \$12,000 to LMST. \$6000 out of the 2/3 advertising and \$6000 out of capitol. Lauren Foster seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

The Banner Elk Book Exchange came before the board asking for \$1845 to help with advertising. Tom McMurray made a motion to grant \$1845. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Meredith Olan, representing the Greater Banner Elk Heritage Foundation, came before the Board asking for \$2881.75 for advertising the Museum. Tom McMurray made a motion to grant \$2881.75 to GBEHF. Scott Garland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Gary Smith, representing Ensemble Stage came before the Board asking for \$4000 to help with advertising costs. Lauren Foster made a motion to grant \$4000. Tom McMurray seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

The Banner Elk Chamber of Commerce came before the Board asking for \$2000 to help with Thursday night Concerts in the Park. Scott Garland made a motion to grant \$2000. Lauren Foster seconded the motion. Tom McMurray recused himself from voting. 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