

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, August 18, 2022. The meeting began at 8:03 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Laura Kerr Wiley, Joey Gawrysiak, Gwen Walker, Ashley Sonntag, Victoria Kidd

Board Members Absent: Lani Pendleton, Julie Shaffer, Levi Snapp

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Phil Milstead, Winchester City Council; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

Call To Order: Gwen Walker, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The July minutes were approved on a motion by Laura Kerr Wiley, seconded by Ashley Sonntag.

Executive Director's Report

Justin Kerns reported that he attended the ESTO Conference, which is a conference for DMO directors. He noted that he has five upcoming conferences between September - November. He reviewed the hotel numbers and said that occupancy is down very slightly, but revenues are up 10% because of the increase in average daily rate. He also announced that the Microtel just recently opened.

Committee Reports

Member & Officer Nominations Committee – Lani Pendleton and Laura Kerr Wiley

The committee did not have anything to report and they did not meet in the past month. They said that they are looking for a City lodging representative to fill the vacant position.

Marketing Committee – Julie Shaffer and Joey Gawrysiak

The members reported that they met yesterday, and the fall and winter campaign starts in October. Stakeholder interviews have been completed and a survey was sent out. They also discussed the local Uncommon to the Core campaign, which will be the next project.

Personnel Committee – Ashley Sonntag and Julie Shaffer

The committee did not have anything to report at this time.

Finance Committee – Gwen Walker and Laura Kerr Wiley

The finance committee reported that the Visitors Guide payment is still outstanding on the printing line item. Frederick County's final distribution from the bed tax is also still outstanding for FY22, which means more funds will be coming soon. They noted that drafting of the FY24 budget will begin in the

next few months. Gwen Walker talked about the possibility of getting a work vehicle, and asked Mr. Kerns if he could look into that.

Video Featurette Ad Hoc Committee – Ashley Sonntag and Victoria Kidd

The committee plans to meet after this meeting.

Sports Tourism Ad Hoc Committee – Joey Gawrysiak and Levi Snapp

The committee reported that the bid for the sports tourism project was awarded to Don Schumacher, a consultant that will be evaluating our sports related assets and making recommendations. The committee will also be putting out a request for the creative work that will need to be done in regards to the marketing effort.

Old Business:

Tourism ARPA Project Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that everything has now been approved, and there are seven initiatives in progress.

New Business:

Virginia 250 – A Revolution of Ideas – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns pointed out that in the next five years, work will begin on American Revolution 250. This is a statewide effort and local committees will be formed to plan and execute events related to the American Revolution.

City and County Liaison Comments

Mr. Philip Milstead noted that upcoming discussions at City Council meetings will include improvements to the soccer fields at Jim Barnett Park. He also said that the Holiday Parade will be taking place this year.

Public Comments

None.

Presentation by Charrette on spring campaign – Amanda Carter (via Zoom)

Ms. Carter reviewed the goals and objectives of the spring and summer marketing campaign. She displayed the creative, the target markets, showed the media placements and explained what tactics were used. She also explained which key performance indicators were used to evaluate the success of the campaign. She reported that the campaign boasted 3.5 million impressions and website sessions were up 24%. Hotel occupancy increased throughout the campaign. Next, she reviewed the competitive audit and consumer research findings. She said that stakeholder interviews were held in July and she reviewed those findings. Finally, she reviewed traveler trends and showed a competitive audit that was completed after speaking with Winchester's competitor destinations.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Joey Gawrysiak, seconded by Laura Kerr Wiley at 9:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Creative Design and Visitor Services Manager, Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau.