



**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING**

City Hall Conference Room
300 W. Crowell Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Thursday, March 9, 2023 - 8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of February 9, 2023
2. Finance/Occupancy Report
3. Budget Presentation and Call for Public Hearing
4. Science Center Update
5. Dowd Center Theatre Update
6. Other

MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

CONFERENCE ROOM

300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

FEBRUARY 9, 2023 – 8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: Vice Chairwoman Pat Kahle, Gina Day, Joyce Rentschler, Arpan Bhakta, and MaryAnn Rasberry

Absent:, Ron Hinson, Lorayn DeLuca, and Chairman Marion Holloway

Staff Present: Communications and Tourism Officer Pete Hovanec, Communications Specialist Bradley Lucore, Finance Director Lisa Strickland, Downtown Director Matt Black, Accounting Manager Ashley Ivey, City Manager Brian Borne, Assistant City Attorney Ashley Duncan Britt, Monroe Science Center Supervisor Lauren Fike, and Dowd Center Theatre Supervisor James Vesce

Staff Absent: Communications and Tourism Assistant Alison Nichols

Visitors:

Vice Chairwoman Kahle called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of February 9, 2023 to order at 8:30 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Meeting of December 8, 2022 Ms. Rasberry made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of December 8, 2022. Ms. Rentschler seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Bhakta, Rasberry, Day, Kahle, and Rentschler

NAYS: None

Mr. Hovanec announced that Sharon Crowder Poston has had to resign from the TDA Board due to a medical issue. The board members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Crowder Poston's service to the TDA and their sincere wishes for her speedy and complete recovery.

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report Ms. Ivey stated that the year is halfway over, and collections are up about 18%. January collections were about \$58,000. The unreserved balance of the capital project fund is \$791,413 over and above anything currently committed.

Item No. 3 Fiscal Year 2023 Audit Contract for Monroe Tourism Development Authority Ms. Ivey explained that this is an annual request to get approval for the audit contract. We have a five-year service agreement with Martin, Starnes & Associates, and this is the last year of that agreement. The cost

estimate is \$2,900, which is no increase from last year. They are the audit firm for the City, and they've always been timely and professional. Staff is asking the Board to approve the audit contract for \$2,900.00 for Martin, Starnes & Associates for Fiscal Year 2023.

Ms. Rasberry made a motion to approve the audit contract with Martin, Starnes, & Associates, CPA's, PA for \$2,900. Ms. Day seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes;

AYES: Bhakta, Rasberry, Day, Kahle, and Rentschler

NAYS: None

Item No. 4 Science Center Update Mr. Hovanec stated that the Science Center is in its fifth week of being "soft opened" Wednesdays through Saturday. It's been a little slower during the week, but the weekends are very busy.

The first four weeks daily attendance numbers show about 500 people coming through per week, which is \$5,000 admissions per week. The Center is not doing field trips or birthday parties or school groups yet, so these numbers should only go up, especially when school is out. Challenges include equipment breakage/repair/replacement. The parking lot is finally under contract to be repaved and re-lined beginning March 1 and continuing possibly into July, which will present issues with dust and debris and actual places for guests to park. Staff has had some conversations with the library about sharing some parking but is concerned about how this will affect Science Center attendance. Mr. Hovanec expressed his frustration that no contractors were willing to take the project last year before the Science Center was open.

Mr. Borne pointed out that there is no choice; the work simply has to be done.

Mr. Hovanec said that the contractors will try to do most of the heavy stuff on Mondays and Tuesdays when the Science Center is closed.

Mr. Borne added that this will add many, many spots to the City's overall public parking in the end.

Ms. Rasberry asked how much of the \$5,000 in admissions is actual profit after expenses.

Mr. Hovanec responded that staff has not figured that out yet. It will be close to covering the operating expenses.

Mr. Bhakta asked how much the loan on the building was.

Ms. Strickland replied that payments are about \$175,000 per year.

Ms. Rentschler asked to clarify that the project was for the whole lot.

Mr. Borne confirmed that the project would indeed redo the entire lot.

Mr. Hovanec played a parking PSA created by Mr. Lucore which will be released on social media.

Mr. Hovanec explained that with the parking lot under construction, the Science Center won't be able to open fully until it's complete.

Ms. Fike reported that the Science Center visitors have been very supportive and positive overall. There have been no incidents so far, and adults are staying with their children. Staff is learning about which hours tend to be slow or busy.

Mr. Hovanec said some staff hours might be shifted a bit to accommodate working and open hours.

Ms. Fike said that staff is also taking notes so they can best tailor the membership program when it starts.

Mr. Hovanec said that staff might look into offering classes for homeschool co-ops. Cameras are up but aren't fully operational yet. Ms. Fike has done a wonderful job choosing staff members, and HR has been helpful with setting competitive wages that attract quality applicants.

Mr. Borne added that the City has been addressing that issue departmentally because every job can't be treated the same: Supply and demand have to be taken into consideration and the City looks at that just like any other employer would.

Mr. Hovanec showed some of the zip codes captured at the Science Center. Many local Monroe zip codes and some from far-away states, but importantly staff is seeing zip codes from the western part of the county, which is good.

Ms. Day suggested putting together a flyer for out-of-town visitors to help them find things to do in Downtown during their visits.

Mr. Hovanec said that guests are visiting local businesses during their stay.

Ms. Fike added that guests are definitely asking where to eat while they're there.

Ms. Rasberry asked if there is a map of Downtown restaurants.

Mr. Hovanec responded that there is one of restaurants and other businesses.

Ms. Rasberry asked if there were t-shirts yet.

Ms. Rentschler asked if the Science Center needed volunteers yet.

Ms. Fike responded that staff is working on both.

Mr. Hovanec announced that Mr. Black is working on a dog park for the City, which will be located at the lower level of the Science Center parking lot.

Mr. Hovanec showed the board the plans for the dog park.

Mr. Black requested a motion for support from the TDA Board.

Ms. Britt stated that it could be a consensus since it isn't an agenda item.

Mr. Black said that the project is going out to bid in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Hovanec said it will be pricier than staff originally thought – close to \$100,000.

Mr. Black stated that fees and costs are higher now.

Ms. Raspberry asked if there were start and finish dates yet.

Mr. Hovanec said staff wouldn't have those until the project gets approved.

The board gave a unanimous vote of support for the presented dog park plan with Ms. Rentschler making a motion and Ms. Raspberry seconding it.

Mr. Hovanec said staff is learning a lot through the soft open, and it has been great training for the staff. Visitors are benefitting from one-on-one attention; seeing a lot of repeat visitors.

Item No. 5 Dowd Center Theatre Update Mr. Hovanec said the theater is doing very well. Good acts and tickets are selling. The goal is to pay talent \$3,000-10,000 and have anywhere from 250-350 people come to see them. Staff is working to use the promoter less and do more booking in-house. Mr. Vesce has a good eye for up-and-coming talent and finding the sweet spot for the Monroe-Union County market.

The board discussed the Playmakers event at the theater, which was very successful.

Mr. Hovanec said that private events and rentals are doing well. Lanti has been doing successful plays, but there have been some safety concerns with scenery. Private rentals are still huge, and staff is still fine-tuning those. Movies are all right but only drawing 30-50 people and are losing money, but they're drawing traffic to Downtown.

Ms. Rentschler pointed out that when movie titles are on the marquee, it lets the public know things are happening downtown.

Mr. Hovanec said staff is working to do better marketing outside the region and beyond just the Monroe market.

Vice Chairwoman Kahle said the Chamber of Commerce is promoting Downtown in all its printed materials and guides.

Mr. Vesce shared some of the upcoming programming: Ruben Studdard is in conversations with staff, but dates keep changing. Ricky Scaggs is coming in August. "Hidden Figures" is showing for Black History month. The library calls and asks for donations of the theater to show movies, but movies require royalties between \$300-500. Two gospel concerts are scheduled in March and June. The theater will produce its first in-house production in April. Shakespeare in Hip Hop is also scheduled. Staff is open to movie suggestions. The theater has been open for over a year, and staff has found that patrons complain about ticket prices but never about parking because it's free.

Mr. Hovanec opined that the pricing piece is crazy; people in Monroe think things should be free or next to nothing. Staff sees this all the time at the Monroe Country Club. The City doesn't need to make a ton of money, but it needs to cover costs.

Mr. Borne said he thinks that will level off because everything is priced higher everywhere.

Mr. Hovanec said that the Science Center does charge \$10 and hasn't received too many complaints about that. The theater is still on the three to five year opening plan. The theater lost a lot of money on Michael Cavanaugh and Cher – they weren't the right performers for Monroe audience.

Mr. Hovanec also noted that staff can't promote private events, even though the theater is busy with them, and they are drawing business to other Downtown establishments.

Item No. 6 Other Mr. Hovanec reminded the Board that the budget will be presented in March and the public hearing will be held in April. Budget will basically be the same as this year but will use some of this year's leftover special event money toward a Science Center VIP bash.

Mr. Hovanec said staff is still reconciling Air Show money. It was a successful show and will need a bigger budget next year as insurance companies are upping premiums on performers.

Ms. Strickland said that the Air Show is budgeted to lose about \$75,000 but only lost \$30-40,000.

Mr. Black discussed the Downtown Master Plan public information sessions and encouraged the Board to come participate.

Ms. Rentschler noted that the Art Walk will be April 14-15.

Mr. Bhakta made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Day seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Bhakta, Rasberry, Day, Kahle, and Rentschler

NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

ATTEST:

Marion Holloway, Chairman

Alison H. Nichols

MTDA/2-9-23

**CITY OF MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA
HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX COLLECTIONS HISTORY**

Month	Collections																				Total from Inception
	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	
July	\$ -	\$24,556.89	\$27,208.12	\$29,286.12	\$28,559.50	\$32,087.46	\$24,549.05	\$27,790.74	\$27,818.09	\$29,545.33	\$28,654.11	\$43,035.55	\$50,935.50	\$57,757.87	\$49,237.75	\$52,555.67	\$50,502.69	\$36,361.82	\$58,632.48	\$77,203.59	
August	-	25,022.32	30,345.70	30,787.10	30,115.11	32,033.40	25,786.36	28,032.25	29,928.88	29,019.70	30,116.04	36,977.80	48,845.23	56,430.47	53,328.43	53,326.15	56,119.30	33,717.52	\$57,897.52	\$72,112.89	
September	-	23,650.32	25,663.34	27,638.59	26,326.66	30,674.71	24,355.49	25,216.46	29,075.25	34,306.54	26,188.56	36,170.00	43,971.63	52,501.28	49,280.40	57,322.54	54,601.79	36,333.99	\$57,646.95	\$67,860.45	
October	23,898.98	25,473.20	27,055.75	28,562.74	31,670.44	30,657.74	26,223.58	28,169.20	27,991.73	30,332.49	32,977.87	39,730.02	50,450.31	62,852.14	54,883.77	61,478.56	58,576.63	47,918.88	\$60,324.82	\$72,465.20	
November	22,494.05	21,146.42	22,983.34	25,543.85	28,526.48	24,889.11	21,999.34	24,475.06	27,316.22	23,851.33	26,593.65	38,201.55	44,935.28	53,718.49	52,159.03	52,344.58	44,677.93	33,689.77	\$62,776.88	\$69,846.82	
December	16,840.00	18,153.54	19,603.53	22,332.76	23,850.96	22,574.32	17,584.24	19,915.52	21,837.96	20,589.31	24,367.81	29,698.95	37,857.15	42,905.99	43,020.41	41,248.49	35,855.88	30,608.58	\$55,627.44	\$58,041.30	
January	20,665.34	20,582.21	22,515.21	23,357.77	28,635.44	23,883.63	19,615.02	21,103.77	23,391.38	24,429.80	28,568.49	33,174.57	47,446.36	49,314.76	44,917.89	45,790.70	37,998.34	34,555.26	\$47,425.62	\$57,371.07	
February	21,943.99	21,854.75	22,916.93	26,649.30	32,343.36	23,992.82	26,678.68	22,835.19	27,762.95	26,817.63	31,618.26	43,506.47	49,690.07	50,786.19	49,090.46	50,174.09	41,074.64	35,790.58	\$55,074.93	\$0.00	
March	23,020.95	27,654.43	28,608.28	31,187.99	35,210.37	27,000.53	24,336.17	28,069.68	31,538.28	32,723.61	35,351.64	45,588.42	54,238.06	58,370.59	58,151.91	55,628.08	44,213.52	49,962.86	\$68,473.24	\$0.00	
April	23,655.79	24,442.11	25,763.12	26,374.34	34,877.90	29,873.15	25,712.31	26,000.83	27,103.36	31,967.58	33,561.95	44,006.59	56,185.32	54,463.65	55,541.22	52,298.83	24,603.94	54,315.38	\$72,023.49	\$0.00	
May	24,877.18	29,180.42	30,325.62	31,500.43	34,667.79	30,725.91	27,459.38	27,747.78	29,612.56	30,685.57	33,436.34	46,174.97	55,415.35	59,183.07	56,465.45	58,606.08	30,748.09	57,003.16	\$72,290.75	\$0.00	
June	22,969.04	26,509.85	28,506.59	30,525.80	34,605.93	27,755.05	28,609.00	29,627.13	28,256.66	30,805.02	37,334.32	46,835.97	56,036.83	53,968.10	56,273.88	54,481.57	36,285.75	57,435.41	\$72,729.08	\$0.00	
Penalties/Interest	2,275.37	502.50		2,852.82	2,245.44		1,028.71		25.20	22.50		130.10	40.29								
Total Collections	\$202,640.69	\$288,728.96	\$311,495.53	\$338,599.61	\$371,635.38	\$336,147.83	\$293,937.33	\$308,983.61	\$331,658.52	\$345,096.41	\$370,771.04	\$481,230.96	\$596,047.38	\$652,252.60	\$622,350.60	\$635,255.34	\$515,258.40	\$507,713.19	\$740,932.20	\$474,901.32	
Distribution of Collections																					
Administrative Fee	\$30,396.11	\$43,309.34	\$46,724.33	\$50,789.96	\$55,745.30	\$10,084.43	\$8,818.12	\$9,269.51	\$9,949.76	\$10,352.89	\$11,123.13	\$14,436.93	\$17,881.42	\$16,522.53	\$16,415.73	\$16,352.55	\$15,152.58	\$15,077.13	\$17,409.32	\$14,247.04	\$430,058.12
Operating (2/3)	\$57,414.86	\$81,806.54	\$88,257.07	\$95,936.54	\$105,296.68	\$108,687.80	\$95,039.73	\$99,904.70	\$107,236.25	\$111,581.17	\$119,882.64	\$273,630.07	\$385,443.97	\$423,820.05	\$403,956.58	\$412,601.86	\$333,403.88	\$328,424.04	\$482,348.59	\$307,102.85	\$4,421,775.87
Capital (1/3)	\$114,829.72	\$163,613.08	\$176,514.13	\$191,873.11	\$210,593.38	\$217,375.60	\$190,079.48	\$199,809.39	\$214,472.51	\$223,162.35	\$239,765.27	\$193,163.96	\$192,721.99	\$211,910.02	\$201,978.29	\$206,300.93	\$166,701.94	\$164,212.02	\$241,174.29	\$153,551.43	\$3,873,802.89
	\$202,640.69	\$288,728.96	\$311,495.53	\$338,599.61	\$371,635.38	\$336,147.83	\$293,937.33	\$308,983.60	\$331,658.52	\$345,096.41	\$370,771.04	\$481,230.96	\$596,047.38	\$652,252.60	\$622,350.60	\$635,255.34	\$515,258.40	\$507,713.19	\$740,932.20	\$474,901.32	\$8,725,636.87

Operating Fund Activity:

Fiscal Year	Total Revenue*	Operating Expense	Capital Fund Transfer Out	Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	Fund Balance
2004	172,430	249	114,830	57,351	57,351
2005	245,420	49,354	163,613	32,453	89,804
2006	268,539	70,628	176,514	21,307	111,201
2007	292,730	69,590	191,873	31,267	142,468
2008	319,940	79,519	210,593	29,828	172,296
2009	327,232	85,108	217,376	24,748	197,044
2010	286,292	105,147	190,079	(8,934)	188,110
2011	306,323	141,300	199,809	(34,786)	153,324
2012	338,380	218,328	214,473	(94,421)	58,903
2013	366,349	157,025	223,162	(13,839)	45,064
2014	389,562	132,144	239,765	17,653	62,717
2015	505,323	229,769	193,164	82,390	145,107
2016	603,262	324,214	192,722	86,326	231,433
2017	677,786	243,750	211,910	222,126	453,559
2018	634,804	270,913	201,978	161,913	615,472
2019	643,745	257,345	206,301	180,099	795,571
2020	599,412	270,236	166,702	162,473	958,044
2021	501,615	385,603	164,212	(48,200)	909,844
2022	732,524	459,705	241,174	31,645	941,489

Fund Balance as of June 30, 2022 \$941,489

* Includes total occupancy tax collection less administrative fee plus interest earnings and revenue for The Tinker Belle.

Capital Fund Activity:

Revenue	\$3,873,802.89
Proceeds from 2018B Limited Obligation Bonds - Science Center	\$3,651,935.65
Interest Earned Trustee Account for 2018B Limited Obligation Bonds	\$82,349.44
Investment Earnings	110,382.55
Donations/Sponsorships	440,233.25
Grants	100,000.00
Expenses:	
Professional Fees for Civic Center	86,838
Monroe Park Master Plan and Site Assessment	23,058
Air Museum Advance Planning	19,240
Purchase "The Tinker Belle"	150,000
Capital Improvement to Interior of "The Tinker Belle"	18,500
Storage Building	8,175
Tourism Study	7,500
Snow Machine	6,129
Tinker Belle Navigational Equipment	1,480
Center Theater Property	248,273
Tinker Belle Engine Purchase	80,046
Tinker Belle Tail Wheel	5,151
Purchase of Property Adjacent to Center Theater	260,497
Purchase of 318 E. Franklin Street Property	449,875
Capital Improvements to Science Center Building	3,848,582
Architectural/Engineering Services/Exhibits Consulting - Science Center	669,225
Fund Raising Services - Science Center	100,439
Capitalized Equipment/Exhibits - Science Center	505,374
Center Theater Expansion - Consulting Services	62,000
Branding Initiative/Website Design	33,830
2018B Limited Obligation Bonds - Issuance Costs - Science Center	84,256
2018B Limited Obligation Bonds - Debt Service & Annual Admin Fees	583,082
ERP Project	3,220
NC DNCR Grant Capital Equipment Expenses	93,888

Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund

as of February 28, 2023 \$910,044.61

Portion of Cash Balance Currently Committed in Projects:

Projects:	
Branding Initiative	\$ -
Monroe Science Center Building	24,340.64
Center Theatre Expansion	-
Science Center Exhibits	<u>75,740.90</u>
	\$ 100,081.54

Unreserved Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund \$809,963.07

(50.00)

Occupancy Tax Special Revenue Fund Operating Activity FY 2023

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>FYTD Actual</u>
Revenue:		
Occupancy Tax	199,497	\$ 153,551
Investment Earnings	829	1,704
Total	<u>200,326</u>	<u>155,255</u>
Expenses:		
Debt Service - Principal & Interest	257,463	32,417
Debt Service - Bond Admin Fees	880	1,056
Total	<u>258,343</u>	<u>33,473</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u>(58,017)</u>	<u>121,782</u>

The Tinker Belle Operating Activity FY 2023

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>FYTD Actual</u>
Revenue:		
Show Appearance Fees	20,000	\$ -
Walk-Through/Merchandise Sales	10,000	5,135
Total	<u>30,000</u>	<u>5,135</u>
Expenses:		
Repair & Maintenance - Equipment	27,005	20,266
Travel	6,500	-
Fuel	20,000	1,818
Insurance	12,460	7,917
Contracted Services - Warriors & Warbirds	10,000	-
Merchandise for Resale	3,000	-
Marketing & Promotions	17,275	1,052
Printing	2,500	-
Total	<u>98,740</u>	<u>31,052</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u>(68,740)</u>	<u>(25,917)</u>



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Marion Holloway, Chairman

DATE: March 9, 2023

FROM: Peter Hovanec, Communications and Tourism Office

SUBJECT: Call for Public Hearing to be held April 13, 2023 for FY 2023-2024 Budget

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The consideration of calling for a Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget to be held on April 13, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

REVIEW

North Carolina General Statute 159-12 stipulates that a public hearing be held to receive public comment on the proposed Annual Budget prior to adoption of such Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the TDA board call for a public hearing to be held on April 13, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. to receive public input.

Attachment(s):



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Marion Holloway, Chairman

DATE: March 9, 2023

FROM: Peter Hovanec, Communications and Tourism Director

SUBJECT: Science Center Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The TDA will be presented an update on science center attendance numbers and future plans.

REVIEW

The science center has been open for seven weeks. We have seen 3,469 guests. This includes all adults, seniors, children and children under 2. We have generated \$32,019 in admission sales and \$5,605 in merchandise sales.

In February, Atrium Health donated two wheelchairs for guests to use during their visit. Staff has also started planning for the grand opening and donor celebration party.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.

Attachment(s):

STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Marion Holloway, Chairman

DATE: March 9, 2023

FROM: Pete Hovanec, Communications and Tourism Director

SUBJECT: Dowd Center Theatre Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The TDA will be presented an update on events for the Dowd Center Theatre.

REVIEW

Previous Movie Calendar: February 4 *To Kill A Mockingbird*; February 11 *Hidden Figures*; February 16 *February One*.

Previous Bookings: Union Symphony *Phenomenal Women* Jan. 28; Malpass Brothers Feb. 10.

Upcoming Bookings: UCCAC presents *A Sick Day For Amos McGee* March 1 & 2; James Gregory March 3; Lanti Performing Arts presents *Lion King, Jr.* beginning March 8; Ray Greene & the Capital Cities Chorale March 24; Union Symphony *Symphony of Science* March 25; Acting Out Studios presents *The Addams Family* beginning March 31; Monroe Art Walk April 14-15; *In The Master's House There Are Many Mansions* beginning April 20; Union Symphony presents *Art, Music, & Film* April 22; *The Shakespeare Time-Traveling Speakeasy* May 12; Acting Out Studios Showcase beginning May 18; Lanti Performing Arts presents *Into The Woods* beginning May 26.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.