



**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING**

City Hall Conference Room
300 W. Crowell Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Thursday, August 14, 2025 - 8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Meeting of April 10, 2025 and June 12, 2025
2. Finance/Occupancy Report
3. Dowd Center Theatre Update
4. Science Center Update
5. Air Show Update

MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

CONFERENCE ROOM

300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

APRIL 10, 2025 – 8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Robert Burns, Vice Chairwoman Pat Kahle, MaryAnn Rasberry, Sheila Crunkleton, Joyce Rentschler, and Ron Hinson (left 8:48 a.m.)

Absent: Gina Day and Arpan Bhakta

Staff Present: Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director Pete Hovanec, Finance Director Lisa Strickland, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Administrative Services Supervisor Alison Nichols, Senior Budget Analyst Angela Duncan, Assistant City Manager Jeff Wells, Science Center Supervisor Lauren Fike, and Assistant City Manager Lisa Hollowell

Staff Absent:

Visitors: Gracie Presson

Chairman Burns called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025 to order at 8:33 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of

March 13, 2025 Mr. Hinson made a motion to approve the Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of March 13, 2025. Ms. Rasberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Kahle, Rasberry, Hinson, Rentschler, and Crunkleton

NAYS: None

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report Ms. Strickland stated that occupancy tax collections for February came in at \$53,143. One hotel did not make payment this month because they were the victim of bank fraud. This money will be added when it comes in and have been in touch with the finance department. Technically they should have late fees, but those might be waived because of the situation. Collections will determine that. Even with that, collections are still up 7% from last year. The operating fund balance is \$925,443, which will be updated at the end of the fiscal year. The capital project fund balance is negative because there is a receivable from Rotary there which will be paid over time. The occupancy tax special revenue fund is \$347,591.

Ms. Strickland requested that the Board consider a budget amendment to maintain budgetary compliance. Ms. Strickland explained that since there is an increase in collections, we want to recognize that revenue

and increase the transfer out that goes back to the capital fund. If that goes over the budgeted amount, it gets a budget comment in our audit. This budget amendment does need the approval of the board.

Mr. Hovanec clarified that nothing is being shifted and staff is just putting money where it goes and accounting for the larger than expected collections.

Ms. Strickland confirmed this.

Vice Chairwoman Kahle made a motion to approve Budget Amendment BA-2025-02. Ms. Rasberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Kahle, Rasberry, Hinson, Rentschler, and Crunkleton

NAYS: None

Item No. 3 Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

A. Public Hearing Chairman Burns opened the duly advertised public hearing.

Mr. Hovanec stated that staff has taken out the \$100,000 new position out of the budget because it put undue strain on the budget. Administration is looking at other ways to fund that. Everything else in the budget remains the same since the presentation last month. The budget reflects a \$35,000 decrease from last year's budget. Mr. Hovanec reviewed a few line items and noted that Mr. Bhakta, who could not be present at today's meeting, sent an email noting his objection to the \$100,000 new position being paid for out of the Tourism budget.

Ms. Crunkleton asked if Tourism might do a percentage of the funding of the position.

Mr. Hovanec responded that would not happen at this time, but possibly in future years.

Ms. Nichols noted that board members were given an updated document for R-2025-01 reflecting one line that had been consolidated. The updated version was received after the packet had been published, but all numbers remain the same.

Ms. Duncan explained that the line was consolidated to prevent having to do another budget amendment like BA-2025-02 next fiscal year to move money around.

Ms. Presson from the Best Western Hotel stated that she and the staff at the Best Western are not in agreement with the occupancy tax increase. This puts a strain on the hotel because they are competing in the market. Any time the hotel has to do upgrades, they can't increase the rate because it drives away business. Revenue from the air show doesn't help the Best Western. The recession and tariffs are increasing costs everywhere, and this is not the time to increase the occupancy tax.

Mr. Hovanec asked Ms. Presson to pass on to Mr. Bhakta that the position had been taken out of the budget.

Mr. Hovanec also pointed out to Chairman Burns and the board that the occupancy tax increase that Council voted the other night to increase from 5% to 6% is not included in this budget.

Ms. Crunkleton noted that the Board knew nothing about that at this point in time.

Mr. Hovanec said that that would be discussed later in the meeting.

There being no other speakers, Chairman Burns closed the public hearing.

B. Action – Resolution and Budget Ordinance to Adopt FY 2025-2026 Budget Ms. Rasberry moved to adopt Resolution R-2025-01:

**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT AN ANNUAL
BALANCED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026**

R-2025-01

WHEREAS, the Monroe Tourism Development Authority is required by the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act to adopt an annual balanced budget; and

WHEREAS, a balanced budget has been prepared for the Monroe Tourism Development Authority for fiscal year 2025-2026 under the provisions set forth in the above referenced legislation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Monroe Tourism Development authority adopts the following budget ordinance:

**BUDGET ORDINANCE
BO-2025-01**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Directors of the Monroe Tourism Development Authority:

Section 1A The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the General Operating Fund for the operation of the Authority and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, ending June 30, 2026:

Physical and Economic Development	\$ 1,164,106
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Section 1B It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the General Operating Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026:

Restrictive Intergovernmental	\$ 865,240
Sales and Services	279,375
Investment Earnings	18,991
Miscellaneous	500
	<hr/>
	\$ 1,164,106

Section 2 A copy of this Budget Ordinance shall be furnished to the Director of Finance of the Authority to be kept on file for direction in the disbursement of funds.

Adopted this 10th day of April, 2025.

Mr. Hinson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Kahle, Rasberry, Hinson, Rentschler, and Crunkleton

NAYS: None

Item No. 4 Science Center Update Ms. Fike stated that the new traveling exhibit, Motion Mania, opened last week. This exhibit meets state standards, so school groups are eager to visit.

Mr. Hovanec noted that the revenues for the Science Center do not pay for themselves, and staff will be trying to form a non-profit "Friends Of" committee for the Science Center and theater over the next year. Private and corporate donations would be helpful as the \$10 admission price does not cover the cost of the facility.

Item No. 5 Dowd Center Theatre Update Mr. Hovanec said that the theater will be coming into a quiet summer time but has bookings through May. The theater is partnering with the Latin community for programming in conjunction with the Latin Fest. The theater committee is working hard, and there will be changes to and direction for private rental policies. Staff should be taking over alcohol concessions soon, which will bump up revenues. The theater supervisor position was posted. Staff has identified 6-8 applicants for interviews. In the meantime, Ms. Fike is doing a phenomenal job overseeing both facilities. The Art Walk is this weekend. The gallery has been open for several months, and the theater gets 15% of art sales. This does attract people to Downtown.

Item No. 6 Occupancy Tax Increase Mr. Hovanec told the Board that City Council was brought a proposal to raise the occupancy tax from 5 to 6%. The proposal went through the General Services Committee last week, and it went to Council on Tuesday night. City Council voted 5-2 in favor of sending this request to our legislation. Mr. Hovanec introduced Assistant City Manager Lisa Hollowell to explain.

Ms. Hollowell stated that this is the start of a process. Council approved the proposal to ask the legislature to allow the City to go from collecting 5% to 6% and put forward that legislation. The City right now already has a potential 6% because the County has the ability to levy 1% if it had a referendum. However, the County has never exercised that right. 6% could already be in place, but it isn't. This legislation request is switching that 1% from Union County to the City of Monroe. Union County would still have the ability to have a referendum to levy that 1% for the rest of the county with the exception of Monroe. Currently the City has the ability to have up to 5%. Mecklenburg County has an occupancy tax of 8%, the only ones in the whole state at that level, because they have the ability to have an extension to pay for the NASCAR Museum. Staff reached out to the delegates to let them know of the actions of City Council, and now the ball is in their court to ask the legislature to pass the request. Last month the TDA looked at funding a position for Promotions and Communications Specialist, but staff determined it could not be afforded with the revenues that are coming in. Staff looked at other ways to increase revenue and looked at raising the occupancy tax and took it to City Council, so that's how that happened between last month's TDA meeting where it wasn't discussed and the City Council meeting. Council passed it with a vote of 5-

2. These funds can be used in a very specific way. It's all related to Tourism and promotion of the City and can be some capital expenses. The first ten years of the law was very specific with two thirds of it being for the Science Center and one third for other promotion and Tourism activities, and after ten years per the law that switched from a two thirds/one third split to a one third/two thirds split. This 1% increase would be an additional \$60,000 toward Science Center activities and capital, and then the rest of it toward promotion of tourism.

Ms. Kahle asked what the total impact to revenue would be.

Ms. Hollowell responded that it would be \$180,000.

Ms. Rasberry asked if the City does get the additional 1% for a total of 6% and the County wants to get its 1%, would only the County facilities get that?

Ms. Hollowell said that if the City of Monroe is granted the ability to take 6%, then Union County won't be able to impose a 1% occupancy tax within the City limits, so their ability would be for everywhere else in the county. The way that the City is asking the legislature is not to unduly affect them in such a negative way and they could still access the rest of the county. The General Assembly self-imposes that no occupancy tax go above 6%, with the exception of Mecklenburg County. Even if a bill passes, it still has to go back to Council. They would have to have a public hearing and pass a resolution to do it, so there are several steps that still have to happen. At the Council meeting, there was a discussion about the fund balance that already exists with this entity. There are no general funds or other funds that go into the TDA budget. TDA controls its budget. There is no rainy day fund except fund balance, so collectively this board will want to decide what the fund balance policy is and how it wants to use those funds. The Board may have already done this. TDA currently uses it for replacement of equipment at the Science Center and for operating expenses at the Science Center, so there are different needs of that fund balance. But that is it – that \$900,000 budget that TDA has every year and the fund balance, that operates everything TDA wants to do regarding tourism.

Ms. Rasberry asked about the prepared food tax.

Mr. Hovanec replied that it is conceptual right now.

Ms. Kahle said that she understands that TDA is an enterprise, so those responsibilities lie with the Board, but she is surprised that this is the first that this issue has come to the TDA board. There has been no discussion of increasing the occupancy tax at this level, and she needs help understanding what role the Authority plays in that – is that not a conversation that should start here and then go to Council? It just feels like this board was bypassed. She asked for help understanding what the normal process was.

Ms. Crunkleton and other members of the Board concurred with Ms. Kahle's comments.

Ms. Hollowell said that when the legislation was first enacted, there was not a TDA, and they've never had a request for an increase before. So it probably makes sense that this committee has never generated this request. But it's the Council that decides whether to ask the General Assembly for the increase. This discussion among staff occurred as a result of the TDA meeting last month.

Chairman Burns asked if this came about from the TDA board discussing adding a position.

Ms. Hollowell answered that it came from discussions of the Tourism Development Authority, and the question came up whether or not [unintelligible] and they decided to put it before Council and decide.

Chairman Burns responded that that was the wrong process. That should have come before this committee beforehand. 100%. Chairman Burns expressed his frustration.

Ms. Crunkleton stated her appreciation for Chairman Burns' comments because it does feel like the TDA board got left out of the process, and while the word "committee" is used, this board does control its own budget.

Chairman Burns asked Ms. Hollowell to clarify that this went to the General Services Committee.

Ms. Hollowell confirmed that it did.

Chairman Burns stated that once again, the wrong process was followed. It starts here – anything that has to do with the TDA. That's what should happen. This is where the frustration is coming from. The TDA has businesses and hotels all throughout this city, and this should have had a recommendation. Any time that we do any recommendation all the way across this city, we put them through recommendations by committees. That is the purpose of having committees. Chairman Burns would have liked to have heard that and did not know that. Chairman Burns asked if this basically came from discussion about adding a position.

Ms. Hollowell responded that it was more than just adding a position. Staff was looking collectively at the overall budget and what the potential needs are as far as what this committee wants to do. It is a process. The board can talk about it and decide if it is something useful. It's not a slam dunk with the legislature.

Chairman Burns noted that the TDA is already naturally increasing 8-9% per year. Increasing taxes is increasing a burden on the same population. The TDA should want more people coming to the City and sharing that burden. The City doesn't have to raise taxes; it can encourage businesses to come and start here, come and stay here in our hotels. Chairman Burns noted that he was one of the two who voted against this, adding that naturally planning ahead is key, and he is really confused by this process. Yet another thing was skipped when TDA was skipped and this got put in front of Council.

Ms. Kahle stated that usually she is in favor of occupancy tax because the City's population doesn't pay it; it's paid by visitors to the area. However, the optics here are bad. The Board just passed a budget amendment because its revenues are so much better than projected – the optics of passing a tax at the same time the Board is passing this budget amendment feels uncomfortable. There has been a 7% increase over last year and that's with one of the hotels being late making a payment. The second part of this is that in a training with City Attorney Terry Sholar several months ago for the Board to understand its role better, it was Ms. Kahle's understanding that this is an enterprise, under the authority of the City of course, and not to be a part of the conversation, feels like the Board was bypassed and it's very uncomfortable. It's a budget the Board control but it doesn't. The timing is unfortunate, and the other side of that is what's happening here is the City is creating a tax that will never go away. That's fine because there are things the Board wants to fund, and the Center Theatre has been very good for Monroe. The process is uncomfortable, and the optics on top of what the Board just did feels very uncomfortable, so Ms. Kahle is struggling with trying to understand the action.

Ms. Raspberry asked if it were possible to get approval for the 1% and not enforce it.

Ms. Hollowell answered that it was possible. It needs to come back to Council anyway for the resolution, and the 6% is already authorized for the City. This request to the legislature switches it from the County to the City. The County hasn't exercised their option. This is a discussion the Board needs to have: What does the TDA want to do if the legislature authorizes this? Does the Board want to be able to do more with Tourism and Economic Development?

Ms. Kahle said that that would be a good discussion to have. Having the ability to do it is different from actually doing it. Going a full 1% increase is also another matter. No hotel owner is going to want TDA to do this, which is understandable. It's a balancing of priorities. Going back to optics and timing – is this the time when the general consensus is that the country is heading into a recession? These timing issues need to be a part of the discussion as well as planning. None of that has been done, and again including this body in the conversation is important, and Ms. Kahle feels like the Board was bypassed. That feels uncomfortable, and she is trying to understand the reason behind it.

Ms. Hollowell apologized for the way the Board felt, stating that it was good that Chairman Burns was hearing how the Board felt about the issue, and asked if the Board wanted that switch of the 1% from the County to the City so that the City could use it. Otherwise, the County gets it if they were to go forward with it. The other thing is, even if the General Assembly were to give the City the authority to take the 1%, it doesn't mean that the City has to go through with it. The TDA board does have a lot of things going on, not just with Downtown but with the entire City, and it may be an opportunity to have more funds available. The other thing is that typically with hotel stays, elasticity with a percent increase doesn't have a whole lot of play. Cost overall does, but does 1% really make a difference? Are people going to not come to the City of Monroe because of the 1%? Elasticity doesn't come into play with these short-term stays. This board's discussion is sending a message to the mayor so he knows what to do going forward.

Ms. Rentschler asked if the City got the 1% and chose not to use it whether the County could still get the 1%.

Ms. Hollowell responded that it would mean that it would be in place until the General Assembly repealed it. The big difference is that the County's was written in a way that they have to take theirs out and get a vote from the entire County to implement it. The City's 5% was never written that way, and the 1% would not be that way.

Ms. Rentschler asked if the City could protect the hotels from the 6% if it didn't proceed and exercise the power to levy the additional 1%.

Ms. Strickland said that the City is the entity that charges the tax collector to collect the tax. They do that annually when they adopt their budget, which is why the TDA budget is adopted first. That charge is on there, and then the tax collector collects the amount that the City includes in that ordinance.

Ms. Raspberry stated that just because it's approved for the City to go to 6%, it doesn't mean they will be required to.

Ms. Hollowell confirmed, saying that it would still have to go back to Council.

Chairman Burns said that he would pass all this along to City Council, warning the Board that Council is very much for moving forward with it. It is not enacted at this time. There is an opportunity for the Council to decide not to do it. Presiding over the meeting, it didn't sound like that is even an option. However, to that point, because it hasn't been passed, when that time comes, it does have to come to public hearing. People, hotels, individuals, travelers – that's the time for people to come before Council to let them know they don't think that they should. That's an important voice. The reality is that with the potential recession or decline in the economy and also really bad timing with re-evaluation from the County, the optics of it... Also, Chairman Burns stated that he does want to correct about the purpose of this committee: The TDA serves in conjunction with the City Council. This is actually state mandate, so keep that in mind. TDA works with the City Council in adjusting things, but this money comes from the State. This is a state-mandated committee, so this board has a loud voice. It's not necessarily like every other committee that serves at the pleasure of City Council.

Ms. Kahle remarked that Ms. Hollowell's idea about having a policy in conjunction with the fund balance is a good one and that it is something to have a conversation about. Ms. Kahle stated that she isn't opposed to an increase, but the timing and optics of it are poor. The timing in terms of getting this through the General Assembly is critical, but it is confusing about how it happened without this group being a part of it. Ms. Kahle thanked Ms. Hollowell for the clarification and her regret that Ms. Hollowell had to be the messenger and hear the Board's comments.

Ms. Crunkleton agreed, remarking that normally she supports a hotel tax because it's not residents paying it, but the process is important.

Mr. Hovanec opined that in the long run, it is good for the City to have this in its back pocket. With more money, the TDA can do more things. Mr. Hovanec stated that he does understand the burden on the hotels, and process aside, it's good to protect the City's interest from the County.

Chairman Burns concurred, noting that his personal argument is not that this is a bad thing; it's a matter of his belief that this is the wrong time and the process is very important to him.

Ms. Rasberry asked if the County could step in now to take their 1%.

Mr. Hovanec answered that they would have to have a county-wide referendum, which would be unlikely to pass. He went on to say that he loves the idea of having a fund balance policy and having this in TDA's back pocket. It would be great to have something to put it towards. The board doesn't need to focus on the communications position too much.

Ms. Kahle agreed. If there were a project that coincided with the implementation of the increase, that would help with community buy-in and understanding from hotel owners and leaders. And the process, again, is the biggest issue. To Ms. Hollowell's point, people who want to stay in Union County are not going to be deterred by an additional 1%.

Mr. Hovanec responded that it could start price wars between County and City hotels if Indian Trail and Stallings hotels don't have to worry about the occupancy tax rate and start lowering their rates a bit.

Ms. Crunkleton reminded the Board that the Rotary Roast of Pat Kahle is a fundraiser for the Rotary project fund for the new shelter at the Science Center and asked the Board to consider a \$5,000

sponsorship as no one has advocated more for Tourism in our City than Pat Kahle. The City/Tourism Board would be a presenting sponsor with time at the mic and leading the champagne toast. The guest list is currently at 184 with a maximum capacity of 240 people. Many corporations have tables, and the City/Tourism would receive two tables with a total of 16 seats. Several Council members have reached out wanting to attend.

Mr. Hovanec reminded the Board that money is allocated each year for special events, and the Board does have money for this in the budget. Ms. Kahle has been an advocate for the City and Tourism for many years. Typically for sponsorships over \$1,000, staff asks the Board for a vote.

Ms. Kahle announced that she would recuse herself from this vote; however, staff noted that because Mr. Hinson had left the meeting early, her vote would be needed for a quorum.

Mr. Hovanec clarified that Ms. Kahle would not be directly benefitting from this sponsorship.

Ms. Kahle responded emphatically that she would most definitely not benefit from this fundraiser.

Ms. Crunkleton stated that outside of expenses, the money is all coming back to the City as the idea was that it would be used to pay for the project for which Rotary owes money to the City.

Chairman Burns suggested that the TDA Board make a recommendation for this, have staff talk to the legal department, and potentially take this to City Council for a vote.

Mr. Hovanec and the Board responded that the timing would be too close with the next City Council meeting being May 13 and the event being May 15.

Mr. Hovanec remarked that the Board has sponsored many other events in the past and has that authority, and it is just a question of whether this Board wants to do it.

Ms. Rasberry immediately responded that she wanted to.

Ms. Crunkleton said that this Board ties right into what the project is.

Chairman Burns said that his personal opinion was that he didn't feel comfortable with the Board doing this, noting that obviously he appreciates everything Ms. Kahle and Rotary have done, but he doesn't feel comfortable with the general purpose and doesn't want to make a quick decision. Because it's specifically for a person, he feels apprehensive about the optics.

Ms. Rasberry pointed out that the proceeds are advertised to support the Monroe Rotary Pavilion and Garden at the Monroe Science Center, not a specific person.

Ms. Crunkleton said that the event was going to sell out and Rotary would be fine, but in her opinion this was a great opportunity for the City to have the ability to have that time.

Chairman Burns told the group they could still take a vote.

Ms. Crunkleton expressed her concern about having a quorum without Ms. Kahle's vote.

Mr. Hovanec clarified that Ms. Kahle is not receiving any direct benefit.

Ms. Crunkleton confirmed that she was not and also told Chairman Burns that if he were against it, she would rather not go forward with it.

Ms. Hollowell asked for clarification of the sponsorship details, and Ms. Crunkleton confirmed all of them: 2 tables, 16 seats, dinner, drinks, and all proceeds minus costs come back to the City to pay for the Rotary shelter at the Science Center.

Ms. Hollowell asked who would get use the seats at the table.

Ms. Crunkleton responded that it would be the City's choice.

Mr. Hovanec said he would offer them to the Tourism Board first and then whatever remained would be given to the City Manager's office to share with Council and staff.

Ms. Crunkleton noted that she and Ms. Kahle already had tickets.

Mr. Hovanec said that Mr. Hinson already had tickets.

Ms. Rentschler said that she would like to move to vote.

Ms. Kahle responded that without her, the Board did not have enough votes to move on it, and she was uncomfortable voting, especially after this conversation.

Mr. Hovanec asked how much one table cost.

Ms. Crunkleton responded that it was \$1,000 per table and \$125 per person.

Ms. Crunkleton made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Rasberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Kahle, Rasberry, Rentschler, and Crunkleton

NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

ATTEST:

Robert Burns, Chairman

Alison H. Nichols

MTDA/4-10-25

MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

CONFERENCE ROOM

300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

JUNE 12, 2025 – 8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: MaryAnn Rasberry, Sheila Crunkleton, Joyce Rentschler, Ron Hinson, Gina Day, and Arpan Bhakta

Absent: Chairman Robert Burns and Vice Chairwoman Pat Kahle,

Staff Present: Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director Pete Hovanec, Finance Director Lisa Strickland (arr. 8:34 a.m.), Parks & Recreation and Tourism Administrative Services Supervisor Alison Nichols, Assistant City Manager Jeff Wells, Science Center Supervisor Lauren Fike, , Communications Specialist Bradley Lucore, Senior Staff Attorney Terry Sholar (left 9:11 a.m.), Accounting Manager Ashley Ivey, and Webmaster Payton Mills

Staff Absent:

Visitors:

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairwoman, this meeting was held for informational purposes only, and no action was taken. Mr. Hovanec called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of June 12, 2025 to order at 8:29 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025 Continued to July 10, 2025 meeting.

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report Ms. Ivey stated that April collections were strong with a total of \$77,453. Two months remain in the fiscal year, and those months usually yield high numbers. The Capital Project Fund balance looks odd but is reflecting the closing out of the Science Center building and exhibit projects and will offset each other. Finance just received the annual Rotary payment for the picnic shelter. The Special Revenue Fund reflects the majority of debt payments posted for the year. Nothing is out of the ordinary with the Science Center operations.

Mr. Hovanec confirmed with the Board that they should have received a statement/questionnaire from the auditor, and Mr. Sholar reminded the Board that all answers are “to your knowledge.”

Mr. Hovanec thanked the hotels for their excellent work this year and discussed the importance of continuing to keep the budget strong and the implementation of a “Friends Of” group for the Science Center and Dowd Center Theatre in the coming year.

Item No. 3 Science Center Update Ms. Fike reminded the group that the “Motion Mania” travel exhibit will be in place through August. The first day of summer break saw triple attendance. Staff is stable.

The group discussed small updates needing to be made at the center; the pros and cons of season passes; and library day passes, special discounts, and free days making the Science Center accessible to all.

Item No. 4 Dowd Center Theatre Update Mr. Hovanec stated that summer is slowing down at the theater with the exception of movies, which allows staff to focus on maintenance. The upcoming fall season will provide many exciting acts, and Tim Pappas will start on July 1 as the new DCT Supervisor.

The group discussed the process for choosing acts, marketing, and ticket sales related to specific acts. Mr. Hovanec is hopeful that Mr. Pappas will be helpful in these areas with a strong background in social media and advertising. The restaurant situation is a struggle with limited sit-down options in Downtown.

Mr. Hovanec reviewed City Council's recent actions regarding private rentals. Starting July 1, the theater will allow ten private rental dates per year to non-profit groups, which will generate \$25,000 in revenue. These rentals will have specific parameters and are a step toward opening the DCT back up to the public.

Staff and the Board discussed their experience with the contracted theater consultant and the consultant's recommendations about specific policies and moving the theater forward. Many board members expressed their frustration with the age policy causing a loss of business at the theater and gave various examples. The group discussed making a recommendation at the next meeting to take to the standing mayoral theater committee. This led to a discussion about the role of the TDA as it pertains to the DCT. Mr. Sholar described that role as generating funding and providing input on operations; Mr. Hovanec added that the only piece of the theater funded by the TDA is marketing and promotions.

The group also discussed the proposed "Friends Of" committee, which would be a stand-alone non-profit committee, in comparison to the current mayoral committee, which is an ad-hoc committee expiring after one year if its purpose is achieved. The TDA itself is state-chartered and will remain regardless.

Item No. 5 Air Show Update Mr. Hovanec said that plans for an air show this year will move forward once the budget is approved. This will possibly be the last one due to ongoing construction at the airport.

Mr. Hovanec shared that the part-time Tourism Assistant position has been open since Ms. Nichols moved to the Parks & Recreation department, and staff has hired Lori Lundy to fill that position starting next month. Ms. Lundy will be working with the TDA and Science Center going forward.

The group reviewed upcoming City events.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

ATTEST:

Robert Burns, Chairman

Alison H. Nichols

MTDA/6-12-25

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

Month	Collections										Inception	
	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024		
July	\$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	\$71,311.91	\$70,875.15	
August	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	\$70,250.44	\$76,578.66	
September	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	\$70,961.74	\$80,412.65	
October	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	\$78,388.15	\$90,971.64	
November	36,201.55	44,935.28	53,718.49	52,159.03	52,344.58	44,677.93	33,689.77	\$62,776.88	\$69,846.82	\$66,133.93	\$78,695.22	
December	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	\$61,688.92	\$62,565.29	
January	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	\$66,446.68	\$68,625.18	
February	43,506.47	49,690.07	50,786.19	49,090.46	50,174.09	41,074.64	35,790.58	\$55,074.93	\$64,640.72	\$62,730.49	\$53,143.41	
March	45,588.42	54,238.06	58,370.59	58,151.91	55,628.08	44,213.52	49,982.86	\$68,473.24	\$77,373.44	\$73,443.47	\$99,912.45	
April	44,006.59	56,185.32	54,463.65	55,541.22	52,298.83	24,603.84	54,315.36	\$72,023.49	\$69,155.17	\$68,463.29	\$77,453.41	
May	46,174.97	55,415.35	59,183.07	56,465.45	58,606.08	30,748.09	57,003.16	\$72,299.75	\$76,655.92	\$77,856.16	\$86,423.02	
June	46,835.97	56,036.83	53,968.10	56,273.88	54,481.57	36,285.75	57,435.41	\$72,729.08	\$74,197.82	\$80,517.94	\$82,066.87	
Penalties/Interest	130.10	40.29										
Total Collections	\$481,230.96	\$596,047.38	\$652,252.60	\$622,350.60	\$635,255.34	\$515,258.40	\$507,713.19	\$740,932.20	\$836,924.39	\$848,193.12	\$927,722.95	
Distribution of Collections												
Administrative Fee	\$14,436.93	\$17,881.42	\$16,522.53	\$16,415.73	\$16,352.55	\$15,152.58	\$15,077.13	\$17,409.32	\$17,296.09	\$18,481.93	\$19,277.23	\$470,866.33
Operating (2/3)	\$273,630.07	\$385,443.97	\$423,820.05	\$403,956.58	\$412,601.86	\$333,403.88	\$328,424.04	\$482,348.59	\$546,418.86	\$553,140.79	\$605,630.48	\$5,819,863.15
Capital (1/3)	\$193,163.96	\$192,721.99	\$211,910.02	\$201,978.29	\$206,300.93	\$166,701.94	\$164,212.02	\$241,174.29	\$273,209.43	\$276,570.40	\$302,815.24	\$4,572,846.53
	\$481,230.96	\$596,047.38	\$652,252.60	\$622,350.60	\$635,255.34	\$515,258.40	\$507,713.19	\$740,932.20	\$836,924.39	\$848,193.12	\$927,722.95	\$10,863,576.01

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	21,397	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
2023	973,580	720,369	273,209	(19,999)	921,490
2024	1,068,593	788,070	276,570	3,953	925,443

Fund Balance as of June 30, 2024

\$925,443

Capital Expense History:

Professional Fees for Civic Center	86,838
Monroe Park Master Plan and Site Assessment	23,058
Air Museum Advance Planning	19,240
Purchase of "The Tinker Belle"/Capital Upgrades	255,177
Storage Building	8,175
Tourism Study	7,500
Snow Machine	6,129
Center Theatre Property/Adjacent Property Purchase	508,770
Purchase of 318 E. Franklin Street Property for Science Center & Capital Improvements/Consulting/Fun	5,038,358
Capitalized Equipment/Exhibits - Science Center	786,625
Center Theatre Expansion	332,497
Branding Initiative/Website Design	33,830
NC DNCR Grant Capital Equipment Expenses - Science Center Exhibits	100,000

**Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund
as of July 30, 2025**

Projects:	
Monroe Science Center Building	0.00
Science Center Exhibits	-
Rotary Picnic Shelter Project	(5,104.76)
	<u>(5,104.76)</u>
	<u>\$ (5,104.76)</u>

Occupancy Tax Special Revenue Fund Operating Activity FY 2025

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>FYTD Actual</u>
Revenue:		
Occupancy Tax	273,863	\$ 275,733
Sales of TinkerBelle	-	-
Investment Earnings	17,481	17,329
Appropriation of Fund Balance	-	-
Total	<u>291,344</u>	<u>293,062</u>
Expenses:		
Debt Service - Principal & Interest	253,973	253,973
Debt Service - Bond Admin Fees	1,056	1,056
Total	<u>255,029</u>	<u>255,029</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u><u>36,315</u></u>	<u><u>38,033</u></u>

Fund Balance History of the Occupancy Tax Special Revenue Fund

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Total Revenue*</u>	<u>Debt Service Expense</u>	<u>Capital Fund Transfer In/(Out)</u>	<u>Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets</u>	<u>Fund Balance</u>
2022	\$ 241,649	\$ 254,351	\$ 260,565	\$ 247,863	\$ 247,863
2023	278,051	258,403	-	19,648	267,511
2024	406,745	256,665	(70,000)	80,080	347,591

Monroe Science Center Operating Activity FY 2025

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Current Year Actuals</u>	<u>Prior Year Actuals</u>
Revenue:			
Admission Fees	350,000	\$ 174,044	\$ 172,846
Gift Shop Sales	-	33,843	31,328
Birthday Party Packages	10,000	4,687	11,644
Misc Annual Membership	5,000	-	-
Rent Science Center Facility	10,000	-	-
Total	<u>375,000</u>	<u>212,574</u>	<u>215,819</u>
Expenses:			
Salaries & Benefits	412,645	385,539	340,411
Bank Service Charges	2,500	7,215	7,006
Technical Contracted Services	15,002	6,959	8,471
Repairs & Maintenance - Buildings & Equipment	9,186	6,617	4,574
Software License & Support	1,977	1,444	(5)
Repairs & Maintenance - Copiers	1,000	257	601
Property Damage/Wellness & Clinic Cost	3,871	3,871	3,248
Marketing & Promotions/Printing	29,875	18,433	16,627
Training and Travel Exp	4,535	1,751	1,591
General Supplies	3,000	6,472	7,470
Small Equipment	500	901	1,940
PC's Peripherals	6,229	6,139	-
Utilities & Telecommunications	31,960	24,416	26,332
Items for Resale - Giftshop	23,821	12,300	14,434
Organizational Dues	1,000	650	1,060
Subscriptions & Publications	550	861	517
Special Events	10,000	5,619	1,765
Other Operating Expense & Cost Allocations	5,638	6,932	5,613
Total	<u>563,289</u>	<u>496,375</u>	<u>441,655</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u><u>(188,289)</u></u>	<u><u>(283,801)</u></u>	<u><u>(225,837)</u></u>



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority
VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2025
FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director
PREPARED BY: Tim Pappas, Dowd Center Theatre Operations Supervisor
SUBJECT: Dowd Center Theatre Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

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

REVIEW

Senator Craven and City officials visited the Theatre for a welcome event on Monday, July 14. We presented a month of children’s movies in July, which were all well-attended. Frozen 2 welcomed 112 moviegoers on the morning of Thursday, July 24. Repairs, cleaning, and maintenance were done to the facility, addressing cracks in plaster and squeaking seats. Improvements continue. Concerts for the 2025 Summer/Fall concert season were announced in a sequential fashion, beginning Tuesday, July 22. For August, movies will be presented on Thursday evenings at 7pm and Saturday mornings at 11am, with the exception of the final week, which will feature a 2-night double feature. Social media retooling has begun with a focus on consistency and a sleek, clean, consistent look which highlights the design of the DCT’s iconic marquee. Forward focus is to extend our planning timeline for events in order to better establish a marketing strategy and attract patrons from the City of Monroe and surrounding towns. The ultimate goal is to appeal to the current loyal patrons and keep them returning, while also attracting new folks to the theatre.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority
VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2025
FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director
PREPARED BY: Lauren Fike, Monroe Science Center Supervisor
SUBJECT: Monroe Science Center Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The TDA will be presented an update on events and operations for Monroe Science Center.

REVIEW

The Science Center has had a busy summer with general admission traffic as well as advanced admission with summer camp/field trips. Our summer traveling exhibit has gotten lots of positive reactions and will end August 31, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority
VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2025
FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director
PREPARED BY: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director
SUBJECT: Air Show Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The TDA will be presented an update on Warbirds Over Monroe Air Show plans.

REVIEW

The annual Warbirds Over Monroe Air Show is scheduled to take place on November 8-9 at the Charlotte- Monroe Executive Airport. The air show serves as the largest event in Union County, drawing upwards of 50,000 people over the duration of the event, and the Monroe Tourism Development Authority is its largest sponsor. This year the air show will face challenges due to construction at the airport, but staff is working to adapt to the limitations. Staff is contracting with television, radio, newspapers, billboards and social media to advertise the event.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.