



**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING**

City Hall Conference Room
300 W. Crowell Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Thursday, October 9, 2025 - 8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes Of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Meeting of August 14, 2025
2. Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Report
3. Finance/Occupancy Report
4. Dowd Center Theatre Update
5. Monroe Science Center Update
6. Air Show Update

MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

CONFERENCE ROOM

300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

AUGUST 14, 2025 – 8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Robert Burns, Vice Chairwoman Pat Kahle, MaryAnn Rasberry, Sheila Crunkleton, Joyce Rentschler, Ron Hinson, and Gina Day

Absent: Arpan Bhakta

Staff Present: Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director Pete Hovanec, Finance Director Lisa Strickland, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Administrative Services Supervisor Alison Nichols, Tourism Administrative Assistant Kristen Hensley, Assistant City Manager Jeff Wells, Science Center Supervisor Lauren Fike, Dowd Center Theatre Supervisor Tim Pappas, Senior Staff Attorney Terry Sholar (arr. 8:47 a.m.), Legal Assistant Angie Carnes (arr. 8:47 a.m.), and Accounting Manager Ashley Ivey.

Staff Absent:

Visitors: Tiffani Mozee (arr. 8:39 a.m.)

Chairman Burns called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of August 14, 2025 to order at 8:32 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025 and June 12, 2025. Sheila Crunkleton made a motion to approve the Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025 and June 12, 2025. Ron Hinson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

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

NAYS: None

At this time, new City of Monroe staff members Kristen Hensley, Tourism Administrative Assistant, and Tim Pappas, Dowd Center Theatre Supervisor were introduced and welcomed.

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report: Ashley Ivey presented reports on Occupancy Tax. She concluded that the Occupancy Tax has increased by 9.38% since last year and basically doubled since 2015. She stated that audits will be taking place and new numbers will be provided next month. She discussed the Capital Project Fund and stated the Special Revenue Fund is strong. She stated that the Science Center is on budget.

Pat Kahle stated that Rotary payments are ahead of schedule.

Item No. 3 Dowd Center Theatre Update: Pete Hovanec reviewed upcoming theater events and introduced new Dowd Center Theatre Supervisor Tim Pappas.

Tim Pappas introduced himself, and gave background of his previous work experience with the Charlotte Symphony. He emphasized his commitment to affordable programming.

Mr. Pappas reviewed upcoming acts, noting staff's commitment to promoting diverse programming.

Pete Hovanec stated that the City is building toward season tickets for the Dowd, eventually with increased bookings. He stated the movies over the summer have been a big hit, especially with the sensory friendly movies and the \$2 admission price.

Tim Pappas mentioned he has focused marketing and social media targeting not only Monroe but the surrounding communities. Season tickets may be implemented as soon as early 2026. He stated that the subscription model is still in the experimental phase.

Pete Hovanec discussed how some shows currently are ticketed and some are general admission. He mentioned that the Dowd is looking at various acts including Contemporary Christian, Bluegrass and Jazz performers.

Tim Pappas is looking into youth oriented programming, including Charlotte Children's Theater's travelling show.

Pete Hovanec stated that staff is considering summer camps at the Dowd in 2026. He also demonstrated how the private rentals for the Dowd are now available on the City of Monroe website. The available dates are listed on the website and instructions for non-profits to rent the Dowd are published there. No applications have been received since this service went online. No private individuals can rent the Dowd at this time.

Pat Kahle suggested opening up rental to all nonprofits, not just 501(c) (3) organizations.

At this time, applicants must choose 3 dates for their desired rental in case the City or Dowd cannot accommodate their first choice.

Gina Day stated that the advance scheduling for the Dowd is very helpful for hotels when the schedule is published far out in advance.

Mayor Robert Burns inquired about the "Friends Of" report. Pete Hovanec stated that this is still in the planning stage, needing more input from the legal aspect, and that he will make it a priority.

Item No. 4 Science Center Update Lauren Fike stated that this has been the busiest summer the Science Center has had yet. She stated there have been a lot of group visits as well as the general public attendance. She described some new programming, including Scavenger Hunts at the Science Center, which have been very popular and interactive.

The Public Library is now featuring an "Explorer Pass" to the Science Center, whereby the public can "check out" the Pass just as they would a Library Book. However, the process is entirely digital. The public has access to 3 passes per day, with each pass valid for 4 persons free admission to the Science Center. These Explorer Passes are great to expand access for those in the community with affordability issues and an excellent resource for the community.

Pat Kahle praised this benefit for the community.

Lauren Fike also discussed other discounts for the community, including ½ price Report Card promotion and the Annual Free Event to commemorate the anniversary of the Grand Opening.

Pete Hovanec discussed how the Science Center had experimented with staying open later into the evening hours, but did not see much traffic during the several attempts for extended hours. He stated there was just not much response from the public during these extended hours.

Ron Hinson stated that the Kiwanis Club would be interested in a putt putt area at the Science Center and asked if the City could look into installing something like that.

Pete Hovanec stated that the City had previously researched this idea and that the estimates during that process came in around \$200,000 for a professional 18 hole putt putt area to be installed in the parking lot. A quote was also given for a 36 Hole Course at \$250,000.

Item No. 5 Air Show Update Pete Hovanec presented the poster design for this year’s Air Show. He stated that tickets sales have gone live on the website and have generated \$11,000 so far with the Air Show still 3 months away. He stated last year’s crowds were huge and this year is looking promising with a lot of early response from social media and early ticket sales and buzz around the community. Michelin will be sponsoring one of the performers and will have a recruiting booth at the Air Show.

Pat Kahle inquired about the construction at the Airport and Pete Hovanec stated that there is not much construction yet.

Pete Hovanec advised that the Photo Passes for the Air Show have already sold out.

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

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

NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

ATTEST:

Robert Burns, Chairman

Kristen Hensley

MTDA/8-14-25



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: October 9, 2025

FROM: Ashley Ivey, Assistant Finance Director

PREPARED BY: Ashley Ivey, Assistant Finance Director

SUBJECT: Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Report

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board that on October 9, 2025, Mr. Eric Van Orden, of Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. will present the audited financial statements for the Monroe Tourism Development Authority for the year ended June 30, 2025.

REVIEW

Mr. Van Orden will present the audited financial statements, highlighting the results of the annual audit performed on the Authority's financial records. A printed copy of the audited financial statements will be provided to you.

RECOMMENDATION

No action required. For information only.

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

| Month | Collections | | | | | | | | | | Inception | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | FY2016 | FY2017 | FY2018 | FY2019 | FY2020 | FY2021 | FY2022 | FY2023 | Total from FY2024 | Total from FY2025 | | FY2026 |
| July | \$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 | \$77,308.09 | |
| August | 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 | 75,481.12 | |
| September | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 40.29 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Collections | \$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 | \$152,789.21 | |
| Distribution of Collections | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative Fee | \$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 | \$4,583.68 | \$475,450.01 |
| Operating (2/3) | \$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 | \$98,803.69 | \$5,918,666.84 |
| Capital (1/3) | \$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 | \$49,401.84 | \$4,622,248.37 |
| | \$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 | \$152,789.21 | \$11,016,365.22 |

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 |
| 2025 | 1,189,749 | 930,860 | 302,815 | (43,927) | 881,516 |

Preliminary Fund Balance as of June 30, 2025

\$881,516

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 September 30, 2025**

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Projects: | |
| Monroe Science Center Building | 0.00 |
| Science Center Exhibits | - |
| Rotary Picnic Shelter Project | 400.24 |
| | <u>400.24</u> |
| | <u>\$ 400.24</u> |

Occupancy Tax Special Revenue Fund Operating Activity FY 2026

| | | <u>Budget</u> | <u>FYTD Actual</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Revenue: | Occupancy Tax | 288,413 | \$ 24,996 |
| | Sales of TinkerBelle | - | - |
| | Investment Earnings | 17,481 | - |
| | Appropriation of Fund Balance | - | - |
| | Total | 305,894 | 24,996 |
| Expenses: | Debt Service - Principal & Interest | 256,848 | - |
| | Debt Service - Bond Admin Fees | 1,056 | - |
| | Total | 257,904 | - |
| Net Income (Loss) | | 47,990 | 24,996 |

Fund Balance History of the Occupancy Tax Special Revenue Fund

| Fiscal Year | Total Revenue* | Debt Service Expense | Capital Fund Transfer In/(Out) | Increase/(Decrease in Net Assets) | Fund Balance |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 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 |
| 2025*** | 324,056 | 258,223 | - | 65,833 | 413,425 |

*** Preliminary as of June 30, 2025 - Pending Financial Audit

Monroe Science Center Operating Activity FY 2026

| | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Current Year Actuals</u> | <u>Prior Year Actuals</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Revenue: | 251,000 | \$ 58,836 | \$ 177,617 |
| | 60,000 | 7,233 | 34,358 |
| | 12,375 | 1,468 | 4,687 |
| | 0 | - | - |
| | 6,000 | - | - |
| Total | 329,375 | 67,537 | 216,663 |
| Expenses: | 439,604 | 86,007 | 391,410 |
| | 7,100 | 2,326 | 7,397 |
| | 10,000 | 1,746 | 12,207 |
| | 9,000 | 928 | 6,617 |
| | 20,200 | 20,396 | 1,444 |
| | 750 | 130 | 285 |
| | 4,711 | 4,711 | 3,871 |
| | 15,000 | 1,031 | 19,318 |
| | 2,000 | - | 1,751 |
| | 3,000 | 1,279 | 6,977 |
| | 500 | 375 | 1,794 |
| | 1,367 | - | 6,139 |
| | 26,920 | 7,257 | 24,416 |
| | 20,000 | 3,606 | 18,119 |
| | 750 | - | 650 |
| | 861 | 36 | 879 |
| | 2,500 | 34 | 6,023 |
| | 11,391 | 9,707 | 7,406 |
| Total | 575,654 | 139,570 | 516,702 |
| Net Income (Loss) | (246,279) | (72,033) | (300,039) |



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: September 25, 2025

FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director

PREPARED BY: Tim Pappas, Operations Supervisor, Dowd Center Theatre

SUBJECT: Dowd Center Theatre Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

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

REVIEW

The Theatre has been busy since the last TDA meeting. First quarter ticket revenue is soon to eclipse \$55k, tracking 10% higher than the same period in FY25. The Marshall Tucker Band brought a sold-out crowd, with November's Yacht Rock the Dock also on track to sell out. Revamped marketing efforts are supporting the roll outs of newly-announced performances, as well as continuing promotion of existing shows, including two comedy acts, a tribute band, and 200s rock band Los Lonely Boys round out the fall shows at the end of November. October movies feature a more-comedic approach to the "spooky season," culminating with a Monster Movie Marathon scheduled for October 30th, featuring three classic Universal films, *The Invisible Man* (1933), *Bride of Frankenstein* (1931), and *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954). We have received 6 inquiries for rentals since reopening to 501(c) organizations in Union County/Monroe. We have been able to confirm 3 of them, as they meet the approved criteria.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority
VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager
DATE: October 9 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 slowed down with students returning to school. With this, we shift out focus to community events. We had our third annual Health Fair in partnership with Wingate University that was a success. We are also participating with Wingate University School of Psychology as a study site for a project called *Science Learning and Motivation in Science Center Settings*.

Current Community events:

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 9/12/2025 | Back-to-School Bash | Poplin Elementary |
| 9/27/2025 | Health Sciences Academy Cancer Walk | Monroe High School |
| 10/18/2025 | Halloween Happenings | Downtown Monroe |
| 10/24/2025 | MAFC Trunk or Treat | MAFC |

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority
VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager
DATE: October 9, 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.