



**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING**

City Hall Conference Room
300 W. Crowell Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Thursday, September 10, 2026 - 8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Meeting of August 20, 2026
2. Finance/Occupancy Report
3. Market Study Update
4. Downtown Master Plan Presentation by Ashley Nowell
5. Dowd Center Theatre Update
6. Monroe Science Center Update
7. Science Center Budget Amendment

**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
CONFERENCE ROOM
300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112
AUGUST 20, 2026 – 8:30 A.M.
MINUTES**

Present: Chairman Robert Burns (arr. 8:33 a.m.), MaryAnn Rasberry, Joyce Rentschler, Jennifer Moore, Bill Heisner, Sheila Crunkleton, and Clayton Whitson

Absent: Ron Hinson, Gina Day, and Arpan Bhakta

Staff Present: Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director Pete Hovanec, Finance Director Lisa Strickland, Assistant Finance Director Ashley Ivey, Tourism Administrative Assistant Kristen Hensley, Assistant City Manager Jeff Wells, Assistant City Manager Lisa Hollowell, Science Center Supervisor Lauren Fike, Senior Staff Attorney Terry Sholar, Downtown Director Ashley Nowell, and Dowd Center Theatre Operations Supervisor Tim Pappas

Guest Speaker: Gregg Wisecarver

Chairman Robert Burns called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of August 20, 2026 to order at 8:34 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of July 9, 2026. Bill Heisner made a motion to approve the Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of July 9, 2026. MaryAnn Rasberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Moore, Heisner, Whitson, Rasberry, Rentschler, Crunkleton

NAYS: None

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report: Assistant Finance Director Ashley Ivey presented the Finance/Occupancy Report. She discussed collections from the month of June totaling \$83,646, and stated that the report includes the full fiscal year 2026. She stated total collections of \$893,631 were down approximately \$34,000 from last year, but explained that last year was the highest year, and 2026 numbers were still higher than 2024. She stated the auditors started the annual audit this week. She gave a brief recap of the fund balance for the Special Revenue Fund, currently at \$453,330 and discussed the operating activity for the Science Center.

Item No. 3 Market Study Update: Pete Hovanec introduced Gregg Wisecarver from The Sport Facilities Companies. Gregg Wisecarver displayed the following presentation on the screen:

<https://ddeck.io/6a867b5820e4f4890e558797>

Gregg Wisecarver outlined how The Sport Facilities Companies could provide the City of Monroe with a comprehensive market feasibility study, as well as a financial feasibility study. The market study would

assess needs and trends in the area, evaluate the overall market, and recommend the right assets for the City of Monroe to build for the next 2-3 decades as well as estimate the cost to build them. The financial study would provide a projection of a 5-year bottom line figure for expenses and operations, and 20-year cash flow projection. His company also helps identify funding sources. He emphasized that the recommendations are based on data, and outline what assets to build, how much it will cost to build, and how much it will cost to operate. He discussed how sports facilities do not generate high revenue, but drive economic impact for the community. His company would include an economic impact report with the study, and could also include marketing/branding for the facility. He outlined the many stages of the process.

Jeff Wells spoke about the importance of completing this study to determine feasibility. Pete Hovanec also expressed support. Bill Heisner spoke about driving hotel revenue from big tournaments and the significance of a sports facility able to accommodate these large tournaments.

Gregg Wisecarver outlined pricing for the market study (\$20,000), financial study (\$30,000) or both (\$45,000), and discussed an approximately 10-week timeline for completion of this stage. He concluded his presentation with a discussion of current trends in sports complexes.

Joyce Rentschler inquired about public input for this study. Gregg Wisecarver explained that the public's input is a piece of the study but does not dictate the study.

The board discussed funding for this study.

Item No. 4 Dowd Center Theatre Update: Tim Pappas presented statistics from the last fiscal year for the Dowd, and summarized that everything is moving upwards. He provided an analysis of events: 109 events during the last fiscal year, which is up 20% over FY25 and the highest number of annual activations in the theatre's history. The Dowd welcomed 13,060 visitors, which is a 15% increase from FY25 and the highest annual attendance in the theatre's history. He discussed recent performances at the Dowd, as well as 22 live events that are planned for this fiscal year so far.

Item No. 5 Science Center Update Lauren Fike explained that the summer operating hours on Tuesdays have concluded, and the museum welcomed 120-150 visitors per day over the summer. She discussed how they are booking large school groups for the upcoming school year, and have added an additional time slot for birthday parties, with times now available at 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. She discussed how the grant money has been utilized for a 3D printer, and how fidget toys will be fabricated using the new printer to teach children the technology of 3D printing.

Pete Hovanec updated the board on MaryAnn Rasberry's efforts to establish a Friends of the Science Center and Dowd Center Theatre 501(c)(3) non-profit.

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

AYES: Raspberry, Moore, Heisner, Whitson, Rentschler, and Crunkleton

NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

ATTEST:

Robert Burns, Chairman

Kristen Hensley

MTDA/8-20-2026

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

Month	Collections						Total from	Total from	FY2026	FY2027	Inception	
	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024				FY2025
July	\$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	\$86,143.04	
August	\$6,430.47	\$3,328.43	\$3,326.15	\$6,119.30	33,717.52	\$57,897.52	\$72,112.89	\$70,250.44	\$76,578.66	75,481.12	-	
September	\$2,501.28	\$4,280.40	\$7,322.54	\$4,601.79	36,333.99	\$57,646.95	\$67,860.45	\$70,961.74	\$80,412.65	73,710.88	-	
October	\$2,852.14	\$4,883.77	\$1,478.56	\$8,576.63	47,918.88	\$60,324.82	\$72,465.20	\$78,388.15	\$90,971.64	83,244.67	-	
November	\$3,718.49	\$2,159.03	\$2,344.58	\$4,677.93	33,689.77	\$62,776.88	\$69,846.82	\$66,133.93	\$78,695.22	70,001.39	-	
December	\$2,905.99	\$3,020.41	\$1,248.49	\$3,855.88	30,608.58	\$55,627.44	\$58,041.30	\$61,688.92	\$62,565.29	62,864.60	-	
January	\$4,314.76	\$4,917.89	\$5,790.70	\$7,998.34	34,555.26	\$47,425.62	\$57,371.07	\$66,446.68	\$68,625.18	68,838.50	-	
February	\$0,786.19	\$4,090.46	\$0,174.09	\$1,074.64	35,790.58	\$55,074.93	\$64,640.72	\$62,730.49	\$53,143.41	62,845.12	-	
March	\$8,370.59	\$8,151.91	\$5,628.08	\$4,213.52	49,982.86	\$68,473.24	\$77,373.44	\$73,443.47	\$99,912.45	77,620.90	-	
April	\$4,463.65	\$5,541.22	\$2,298.83	\$24,603.84	\$4,315.36	\$72,023.49	\$69,155.17	\$68,463.29	\$77,453.41	75,398.94	-	
May	\$9,183.07	\$6,465.45	\$8,606.08	\$30,748.09	\$7,003.16	\$72,299.75	\$76,655.92	\$77,856.16	\$86,423.02	82,670.21	-	
June	\$3,968.10	\$6,273.88	\$4,481.57	\$36,285.75	\$7,435.41	\$72,729.08	\$74,197.82	\$80,517.94	\$82,066.87	83,646.66	-	
Penalties/Interest												
Total Collections	\$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	\$893,631.08	\$86,143.04	
Distribution of Collections												
Administrative Fee	\$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	\$18,936.31	\$2,584.29	\$492,386.93
Operating (2/3)	\$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	\$583,129.85	\$55,705.83	\$6,458,698.83
Capital (1/3)	\$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	\$291,564.92	\$27,852.92	\$4,892,264.37
	\$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	\$893,631.08	\$86,143.04	\$11,843,350.13

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
2026	1,106,883	852,297	291,565	(36,979)	844,537

Preliminary Fund Balance as of June 30, 2026

\$844,537

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 DPCR Grant Capital Equipment Expenses - Science Center Exhibits	100,000

**Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund
as of Sept 1, 2026**

Projects:

Monroe Science Center Building	-
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 2027

		<u>Budget</u>	<u>FYTD Actual</u>
Revenue:	Occupancy Tax	\$ 308,952	\$ -
	Sales of TinkerBelle	-	-
	Investment Earnings	13,747	-
	Appropriation of Fund Balance	-	-
	Total	322,699	-
Expenses:	Debt Service - Principal & Interest	254,286	-
	Debt Service - Bond Admin Fees	1,144	-
	Total	255,430	-
Net Income (Loss)		<u>67,269</u>	<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
2025	306,639	251,116	(3,194)	52,328	399,920
2026***	311,402	257,992	-	53,410	453,330

*** Preliminary as of June 30, 2026 - Pending Financial Audit

Monroe Science Center Operating Activity FY 2027

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Current Year Actuals</u>	<u>Prior Year Actuals</u>
Revenue:	185,000	\$ 50,317	\$ 168,170
	Admission Fees	30,000	7,633
	Gift Shop Sales	10,000	3,523
	Birthday Party Packages	0	-
	Misc Annual Membership	3,500	-
	Rent Science Center Facility	228,500	61,473
	Total		210,403
Expenses:	466,491	58,389	404,177
	Salaries & Benefits	7,500	2,184
	Bank Service Charges	10,000	2,151
	Technical Contracted Services	9,000	-
	Repairs & Maintenance - Buildings & Equipment	-	-
	Software License & Support	750	28
	Repairs & Maintenance - Copiers	4,818	-
	Property Damage/Wellness & Clinic Cost	15,000	2,106
	Marketing & Promotions/Printing	2,000	-
	Training and Travel Exp	3,000	-
	General Supplies	2,000	-
	Small Equipment	-	-
	PC's Peripherals	28,011	5,435
	Utilities & Telecommunications	30,000	3,220
	Items for Resale - Giftshop	750	-
	Organizational Dues	861	-
	Subscriptions & Publications	7,500	-
	Special Events	26,434	3,767
	Other Operating Expense & Cost Allocations	614,115	77,279
	Total	(385,615)	(15,807)
Net Income (Loss)		<u>(15,807)</u>	<u>(301,228)</u>

STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: Sept. 10, 2026

FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director

PREPARED BY: Pete Hovanec, Parks & Recreation and Tourism Director

SUBJECT: Sports Market Study

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Staff met with representatives from Sports Facilities Companies to discuss possibilities of future sport/facility venue in Monroe.

REVIEW

Sports Facilities Companies will provide a comprehensive market feasibility study for the city of Monroe that will review all existing service providers, assess needs and trends in the area, and evaluate the overall market. The study would also give a recommendation on the type of facility as well as some cost predictions and financial performance expectations.

The Market Feasibility study would cost \$20,000 and a second part that produces a more in-depth financial feasibility and business model development can be added at a discount if agreed upon at the same time.

Staff is able to cover the cost of the initial market feasibility study out of current budgeted funds. The financial feasibility portion of the study would need to be allocated out of the TDA capital budget. If approved the capital fund allocation request would go to the General Services Committee and then to city council for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends conducting the market feasibility with currently budgeted funds and conduct the financial feasibility portion with funds allocated out of the TDA Capital fund.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Pete Hovanec, Director of Parks & Recreation, Tourism

DATE: September 10, 2026

FROM: Ashley Nowell, Downtown Director

PREPARED BY: Ashley Nowell, Downtown Director

SUBJECT: Downtown Master Plan Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Staff will provide Tourism Development Authority with an update on the status of Monroe's Downtown Master Plan.

REVIEW

Staff will recap Downtown Master Plan progress from the summer and outline input dates spanning throughout the fall.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for discussion.

STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: September 10, 2026

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

The Dowd Center Theatre announced three more live events since the last meeting. *September: A Tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire, Comedian Jeff Allen, and A Gold City Christmas*. These concerts are currently on sale, with another two in the contract process, which will be announced this month.

We've welcomed two local artists to the gallery in September. Louise Napier and Patti Duncan are sharing the space in an exhibit entitled "Nature's Allure," featuring a combination of paintings and fiber arts. Their works will be on display from now until the holidays, including a community event on Tuesday, September 15 at 5:00 p.m., and the Monroe Art Walk on October 9 and 10.

The theatre will once again host Santa Claus this year. With a greater number of hours and more targeted dates than last year, and more targeted dates (including extended hours during the City's Christmas Tree Lighting) there should be ample opportunity for folks to share their list and take pictures. These experiences are free to the public and include a complimentary digital download of their family's photos taken using professional equipment.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: September 10, 2026

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

Staff is turning its focus on deep cleaning and exhibit updating. We will host our fall community day in partnership with Wingate University. This will be the 4th time working with them. This event offers health screenings, flu shots, and health education sessions. We also work with local non profits like Heart of Monroe to offer a free clothing shop in the sensory room at this event.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a budget amendment to carry over remaining funds from If/Then grant.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT
BA-2026-02**

Amendment necessary to appropriate the remainder of the funds for the IF/THEN Champions Network Small Award to be used for programming at the Science Center.

TDA:

Revenues:

Restricted Revenue	\$4,144.11
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Expenditures:

Programming	\$4,144.11
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Adopted this 10th day of September, 2026.

Robert A. Burns, Chairman

Attest:

Kristen Hensley, Clerk