



**MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING**

City Hall Conference Room
300 W. Crowell Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Thursday, March 11, 2021 - 8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of February 11, 2021
2. Finance/Occupancy Report
3. Budget Presentation and Call for Public Hearing
4. Dowd Center Theatre Update
5. Science Center Update
6. Other
7. Tour of Science Center

MONROE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

CONFERENCE ROOM

300 W. CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

FEBRUARY 11, 2021 – 8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Bobby Kilgore, Vice Chair Sheila Crunkleton, Pat Kahle, Ron Brown, Gina Day

Absent: Lorayn DeLuca

Staff Present: Communications and Tourism Officer Pete Hovanec, Accounting Manager Ashley Ivey (left 8:40 a.m.), Communications and Tourism Assistant Alison Nichols

Staff Absent: Assistant City Manager/Director of Downtown Brian Borne, City Manager Larry Faison, Finance Director Lisa Strickland, Assistant City Attorney Ashley Duncan Britt

Visitors:

Chairman Kilgore called the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of February 11, 2021 to order at 8:30 a.m.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes of Monroe Tourism Development Authority Meeting of November 12, 2020 Vice Chairwoman Crunkleton made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Monroe Tourism Development Authority Regular Meeting of November 12, 2020. Ms. Kahle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Crunkleton, Brown, Kahle, and Day

NAYS: None

Mr. Hovanec announced to the board that Council had appointed Cierra Fitzgerald to the board, but she is no longer with the Hampton Inn and is ineligible to serve. Gina Day was sworn in this morning as a new member of the board.

Item No. 2 Finance/Occupancy Report Ms. Ivey stated that December occupancy tax collections were \$30,608, which is still low but looks like it will pick up soon. The numbers are about \$5,000 less than this time last year but about \$10,000 less than the year before. The unreserved cash balance of the capital project fund is \$395,665 apart from money set aside for Science Center exhibits.

Mr. Hovanec noted that statewide the tourism industry is seeing peaks and valleys. More corporations are allowing travel now, and indicators are that the numbers will continue to rise.

Item No. 3 Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Contract Ms. Ivey presented the request for the contract for audit services for the Tourism Development Authority with Martin, Starnes & Associates for this fiscal year.

The contract must be approved annually. This will be the 8th year working with this firm, and they have always been helpful and thorough. The cost is estimated at \$2,800.

Mr. Hovanec asked if the company is doing the City's audit contract as well.

Ms. Ivey replied affirmatively.

Vice Chairwoman Crunkleton made a motion to approve the audit contract with Martin, Starnes, & Associates, CPA's, PA for \$2,800. Ms. Kahle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Crunkleton, Brown, Kahle, and Day

NAYS: None

Item No. 4 Science Center Update Mr. Hovanec informed the board that many exhibits are now in position at the Science Center. About half of the exhibits are in place with more expected to arrive within the month. Staff is looking for more small exhibits to fill in the gaps.

Mr. Hovanec stated that construction is 99% complete and contractors are working on the punch list. Staff is looking at liquidated damages from the company for their extreme lateness and will probably settle around \$50,000.

Mr. Hovanec said that the exhibits are undergoing beta testing and have been well received. The parking area around the Science Center is going out for bid at the end of this month and should be complete in time for opening, hopefully in September.

Mr. Hovanec shared that staff is trying to obtain a Mercury Space Capsule and computer screens used by NASA to be used in a temporary exhibit honoring Dr. Christine Darden, a Monroe native who worked with the Mercury program at NASA as featured in the movie "Hidden Figures." After being on display in the temporary exhibit room, the space capsule would then become a permanent outdoor exhibit dedicated to Dr. Darden.

Mr. Hovanec announced that NBC will be featuring the Get Centered campaign and the Science Center and Dowd Center Theatre all next month as part of a community outreach series. Mr. Hovanec asked the board to think of any contacts they might have in the agricultural community to engage them more with the Science Center. So far the only contribution from the agricultural community has been from the Farm Bureau.

Mr. Hovanec also announced that at the end of the month, a plane will be moved from the airport to the Science Center to become a permanent outdoor exhibit. JB Preslar has graciously donated shipping services. The plane is currently primed and will be finish painted on-site at the Science Center after it has been safely moved.

Mr. Hovanec told the board that an offer for the director position has been extended to a candidate. There were 200 applicants, seven or eight phone interviews, and four in-person interviews. The candidate is currently the second in command at the Catawba Science Center. If she turns down the position, staff will have to open up the search again as none of the other three finalists are available any longer.

Item No. 5 Dowd Center Theatre Update Mr. Hovanec stated that the theater could technically show movies but not have live performers under current governor's orders. Staff is planning to open the lobby during the day to display artwork and hold some evening art shows. Currently the lobby can only hold 10 people, and staff is hoping the number will be raised to 25 soon. Council has been gracious and is not worried about revenue in these times. Staff wants to give people an outlet for recreation, perhaps showing a movie a couple times a day. It would not make any money and concessions would not be sold.

Mr. Hovanec said that staff has some artists booked for this fall, but a lot of artists don't want to make commitments right now. Staff is also looking at the possibility of live virtual shows, which would show live performances on the screen at the theater.

Vice Chairwoman Crunkleton stated that the theater wouldn't want to be associated with a super spreader event.

Ms. Kahle added that the theater might not want to open in a less-than-grand way.

Mr. Hovanec agreed, noting staff is faced with the dilemma of choosing between doing anything to get traffic into the theater or waiting for a big grand opening. Staff is working with the Arts Council to get some artwork and possibly a volunteer to walk people through an art exhibit. Inquiries for theater rentals are numerous, and staff is tentatively approving them (pending governor's orders). The Groundhog Day Economic Summit was successfully filmed at the theater.

The group briefly discussed the lack of Downtown restaurants with predictable hours.

Ms. Day stated that she and her staff are often unsure where to direct hotel guests when they ask for Downtown restaurants because they don't really know what is open and when.

Vice Chairwoman Crunkleton agreed, saying that we need restaurants to have regular, predictable hours.

Mr. Hovanec stated that his plan is to have food trucks at the Science Center.

Vice Chairwoman Crunkleton cautioned Mr. Hovanec that her understanding is that unless the food trucks are on private property, they need to be associated with a private event, and that is something to look into.

Item No. 6 Other Mr. Hovanec informed the board that air show planning has begun. All indicators are that the air show will be allowed this year, although some of the early season air shows have already cancelled for this year. A lot of air show performers went under this year due to all the cancellations. Air show leadership councils are concerned about safety this year because so many performers have not been able to practice regularly due to all the air show cancellations. A big focus of the air show leadership conventions will be on skill maintenance and proficiency. Many air shows last year were held as drive-in air shows. The Monroe airport does not have the space to accommodate that, but staff might explore the idea of finding a field large enough to accommodate many cars to park guests and the overhead space to create an airbox above.

Chairman Kilgore asked about the Youth Council project to paint the two railroad trestles on Old Charlotte Highway by the Monroe Grille.

Mr. Hovanec answered that staff has been trying to make this project work with CSX for the last five years, and the details have just been figured out. The goal is to make the two underpasses pretty but not necessarily to display any messages in an attempt to beautify the area. This will coincide with the nearby Belk Tonawanda Park improvements to spruce up this gateway into Monroe.

Ms. Kahle noted that Aw Shucks will be doing a burger festival in May.

Mr. Hovanec reminded the board that next month staff will have a preliminary budget and will ask the board to call for a public hearing for the following month.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

ATTEST:

Bobby Kilgore, Chairman

Alison H. Nichols

MTDA/2-11-21

**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	
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	
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	
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	54,676.63	36,333.99	
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	47,918.86	
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	28,593.65	36,201.55	44,935.28	53,718.49	52,159.03	52,344.58	44,677.93	33,689.77	
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	
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	
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	-	
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	-	
April	23,655.79	24,442.11	25,763.12	28,374.34	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	24,603.84	-	
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	-	
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	-	

Capital Fund Activity:

Revenue	\$3,396,728.56
Proceeds from 2018B Limited Obligation Bonds - Science Center	\$3,651,935.65
Interest Earned Trustee Account for 2018B Limited Obligation Bonds	\$80,095.72
Investment Earnings	117,447.41
Donations/Sponsorships	292,823.25
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	3,760,475
Architectural/Engineering Services/Exhibits Consulting - Science Center	668,067
Fund Raising Services - Science Center	100,439
Capitalized Equipment/Exhibits - Science Center	306,649
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	398,301
ERP Project	3,220

**Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund
as of March 1, 2021**\$757,031.17**Portion of Cash Balance Currently Committed in Projects:**

Projects:	
Branding Initiative	\$ -
Monroe Science Center Building	115,230.34
Center Theatre Expansion	-
Science Center Exhibits	<u>238,182.64</u>
	\$ <u>353,412.98</u>

Unreserved Cash Balance of the Capital Project Fund \$403,618.19**\$0.00****The Tinker Belle Operating Activity FY 2021****Budget****FYTD Actual**

Revenue:		
Show Appearance Fees	20,000	\$ -
Walk-Through/Merchandise Sales	10,000	-
Total	<u>30,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Expenses:		
Repair & Maintenance - Equipment	25,000	22,411
Travel	6,500	2,496
Fuel	20,000	3,893
Insurance	12,460	10,624
Contracted Services - Warriors & Warbirds	10,000	-
Merchandise for Resale	3,000	-
Marketing & Promotions	17,275	1,431
Printing	2,500	-
Total	<u>96,735</u>	<u>40,855</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u>(66,735)</u>	<u>(40,855)</u>

Update and e-mail to Pete Hovanec, Mary Lou, Brian Borne, Lisa Strickland, Alison Nichols, Bethany H

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STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Bobby G. Kilgore, Chairman

DATE: March 11, 2021

FROM: Peter Hovanec, Communications and Tourism Office

SUBJECT: Call for Public Hearing to be held April 8, 2021 for FY 2021-2022 Budget

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The consideration of calling for a Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget to be held on April 8, 2021 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 8, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. to receive public input.

Attachment(s):



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Bobby G. Kilgore, Chairman

DATE: March 11, 2021

FROM: Peter 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 and how they are impacted by COVID 19.

REVIEW

The Dowd Center Theatre and the adjacent building have been purchased through hotel occupancy taxes, and the process of renovating the existing structure is moving forward. The feasibility and cost estimates were completed by Webb Management, and an RFQ contract was awarded to Clearscapes Architecture for the schematic design and construction documents. The theater is mostly completed, and we have a certificate of occupancy. The theatre has held two successful preliminary events. Due to the pandemic, the gala event is currently postponed until the first of the year, and events are cancelled through the rest of the year. The first public event is yet to be determined. Everything is in a holding pattern awaiting governor's orders. Staff is working on internal programming.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Tourism Development Authority

VIA: Bobby G. Kilgore, Chairman

DATE: March 11, 2021

FROM: Peter Hovanec, Communications and Tourism Director

SUBJECT: Monroe Science Center Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The TDA will be presented an update on construction and exhibit completion for the Monroe Science Center.

REVIEW

With construction is nearing completion, staff is working to develop the exhibit areas as well as the overall layout and design of the purchased exhibits and design of peripheral materials (directional signage, vinyl graphic panels, donor signage, etc.). Staff is contracting with Verner Johnson to continue with their exhibit consulting services. This professional service is needed to assist staff in the overall layout of the facility and will ensure exhibit placement meets ADA standards while maintaining the aesthetic intent of the design elements. It is anticipated that exhibit moving and construction should take roughly six months from time of construction completion. Nearly 20 exhibits have been secured, and the initial staffing process has begun. Verner Johnson has worked closely with the City staff as well as the Science Center architect, Morris-Berg, since the project's inception. Verner Johnson has not only been instrumental in securing the exhibits but also in ensuring that the construction and fabrication of the exhibits meet the size and design standards of the facility.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is needed at this time.

Attachment(s):