



Patrick County Tourism Advisory Council

Called meeting of April 20, 2023

Present: Bessie Weber, Chair; Kurt Bozenmayer, Co-Chair; Jeanie Clark, Secretary; Mary Dellenback Hill; Brian Alley; Chris Prutting; Wayne Kirkpatrick

Also Present: James Houchins, Tourism Director; Grace Cooper, Assistant Tourism Director; Rebecca Adcock, Chamber of Commerce; David Stanley, SilverLining Design; Pam Smith, Ararat Ruitains; Melanie Gilbert, Reynolds Homestead; Laura Clark, One Family Productions

Absent: Denise Stirewalt, Board of Supervisors

The Patrick County Tourism Advisory Council meeting was held on April 20, 2023 in the Community Room at P & H Community College.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting and the meeting agenda were sent via email and presented. On motion by Kurt Bozenmayer, seconded by Wayne Kirkpatrick and carried, the Council approved the April 20 agenda. On motion by Chris Prutting, seconded by Kurt Bozenmayer, the March 16 minutes were approved.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Brian Alley; Chris Prutting; Mary Dellenback Hill; Wayne Kirkpatrick

Voting No: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Wayne Kirkpatrick requested \$6,500 for Stuart Rotary Club for marketing expenses for the annual Beach Music Festival. Wayne distributed a budget to the committee showing expenses, in which several of the items were already completed and others in the process of being completed.

Wayne Kirkpatrick requested \$4,000 for Stuart Rotary Club for the purchase of 2 10x10 tents and 2 10x20 tents with the logos, "Virginia Is For Music Lovers," "Patrick County Tourism," and "Stuart Rotary Club." Rotary will own the tents, however they will be allowing people to

borrow the tents for events if needed. Wayne will be working on a contract for people to sign if they would like to borrow the tents in case of repairs.

The Reynolds Homestead will once again be hosting Bushels & Barrels on June 16 and 17. Melanie Gilbert spoke on behalf of the Homestead requesting \$8,200 for marketing expenses. They hope to increase attendance by 25 to 40 percent. Laura Clark also spoke on behalf of the event. They are trying to feature local foods and wineries. They have increased the number of artists from 4 to 5 to help support local artists. They will be getting merchandise and branding with the PC Tourism logo.

Pam Smith, representing the Ararat Rurians, requested \$5,000 for their upcoming cruise-in events on May 20 and October 21. She indicated that the events are growing each time. The monies will go toward their ad book and other marketing expenses including radio ads, social media ads and more.

Laura Clark spoke, representing One Family Productions' First Friday events. She is requesting \$3,400 to help with marketing expenses including radio ads, target marketing on Facebook and other marketing items. They typically have around 200 in attendance at these events but are hoping to grow to at least 250 or more people. People attend from the area surrounding Patrick County. They are trying to use local artists, food vendors, and wineries.

FINANCE/TOURISM REPORT

James and Grace wrapped up the Tourism Summit, which was a great success. James thanked all those who helped make that event possible. There were different representatives from various organizations in Virginia who spoke. James was excited that Rita McKinley was able to come and speak on behalf of Virginia Tourism. The main goal of the Tourism Summit was to put faces with names and make people aware of the things going on within the county. The Tourism department is working closely with the West Piedmont Planning District Commission on several projects including the Moonshine Heritage Trail. They hope to conduct micro-workshops to educate the public on various opportunities within the Tourism department. They will begin by working with Main Street businesses to inform them of grants that are available to help bring tourism into the county. They plan to hold the meetings at the Visitors Center or through Zoom if needed. These monies will be coming from Virginia Tourism.

Virginia Tourism is helping with the phase implementation plan for the Moonshine Heritage Trail. Phase one is developing the brand and marketing. In phase two, the Charity Loop portion of the Jagged Edge motorcycle trail system will be involved. On March 29, the Blue Ridge Rising Meeting was held, which is an initiative of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. Patrick County is a gateway community. It is estimated that approximately 12,000 vehicles came through Patrick County heading to the Blue Ridge Parkway in the month of February. James spoke with businesses in Meadows of Dan, hoping for collaboration with that area and the parkway to obtain more tourists to stop in Patrick County as they travel to and from the Parkway. A Blitz is taking place currently at the Lamsburg Welcome Center. Noah Mabe took information pertaining to events in Patrick County to Lamsburg to have available. On April 6, James met with Bethany Worley with the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum, and they will begin doing more things dealing with the history and people of Patrick County. On April 11, James

continued the People, Places, and Performers of Patrick segment, where he interviewed Danny Martin who works at Fairy Stone State Park. They spoke about the Moonshine Heritage Trail. Danny shared good information about the history of Fayerdale and other interesting topics about the county. This upcoming weekend, James and Grace will be attending the Pilot Mountain Expo to promote places and events within Patrick County. They are trying to reach out to communities that border Patrick County in Virginia and North Carolina. Grace has been working on fine tuning the website. James and Grace planted the wildflower seeds at Angel Overlook, and they are beginning to come up. There will be gravel added to the parking lot to improve that location. Also, the fence will need more dirt placed under it as it has washed. Railroad ties will also be placed as a border with the flowers. Grace has been working on a Canva design featuring all of the overlooks in the county.

The sub-committee met and spoke about making the budget more accessible and easier to understand. James emailed two documents concerning the budget, which were discussed and viewed. They will be meeting again with Lori to ensure that the numbers are easy to follow. There is approximately \$347,000 presently in the TAC Fund. \$20,000 has been received from VTC with another \$20,000 to come in. We are about 92% on target for this year. Everything within the budget should read better beginning in the new fiscal year in July. James indicated they also have the right to speak with the lawyer to call for an audit if necessary. They hope to have a balance of the monies received and the expenses. The sub-committee wants to know how much is in the fund to safeguard from overpromising on the funds. There is also about \$250,000 in reserve that has not been used yet. That money has been there for about 6 years.

MARKETING REPORT

David Stanley stated that the website has launched. They wanted to do a quiet launch so that any errors could be corrected before it was announced. Please send any corrections to David as you proof the site. They were able to show the site at the recent Tourism Summit. The marketing person from Virginia Tourism spoke afterwards about some ideas on the PC site that they had not thought of and would like to incorporate. A huge benefit to this website is that it is controlled by local people, not an outside agency. There is a meeting planned next week with ITI Digital. This company captures events in the area, and then David and his team are able to approve or edit them before they are added to the site. They try to ensure that they will blend well with other publications. David has been trying to catch up on ads, brochure reprints and preparing for the upcoming festival season. Wayne asked about the banners, and David indicated that he is working on the Beach Music and Fair banners currently and that they should be completed soon. There is a meeting next week to begin planning for the next magazine. Noah will be going to Henry County next week to get the magazine into that area for distribution.

CHAMBER REPORT

Rebecca stated that the Chamber has been busy this month. A Lunch and Learn was held at P&H for temporary food establishments. Eleven students from PCHS attended along with 15 other attendees. The Chamber will be showing the Blue Ridge Rising documentary about Rock Castle. This was attempted before Covid; however, it never aired. This will be part of the Folk Festival on August 19. The documentary is 56 minutes long, and there will be two showings of the clip. They are currently looking to repair the Mabry Mill wheel. They are waiting on Park Services to

help with this project. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library has rolled out. The Farmers Market will begin April 21 with a “sneak peek” with approximately 10 vendors. Earth Day Shreds (shredding), Meds (medicine take back) and Tires will be held. The Strawberry Festival will be held on May 20. James and Rebecca have been asked to repeat the short term rental boot camp in the fall. On May 18, there will be a “yard party” at Pickle & Ash with tickets available. There will be a job fair at P&H on May 2.

NEW BUSINESS

The Council heard a motion made by Kurt Bozenmayer and seconded by Chris Prutting to go into Executive Session to discuss the sponsorship and marketing requests from the Public Comment session.

The Council heard a motion made by Wayne Kirkpatrick and seconded by Kurt Bozenmayer to come out of Executive Session.

The Council voted and approved the sponsorship for \$4,000 for Stuart Rotary for 2 10x10 tents and 2 10x20 tents.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Brian Alley; Mary Dellenback Hill; Chris Prutting; Kurt Bozenmayer

Voting No: None

Abstaining: Wayne Kirkpatrick

Absent: None

The Council voted and approved the sponsorship for \$8,200 for marketing expenses for the Reynolds Homestead Bushels & Barrels event.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Brian Alley; Mary Dellenback Hill; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Kurt Bozenmayer

Voting No: None

Abstaining: Chris Prutting

Absent: None

The Council voted and approved the sponsorship for \$5,000 for marketing expenses for the Ararat Ruritan Club May and October 2023 cruise-in events.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Brian Alley; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Chris Prutting; Kurt Bozenmayer

Voting No: None

Abstaining: Mary Dellenback Hill

Absent: None

The Council voted and approved the sponsorship for \$3,400 for One Family Productions for the First Friday events for marketing expenses.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Brian Alley; Mary Dellenback Hill; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Kurt Bozenmayer
Voting No: None
Abstaining: Chris Prutting
Absent: None

The Council voted and approved the sponsorship for \$6,500 for Stuart Rotary Club for the Stuart Beach Music Festival for marketing expenses.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Brian Alley; Mary Dellenback Hill; Chris Prutting; Kurt Bozenmayer
Voting No: None
Abstaining: Wayne Kirkpatrick
Absent: None

OLD BUSINESS

Bessie asked about follow-up on purchasing a vehicle for the Tourism department. James indicated that they are in the process of possibly leasing something that will have 3rd row seating and also the ability to lay the seats down in order to haul things when needed. They hope to get something by June or July. He will check on getting it wrapped with the logo; however, he is unsure of the lease requirements. The County is waiting for the state to complete their budget so that they will know about available monies.

Bessie asked about lodging rack cards and possibly a micro-workshop for those lodging entities to be able to apply for a small business grant to purchase rack cards. James spoke about wayfinding signs with Blue Ridge Parkway Association. He stated that there are signs on the parkway that indicate tourist information ahead.

Wayne reported there were approximately 50 children who attended the Kids Fishing Day. Also the following events are coming up: a Pig Cookin' Contest at Spencer Penn Center on April 22; the Farm Bureau will be having an Ag Demo Day at Stuart Rotary on April 29, where the Master Gardeners will have a plant sale; Rotary will have their annual Steak dinner on May 12; and there will be a ribbon cutting on April 28 for the I.C. DeHart Park.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council agreed to adjourn until May 17, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the P&H Community room.

On motion by Wayne Kirkpatrick, seconded by Jeanie Clark, the Tourism Advisory Council voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Chris Prutting; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Brian Alley; Mary Dellenback Hill; Wayne Kirkpatrick
Voting No: None
Abstaining: None
Absent: None