



NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2021

Travel and Tourism Board Meeting May 26, 10:30 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kimberly Albritton, Jim Beley, Rolf Blizzard, Mike Butts, Christopher Chung, Tamara Daniels, Senator Chuck Edwards, Dennis Edwards, Rep. Bobby Hanig, Lynn Minges, Lee Nettles, Steven Pasquantonio, Rep. Ray Pickett, Sharon Sexton, Senator Bob Steinburg

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jonathan Fussell, Secretary Machel Baker Sanders, Vivek Tandon

LIAISONS, STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT: Bonnie Bernat, Suzanne Brown, Skye David, Chris Davidson, Guy Gaster, Scott Gilmore, Mary Huntley, Brooks Luquire, Lauren Onsuge, Kathy Prickett, Allison Schult, Marlise Taylor, Wit Tuttell, Heidi Walters

Rolf Blizzard, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Due to COVID-19 the meeting was done remotely.

WELCOME/COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Rolf read aloud the Ethics Statement in accordance with Executive Order No. 35. Roll call was taken of board members present; quorum was met. Rolf asked for approval of the November meeting minutes. Lee Nettles made the motion to approve, seconded by Dennis Edwards; and the minutes were unanimously approved.

INDUSTRY PARTNER UPDATE

Dennis Edwards, NC Travel and Tourism Coalition, requesting \$20 million dollars over two years out of the American Recovery plan for Visit North Carolina to execute and expand the Get Back To A Better Place Campaign and an additional \$10 million dollars in year three or as long as the program allows. NC Travel and Tourism Coalition think it is extremely important that Visit NC has the additional resources they need to execute their campaigns.

Lynn Minges, NC Restaurant and Lodging Association, the Blueprint for Recovery developed by hoteliers and restaurateurs across the state making good progress on the \$300 million grant program that would provide grants to restaurants and hotels that have been impacted by COVID-19. It was included in the Governors recommend use of federal funds from the ARP. We expect it to be included in the Senate budget. Senator Edwards introduced a bill. Also have been working hard on the PPP deductibility. Federal government has waived the taxes, all the other states are waiving those except NC, Hawaii and California that have not waived deductibility. The House has passed a bill that would allow deductibility at the state level. Met with Senate leadership about their tax plan. House Bill 334 will be introduced today which would make

major changes to our state tax code and plan for addressing the PPP deductibility. Senator Edwards also has a press conference planned for today introducing a bill addressing the worker shortage and unemployment insurance. Worker shortage issue is significant. There are short term and long-term issues.

Rolf asked Lynn about the Payroll Protection and how it would impact 2021 tax year and Steven Pasquantonio asked about the restaurant revitalization fund.

Lee Nettles, NC Travel Industry Association, welcoming the summer season. Things have been extremely busy and facing workforce shortages. NCTIA is closely following HB 829 that made it to crossover. It was put forward as a technical correction but does involve some changes to short term rentals. Wilmington is involved in a lawsuit right now and if that bill passes the Senate, it could undermine the city's ability to regulate those short-term rentals in residential communities like they want to.

Mike Butts, Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina, the DMANC has not met so there is no update.

Bonny Bernat, North Carolina Sports Leadership Council, met yesterday and welcomed new member, Commissioner James Phillips. The leadership council recognized the Governor and NCDHHS for all their work they have done on behalf of sports in working with guidelines and protocol, discussed vaccination requirements in sport, and Senate Bill 688.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Rep. Pickett discussed the PPP Bill, HB 829, and budget. Rolf thanked Rep. Pickett for his service.

Sen. Steinburg praised Lynn for encapsulating the legislative review. Senate is almost done with the budget, but the House will not give them the spend number. They have agreed on in the past a maximum of 2.5% growth but still \$700 million a part between the House and the Senate. The Senate is not going to send the budget over to the house until they have a spend number. Recurring money is a challenge but there is a lot of federal non-recurring money to inject some vitality into the economy. Senator Newton is working on tax matters as it relates to PPP. There are lots of philosophical discussions happening. Also discussed the challenges of the Hyde County passenger ferry service. Rolf thanked Sen. Steinburg for his service.

Rep. Hanig discussed the budget impasse and Hyde County passenger ferry. It has been a very busy spring session. Rolf thanked Rep. Hanig for his service.

Senator Edwards mentioned a PCS to HB 128 to address the lack of workforce and asked for support. Provides a bonus of \$500 if someone reenters the workforce inside of 30 days of the bill becoming law and an \$800 bonus if they rejoin the workforce within 60 days of the bill becoming law. Asking the U.S. Department of Labor for authorization to use the FPUC funding

that is now going towards the \$300 a week supplement. DES would audit the incentive. Rolf asked about stipulations around duration of employee going back to work. Rolf thanked Sen. Edwards for his service.

TOURISM INDUSTRY UPDATE

Wit introduced, Chris Davidson, Executive Vice President for Travel Intelligence for MMGY Global. Chris Davidson presented on the Portrait of American Traveler and 2021 Industry Research.

Chris Davidson answered questions from Chris Chung about demographics net scores in comparison to other states. Davidson said his presentation will be available to anyone who wants a copy.

EDPNC UPDATE

Christopher Chung discussed the EDPNC's recent efforts in business recruitment, business development and marketing.

VISIT NC UPDATE

Wit Tuttell, VNC, presented on new research, Get Back to a Better Place campaign and presentations from other departments.

WELCOME CENTER UPDATE

Bryan Gupton, NC Commerce, could not be heard as he had a connection issue. He indicated that his update on Call Center and Welcome Center activities would be sent to board members upon request.

CLOSING

Dennis Edwards motioned for the meeting adjournment and it was seconded by Lee Nettles.

The next board meeting is scheduled for August 31. Meeting adjourned at 12:33.