Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation
Asheville Art Museum – 2 South Pack Square, Asheville, NC 28801

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Present (Voting):	Matthew Lehman, Chair; HP Patel, Vice Chair; Larry Crosby, Michael Lusick, Lucious Wilson, Elizabeth Putnam, Himanshu Karvir, Tim Rosebrock
Absent (Voting):	Brenda Durden
Present (Ex-Officio):	Asheville Vice Mayor Antanette Mosley**,** Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
Absent (Ex-Officio):	None
Staff:	Vic Isley, Mike Kryzanek, Dodie Stephens, Tiffany Thacker, Jenn Kass-Green, Sarajane Case, Connie Holliday, McKenzie Provost, Josh Jones, Ashley Greenstein, Mia Brown, Sarah Myers
BC Finance:	Melissa Moore
Legal Counsel:	Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette
In-Person Attendees:	Blythe Edwards, Casey Gilbert; Chamber of Commerce Jason Sandford, Ashevegas Lauren Styckles, Sandy Newes, Heather Rayburn, Sandra Hall, Anne Walsh, Dominique Dehart, Chris Cottetta, Lauren Styckles; Save the UNCA Woods Brooke Randall, Mountain XPress Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association John Ellis, Retired and Former BCTDA Member David Nutter, Connect Buncombe
Online Attendees:	Ed Silver, Shelby Pearsall, Kristen Childers, Karis Roberts, Emilie Soffe, Allison Bashford, Kimberly Puryear; Explore Asheville Kit Cramer, Asheville Chamber Angi Daus, Asheville Regional Airport Robert McGee, Forever Forests Chris Smith, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission Randy Claybrook, Asheville B&B Association Meghan Rogers, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association Ward Henderson, Engadine Inn and Cabins Will Hofmann, Asheville Citizen Times Lucy Dozier, Emily Ditto; MMGY

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Lehman called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority, and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:04 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Minutes from the July 23, 2025 BCTDA meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- July 2025 financials were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- A penalty waiver request from Downtown Inn & Suites was approved with an 8-0 vote.
- A LIFT Committee Wayfinding program funding recommendation was approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Updates to the Administrative Service Agreements between Buncombe County and the BCTDA, and between BCTDA and Explore Asheville were approved with an 8-0 vote, and a resolution to change the name of the nonprofit corporation was approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Vic Isley provided the President & CEO's report.
- Dodie Stephens provided a Marketing Update.
- Brief updates from Vice Mayor Antanette Mosley and Commissioner Terri Wells were heard.
- Vic Isley appreciated outgoing board member, Larry Crosby, for his service and leadership.
- Public comments were heard.
- With an 8-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Call to Order of the Joint BCTDA Meeting

Lehman called to order the joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority, and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:04 a.m.

Information was provided about the meeting livestream and document access on ExploreAsheville.com. Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Rosebrock made a motion to approve the July 23, 2025 regular meeting minutes. Lusick seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

July 2025 Financial Reports

Melissa Moore, BCTDA Fiscal Agent, presented July 2025 financials. She reviewed operating and earned revenue funds, project funds, and year-to-date lodging sales trends by month and lodging type.

Lehman noted appreciation for the intentional, growing interest income in the project fund accounts.

There were no questions. Patel motioned to approve the July 2025 financial reports as presented. Crosby seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

Penalty Waiver from Downtown Inn & Suites

Lehman presented the details behind the Downtown Inn & Suites penalty waiver request for $729.96, including the penalty confirmation from the Buncombe County Finance Department, and the reminder that this two-step waiver approval process requires the Buncombe County Commissioners to vote.

There were no questions. Wilson motioned to recommend approval of the penalty waiver request from the Downtown Inn & Suites in the amount of $729.96, as presented. Putnam seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

LIFT Wayfinding Program Funding Recommendation

Tiffany Thacker provided background into the Explore Asheville Wayfinding program, which was founded in 2010 and features over 400 signs throughout Buncombe County. Thacker presented a recommendation from the LIFT Fund Committee to fund the FY26 activities of the Explore Asheville Wayfinding program.

A question followed about the program's sign vendor, with Thacker noting that the same design and maintenance vendor has been used since 2010 with satisfaction.

Rosebrock motioned to approve the LIFT Fund Committee's recommendation to award the Explore Asheville Wayfinding Program in the total amount of $371,000 to support management and maintenance in FY 2026. Karvir seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

Administrative Agreements

Approval of Agreements Setting Forth Structure with Buncombe County, BCTDA and Explore Asheville
Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire Wood & Bissette Law Firm, and BCTDA Legal Counsel, presented updated administrative agreements between Buncombe County and the BCTDA, and the BCTDA and Explore Asheville. Rockoff explained that the agreements are legal clarification around the structure of the relationship with the respective entities, and a clerical culmination of work to ensure the most efficient and compliant arrangement between all three bodies.

There were no questions. Crosby motioned to approve the administrative agreements as presented. Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

Approval of Resolution to change the name of the Nonprofit corporation
Rockoff reminded the board that both the BCTDA and the nonprofit corporation have the same name, with the nonprofit holding the title 'BCTDA nonprofit doing business as Explore Asheville'. Confusion can arise from the two entities sharing the same legal name hence this clerical resolution requesting clarification through the adjustment of the nonprofit corporation's name to Explore Asheville.

Putnam motioned to approve the resolution to change the name of the nonprofit corporation to Explore Asheville. Karvir seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 8-0.

President & CEO Report

Vic Isley began by welcoming everyone to the Asheville Art Museum, a TPDF grant recipient. Isley noted that the next BCTDA meeting on October 1 will include a presentation of FY26 TPDF funding recommendations.

Isley presented July lodging occupancy, demand, and supply year over year. Isley reminded the group that while lodging data is a leading indicator of visitation, it is not the only indicator, and the storm's impact on the visitor economy is not immediately clear through lodging data.

Isley invited folks to Travel and Hospitality night on 8/28, noted Mike Kryzanek's career and retirement party, and invited everyone to the upcoming Annual Meeting.

Marketing Update

Dodie Stephens, vice president of marketing for Explore Asheville, began her update with a celebration of recent organizational recognitions. Stephens gave an overview of market strategies her team is using to inspire, engage, and convert audiences through marketing. She noted the one-year milestone of Helene, including planned media strategies and an event to honor Heroes of Helene in partnership with the Asheville Chamber, the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. In anticipation of anticipated media attention, the team has developed partner toolkits and planned a media training webinar.

Stephens shared recent regional and national broadcast coverage including the growing list of accolades earned throughout the community. She noted the opportunity around the upcoming centennial celebration of Asheville Sessions, as a kick-off for storytelling and support for this musical legacy.

Stephens reported successes in sponsored activities and upcoming partnerships with Travel + Leisure, Town & Country, Garden & Gun, and notable influencers. She shared recent learning from social media ad testing, the outcomes of which are driving event-based ads. The Thomas Dambo installation this fall will be an opportunity for this as a family-friendly and storytelling bridge event November to February.

Stephens concluded with the work the marketing team is doing to leverage previous investments through new technologies via Afar and the Mindtrip planner tool enabling visitors to engage with personalized content. She concluded with a note about the return to the important peak fall travel season, noting that the team has been planning since July and looks forward to a vibrant season.

Asheville City Council Update

Asheville Vice Mayor Antanette Mosley reported on recent city-related business, including the appointment of Amy Kelly to the BCTDA Board during the previous evening's city council meeting. Mosley referenced the recent Urban Land Institute visit, sharing some of the recommendations from their presentation. Mosley noted that the ULI report – including a recording of the presentation and a 120-page document is available on the city website.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Wells reported on recent county-related business, including Owen Park planning progress, with community engagement as next step. Wells shared that the Swannanoa EMS station budget was approved, this is the first of a series of County EMS outpost stations. The Swannanoa small area plan committee members have been assigned and activated. Wells mentioned she will share the small parks master plan for BCTDA, noting that community input is appreciated, and this can be done online. Wells concluded with the announcement that she is now board Treasurer for the Land of Sky regional council, which should only affect her position with the BCTDA if the meetings run over time.

Miscellaneous Business

Vic Isley thanked Larry Crosby for his service and leadership, having served on the Board since 2021.

Comments from the General Public

Heather Rayburn, Anne Walsh, Woody Davis, Sandy Newes, and Chris Cottetta, residents of the Five Points neighborhood, spoke on behalf of the *Save the UNCA Woods* group citing their concerns and their opposition of the proposed UNCA stadium on university property. The group suggested a

relocation of the stadium, alternative uses of the wooded area, and invited everyone to their public meeting on August 28.

Jason Sandford, journalist and owner of Ashevegas invited the BCTDA and folks in the room to Heart of the Mountains, a mixed media storytelling event on September 24 6pm – 8pm. This program is a part of the UNCA Helene Symposium.

Adjournment

The PowerPoint presentation and relevant documents are on file with Explore Asheville and are posted on ExploreAsheville.com.

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room, located at 27 College Place.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Myers, Manager, Executive & Strategy