Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation

Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Present (Voting):	HP Patel, Chair; Amy Kelly, Michael Lusick, Lucious Wilson, Himanshu Karvir, Brenda Durden
Absent (Voting):	Tim Rosebrock, Elizabeth Putnam
Present (Ex-Officio):	Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
Absent (Ex-Officio):	Asheville Vice Mayor Antanette Mosley
Staff:	Vic Isley, Josh Jones, Ashley Greenstein, Tiffany Thacker, Tina Porter, Rachel Dudasik, Kimberly Puryear, Mia Brown, Shawn Boone, Ed Silver, Dodie Stephens
BC Finance:	Melissa Moore
Legal Counsel:	Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette
In-Person Attendees:	Robert Sponder, Milan Hotel Group John Ellis, retired & former BCTDA Board Member Lacey Cross, Movement Bank
Online Attendees:	Kristen Childers, Explore Asheville Chip Craig, Greybeard Realty Felicia Sonmez, Blue Ridge Public Radio Jim Muth, TPDF Committee Randy Claybrook, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association Diane Rogers, Pinecrest Angi Daus, Asheville Regional Airport Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association Will Hofmann, Asheville Citizen Times Justin McGuire, Mountain Xpress Mark Faulkner, personal Maggie Chardell, AMOS Lucy Dozier, MMGY Global Jason Sandford, Ashevegas.com Peter Pollay, Mandara Hospitality Group

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Patel called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority, and Explore Asheville, at 8:59 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Minutes from the January 28, 2026, BCTDA meeting were approved with a 6-0 vote.
- With a 6-0 vote, Brenda Durden, HP Patel, Chip Craig, Chris Cavanaugh, and Tim Rosebrock were appointed to the BCTDA Finance Committee.
- January 2026 preliminary financials were approved with a 6-0 vote.
- Vic Isley provided the President & CEO's report.
- Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) and Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fund updates were presented.
- A brief update from Commissioner Terri Wells was heard.
- With a 6-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Call to Order of the Joint BCTDA Meeting

Patel called to order the joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority, and Explore Asheville, at 8:59 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

Durden made a motion to approve the January 28, 2026, regular meeting minutes. Karvir seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 6-0.

Finance Committee Appointments

Patel stated the purpose of the BCTDA Finance Committee is to review financial matters as needed including audits, contracts pertaining to the budget and other financial documents.

Patel presented the following Finance Committee appointments: HP Patel (committee chair/BCTDA Board Chair), Tim Rosebrock (Explore Asheville Treasurer), Chris Cavanaugh, Chip Craig, and Brenda Durden.

Karvir made a motion to approve the BCTDA Finance Committee appointments as presented. Lusick seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 6-0.

January 2026 Preliminary Financial Reports

Melissa Moore, BCTDA Fiscal Agent, presented January 2026 preliminary financials. She reviewed the primary operating and earned revenue funds, project funds, and year-to-date lodging sales trends by month and lodging type.

Karvir motioned to approve the January 2026 preliminary financial reports as presented. Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 6-0.

Penalty Waiver Request Country Inn & Suites

A penalty waiver request from Country Inn & Suites was received by Explore Asheville staff on February 9, 2026. The waiver request was for $1,838.26, the sum of penalty fees for five late payments on one property between March 2025 and December 2025. The written request to have the penalty fees waived, the accompanying rationale, and supporting documentation, were provided to the BCTDA to review in advance of today's meeting.

A request was made to learn more about the penalty process from the County staff side, and a note was recorded to assess the penalty waiver process on the BCTDA side.

Lusick motioned to recommend approval of the penalty waiver request from Country Inn & Suites in the amount of $1,838.26. Kelly seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion carried 6-0. The request will then be considered for final approval by the Buncombe County Commissioners.

President & CEO Report

Vic Isley began her report with the announcement that Asheville City Council appointed Kyle Highberg as the newest BCTDA Member during their February 24, 2026 meeting. Highberg's first meeting will be March 26, 2026.

Isley shared 2025 calendar year-end lodging performance by category, reminding the group that lodging demand is an indicator of economic impact on a variety of local businesses. Isley noted important observations on the US Travel Market, including impacts of recent weather events, domestic travel competition, world cup expectation moderation, k-shaped economy effect on travel, conference board's consumer confidence, and general policy impacts on travel.

Conversation ensued around the bifurcation of lodging properties in Asheville and Buncombe County, the perceived and real impact on gas prices, the proactive efforts of Explore Asheville Business Development and Marketing departments, and the strategic layering in of events.

Isley celebrated the recent NCRLA Stars of the Industry Gala honoring BCTDA board member Brenda Durden and other Asheville area hospitality leaders. Isley closed by reminding attendees of the upcoming partner lunch and learn, the open partner survey, the September 2026 G20 finance track meeting, and teased an impending announcement for the River Arts District.

Annual Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) and Legacy Investment From Tourism (LIFT) Fund Update

Tiffany Thacker, vice president of Partnership and Destination Management provided updates for the TPDF and LIFT funds based on 2025 annual participant reporting. Thacker began with an investment overview and summary of the 39 active projects, 27 through the TPDF and 12 through the LIFT fund. Thacker provided a breakdown of projects in pre-implementation, in-progress, and complete per fund. Thacker noted the influence and impact of Helene on ongoing and completed projects, stating that timelines continue to shift as redesign, access, process, and capacity are assessed, adding that built project impacts seem to differ from impacts on infrastructure projects and delivery timelines diverge by project type. A small number of projects carry more uncertainty, and two projects have voluntarily relinquished awards due to feasibility and site challenges. Thacker celebrated the six projects that

completed this year and concluded the update with a holistic project timeline and financial summaries per fund.

A general conversation and discussion followed, Thacker and Isley addressed and answered questions.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Wells reported on recent county-related business, including the distribution of property valuation letters, and ongoing community engagement for Swannanoa's Owen Park. Wells closed by sharing NC C PACE info session details – explaining this is a state-enabled financing tool allowing commercial and industrial property owners to take on resiliency activities after qualifying.

Miscellaneous Business

There was no miscellaneous business presented at this meeting.

Comments from the General Public

There were no comments made by the public at this meeting.

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 Thursday, March 26, 2026 beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room, located at 27 College Place.

Durden made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Kelly seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Myers, Director of People, Culture & Strategy