BEREA TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES BUSINESS MEETING WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022, 3:00 PM City Annex Building 304 Chestnut Street

Meeting called to order at 3:02 PM, Patrick Huston presiding.

COMMISION MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Laura Carpenter
- Bill West
- Becky Brown
- Kristy Napier
- Patrick Huston
- Rick Thomas

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT:

- Donna Angel
- Liz Todd
- Nancy Conley

GUESTS PRESENT:

- Mayor Bruce Fraley
- City Administrator Rose Beverly
- Jackie Bowling
- Susan Meeks
- Amanda Olmstead
- Debbie Warford

APPROVAL OF AGENDA - May 11, 2022:

Kristy Napier made a motion to approve the agenda. Laura Carpenter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 13, 2022:

Laura Carpenter moved to approve minutes for April 13, 2022. Seconded by Kristy Napier. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The commission heard public comments from Jackie Bowling, she requested to wait and make public comments when Rick Thomas is present. Patrick Huston acknowledged the request, will try to accommodate. Bowling agreed to speak at the end if Rick Thomas not present. Patrick moved to change the public comments to occur at the end of the meeting. Commission voted to move public comments to end, motion passed unanimously.

COPY OF RPM PRESENTATION ON FILE IN THE MINUTES BOOK

Marketing: RPM Presentation by Amanda Olmstead. Recap of Marketing Plan/Execution/Results for 2021-2022 Fiscal Year. Including - Spring campaign: device ID targeted digital display, influenced location visit report, campaign metrics, demographics for visitors, geographic data for visitors, Social Media Recap, Print Ad Recap.

<u>GUEST SPEAKER DEBBIE WARFORD – BEREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:</u> Presented TOPS in Lex as a marketing tool, proposing spread in the publication, featuring Berea businesses. Requesting a grant from BTC, requesting \$2,500 to offset cost.

Donna Angel stated that Berea Tourism has \$1,700 left in the fund for matching grants.

Patrick Huston explained application process.

If grant received, Berea Tourism logo must be present, arts community represented. Debbie will return to next month's meeting with additional details and representative from TOPS Lex Magazine.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 11, 2022

Directors Report

- 1. Marketing: Presented by Right Place Media earlier.
- 2. Candidates Hired: Media Mgr. & Motorcoach Specialist. (Chair present)
- 3. Pavilion rental: Berea College was first rental, and all went well.
- 4. Pavilion Sign should be close to going up.
- **5. Boutique 69 Market** a craft boutique opened on Broadway Sat. 7th: The Tale less Dog Book Store is hoping to open on June 4th with a Ribbon Cutting scheduled for another date:
- 6. Flower Boxes on Broadway were filled last Thursday-T SC.
- Village Life continues to market and promote concerts in the Old Town Cottage Gardens on the weekends.
- 8. Hands on 4 Dance weekend was April 22-24th:
- 9. Boone Tavern continued to host several patio evenings w/music.
- 10. Sunhouse Crafts opened it is doors April 23 w/a Grand Opening Celebration.
- 11. Berea Craft Festival: Berea Tourism staff will work it that week for learning experiences: new staff will also be onsite.
- 12. Architect renderings should be completed anytime, and we can place and ad for bids on the renovation work.
- 13. New BTC orientation was conducted on April 29th.
- 14. National Bike Month, National Travel & Tourism Week,

OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT: Presented by Nancy Conley

April 2022: 1382 (plus 28 grab and go bags) this is a decrease of 192 visitors compared to April 2019 (pre-covid): 1574. We did see an increase from March to April of 243 visitors.

KY Visitor Guide Leads:

January thru April 30, 2022: 653 leads received

Top 10 states are the same as last month:

95
51
40
37
34
34
33

28	
25	
22	
	25

Meetings Attended:

- Special Needs Prom Planning Meetings
- Back to School Bash Planning Meetings
- Renaissance Meeting (Artisan Village Merchant Meeting)

Other Items:

- Continue planning 22nd Annual L&N Day in Berea, June 4 from 9AM 5PM at the Berea Welcome Center. Currently securing exhibitors.
- Working with Donna and Liz on Pavilion Rental preparations

MOTORCOACH REPORT: Nancy Conley

April 1: Group of 46 from lowa. I provided a step on tour. This group spent time shopping, ate dinner at Dinner Bell and stayed overnight at Holiday Inn Express.

April 19: Group of 35 from Michigan. I provided a step on tour. This group spent time shopping, enjoyed a Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, stayed overnight at Boone Tavern, and ate breakfast at Smoke House Grill.

April 23: Group of 30 from throughout the US. I provided a step on tour. This group was scheduled to shop but had a schedule change.

April 24: Group of 45 from throughout the US. Watched private artisan demonstrations in the Artisan Village, spent time shopping and ate lunch at Boone Tavern.

April 29: Group of 42. Ate dinner and stayed the night at Boone Tavern. I arranged for evening music for them at Boone Tavern.

MEDIA MANAGER REPORT: Nancy Conley

Social Media:

- Facebook:
- APRIL

Likes: 10,388 vs. PREV Mth March 10,265 Increase of +123 Reach: 338,654 vs. PREV Mth March 19,103 Increase of +319,501 Engagements: 17,062 vs. PREV Mth March 4,358 Increase of +12,704 Link Clicks: 1,339 vs. PREV Mth March 2,567 Decrease of -1,228

· Instagram:

APRIL

Followers: 3,414 vs. PREV Mth March 3,341 Increase of +73 Reach: 13,579 vs. PREV Mth March 2,338 Increase of +11,241

Monthly Newsletter Emails:

APRIL

Open Rate: 40% (.1% increase from previous month, 6.99% above industry avg which is 33.01%) Click Rate: 4.7% (.6% increase from previous month, 3.56% above industry avg which is 1.14%)

Email Subscribers: Net +383

PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT: Liz Todd

Meetings/Presentations Attended:

- Berea Crafts Festival Marketing Meeting with Melissa Gross, Donna Angel, Amanda Olmstead
- Met with Todd Finley, Executive Director at the Berea Artisan Center to discuss future collaborations partnering during LearnShops year-round, starting in July 2022. Instructors will utilize several spaces at The Artisan Center as classrooms. Will initiate the LearnShop Exhibit again which was highly successful in the past. Finley to host and sponsor opening event, experienced artists to contribute pieces throughout the duration of the exhibit, items for sale, greater exposure, refamiliarization with the goal to share that the LearnShops brand offers an experience unlike any other
- BTC Meeting, farewell to Linda Ross and Charles Arnold
- Back to School Bash Meeting Berea Tourism and City of Berea Business and Economic
 Development partnering with Berea Police Department, #BEREACares to facilitate a backpack drive
 for school-age children in the community finishing with a "Street Party" Back to School Bash in the
 Artisan Village of Old Town. Numerous vendors, resources, school supplies, fun activities
- Helped facilitate the "Back-to-School Bash" flyer creation, and Facebook live initiative as promotion
- Special Needs Prom Meeting in support of National Autism Month (April) and partnering with Berea Police Department, working to host a special needs prom for middle and high-school special needs individuals in the community
- Tourism worked to plan refreshments, photo booth props, crafts for alternative spaces during the event, training opportunities, and building awareness
- Meeting with new Technology Instructor, to provide an alternative class during LearnShops to help narrow the gap between technology and growth in and out of the traditional classroom setting
- Meeting with new local artist, Lori McKeel, has extensive background in art and teaching, will offer several children's classes and family-friendly classes, new to our program

Planning for Festival of LearnShops 10th Anniversary Celebration 2022 July 15-24:

- Working with Donna Angel and Amanda Olmstead on Marketing Strategy
- Working with Jon Wilburn to finalize the website for FOL ticket sales, through user access, LearnShops photos, complete relatable categories and more
- Answering and fielding questions from artists and interested participants, troubleshooting, through email, phone, and social media
- · Working on complete Instructor Roster, Master List, locations around the community
- Planning Kick-off Event for Friday, July 15 (music (Donna Lamb booked), food vendors (Yeti Freeze, others, booked, speakers, logistics)
- Continue to meet/speak with new artists and book locations for classes

- Printed Press Release Flyers
- Decided on poster content

Other:

- Creating and scheduling content for FaceBook in collaboration with Donna Angel, Robert Elam, Nancy Conley, with a minimum/three posts a day, what relates to our target audience, what is happening in Tourism, locally and nationally, observing and mirroring trends for greatest impact – i.e. outdoor adventure, food, art, and the aesthetically pleasing.
- Researching what this looks like for other successful tourism social media platforms with common goals, i.e. Asheville, Austin, Savannah, Charleston, etc.
- Working with Tourism Team to roll out Chestnut Street Pavilion rentals, logistics, etc. to best service the community.

BUDGET APPROVAL 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR

Budget- important piece, citizen/taxpayer money. As part of budget process department heads turn in goals and objectives, Donna Angel shared list of Tourism completed accomplishments based on objectives.

DISCUSSION OF BUDGET AHEAD OF MOTION

Bill West: On the revenue page can we address the transfer to and from of other funds, \$185,000.

Donna Angel: The transfer to and other funds on page one, line item \$185,000 as a negative because that is a grant that we will be receiving and the funds would be transferred out of that account over in to the general fund should we do the two projects listed, 1) \$125,000 Scaffold Cane Trail Expansion 2) Ellipse Street Usage Path on budget last year \$60,000 did not use because State did not release the funding, at that time we proposed working with the Silver Creek Bike Trail, agreed to contribute \$60,000. \$60,000 later came back and Commissioner's voted to approve and pay for the entire Mountain Bike Park project, \$131,000. The \$60,000 then went to the Ellipse Street with approval to replace that in this year's budget when the state replaced that money and use to continue with Ellipse Street expansion project.

Bill West: To clarify, the budget for trails last year was what?

Donna Angel: Susan do you have that number?

Susan Meeks: Last year budget included \$71,000 for the bike trail, included \$60,000 for Ellipse Street trail was subsequently taken out of your budget and put into the bike path because we weren't ready for that project. As far as trails, \$71,000 for the Silver Creek Mountain Bike Trail.

Donna Angel: Did we do anything on any other trails? Susan Meeks: No, it was just the mountain bike.

Bill West: It's a pretty significant difference, that is about 13% of last year's budget and discretionary funds and about 21% of this year's budget and discretionary funds. Thank you.

Rick Thomas: I agree with Bill. For the Tolle Building you've made a best guess in the budget, but we don't have a bid yet.

Donna Angel: We do not.

Rick Thomas: We spend money on promotions, programming, the trail systems, and other things we've funded, and overhead and payroll. Anything we spend in these categories, what is our priority, what is our main job? If we take one item and increase then we have to take from another, so we are balancing, how much do we put in promotion. Programming, infrastructure. I think our record is that infrastructure spending

is important, especially when it can attract tourists to our town and also gives the community members and those who pay restaurant tax to see the benefits. So, I think infrastructure spending, programming – events like you mentioned at Christmas time, for people from out of town and for locals. We are looking to spend our money, so it benefits local and also attracts tourists. Promoting the town of Berea is our main job but we have to be able to recognize that most of the restaurant tax is spent by local people. I agree Bill, that I would be uncomfortable going from \$131,000 to \$185,000, then we don't have money to spend on other things. I think if we look at the division of costs, I'd like to spend more money on programming and be more consistent with our expenditures on infrastructure.

Bill West: To be clear, I support the trail systems, a great deal. The change just seems a bit harsh. And also, before we get through the year I think we should see where we're at how the pavilion comes out, how much we need to spend on the Tolle building. It could be timing as much as the amount.

Patrick Huston: The Scaffold Cane there is a grant that goes along with that, correct?

Donna Angel: Yes, it was almost one million, \$967,574.

Patrick Huston: We would contribute \$125,000 and we would get almost a million if it is approved?

Donna Angel: Yes, the grant has been approved.

Patrick Huston: If we don't use that \$125,000 do we lose that?

Donna Angel: I think it's an option if we don't feel comfortable funding the entire amount then maybe we consider a smaller amount.

Bill West: Do we have the flexibility to give the city the opportunity to spend the money on the trails where they think they would get the best utilization of funding, or do we have to dedicate a certain amount to a certain project, or can we give them a certain amount of money and give them the leigh way to best utilize the funds for the city?

Donna Angel: I think it would be better if it were designated for one thing for monitoring and tracking and to keep us informed.

Susan, are there any legal restrictions when it comes to giving a lump sum?

Susan Meeks: The main issue is there has to be a specific project going at a certain time, there has to be a project available.

Mayor Bruce Fraley: My understanding is that it needs to be given where it can best be utilized.

Rose Beverly: It should be clear that if we don't use those funds, we would not transfer those funds into the account. That's only if it was needed for a project.

Susan Meeks: And if we found other funding or the project did not progress for any reason, we would not transfer those funds.

Patrick Huston: If the project ended up costing more than anticipated how does that work? Is it up to Tourism to fund the remaining? With inflation, especially construction, I know costs could increase.

Mayor Bruce Fraley: We would only use funds that were designated

Rick Thomas: The State didn't award the bids last year for Ellipse, did they do it this year? I think a budget is a budget, whatever we budget doesn't mean it has to be spent, and we can amend it. I'm advocating we budget less than the \$185,000 and then we can have more information with the Tolle Building bid and amend as needed.

Bill West: I would be more comfortable with around \$135,000 for the trails and it's still more money than you spent last year and then we can revisit it.

Laura Carpenter: Is that \$185,000 just for trails or is part of that for the Tolle Building?

Patrick Huston: No, it is just for the two trails. The \$60,000 is what we agreed to push into the next fiscal year.

Laura Carpenter: And we think the government is going to give us another grant?

Patrick Huston: The \$60,000 is done, it has already been voted on by us, the \$125,000 is for a proposed trail to connect Brush Fork, Scaffold Cane, up to College Square. Logsdon Lane to Alumni. So the \$125,000 has not been previously voted on.

Donna Angel: Bill, are you saying that you'd like to see a total of the \$131,000 including the \$60,000 and the additional for the trail, am I reading you correctly?

Bill West: No, I would be more comfortable at the \$131,000-\$135,000 level that is in line with last year's budget. And that we revisit if we can give more if we have more clarification on the Tolle project, which is a more capitalist project. A 10% override on the project is \$40,000. What people are experiencing in construction is 15-20% overruns right now. Building materials went wild, not just talking about this but we're liable to have the same issues with inflation, I'm concerned about all the capital expenditures as a group. It's unfair to pick on trails, but it is the whole capital expenditures compared with the inflation period we are going through.

Donna Angel: Good points.

Bill West: If we can hold a bit, I think we might be happy that we did later down the road.

Rick Thomas: I think we can all agree that the Scaffold Cane trail project is a matter of safety and a good thing, not picking on the trails but if look at the capital expenditures and the Tolle Building is going to be an increase, I'd be comfortable with the \$135,000. But there is a huge crack in the portico porch at the Train station. I suspect there may be some HVAC upgrades there as well and the upper floor at Hotel Building is in bad shape and needs to be taken care of at some point. We have quite a few expenditures on the agenda.

Bill West: I think the reason this got picked on first because of the capital project removed from other projects, wasn't mean to pile on the trails that we really enjoy and support.

Donna Angel: Absolutely, we all do, we all appreciate the trails and the outdoor piece we have in Berea. And for Laura and Kristy just to bring you up to speed on the revenue that we are discussing, on page one of your Excel spreadsheet, income comes from transient room tax and our restaurant tax so for next year we're estimating \$175,000 for the hotel tax and that is a strong figure that we believe it is a goal we will reach, we set the restaurant tax at one million one hundred. Taking out the \$185,000 that left us with a revenue of one million two one four. With Bill's numbers on the percentage rate deducting the \$185,000 back down that would still put us in a good position. Rick makes great points, we need to make some decisions down the road, we have to decide what is a priority to repair, upgrade to get better income out of and to utilize in a better position. Do we want to move to expenses or any more questions on the trails?

Patrick: Any more questions on trails/revenue? Okay. Let's move to expenses.

Donna Angel: Our personnel did go up \$175,000-182,000 this year. We had only a parttime, but we have a full time with motor coach now. With all the marketing and promotions and Buc-ees we need to book many more coach buses. We did increase that a bit. Our part time seasonal employees we did not fill a lot of those. So, we had a lot of extra funding there. With the increased wages for our part time staff that pushed us up to \$138,800 based on seven employees. There are open vacancies currently. The next change was our natural gas bill, we had the pavilion, the Mitchell Tolle Building, as well as Old Town with

the train station. An increase plus a rate increase, about \$7,000 difference. Some of our rental properties are included because we do cover the utilities there, on some of them.

Rick Thomas: I've heard you say there is a lot of air through widows.

Donna Angel: And doors

Rick Thomas: Is the heating and cooling system working?

Donna Angel: It is working, we had some repairs, some band aid fixes so we will be looking at a new unit down the road.

Rick Thomas: If it was someone's home, they might have someone looks at cracks and doors that will cost money too. I see that medical insurance is almost doubled. I mean it is what it is now. Is it rate increases or hiring new people?

Donna Angel: Yes, we did hire a new person and the rates have increased astronomically.

Rick Thomas: Okay, I just think we need to keep an eye on it. Almost doubled this year.

Donna Angel: Office equipment we have included \$52,500, once the Welcome Gallery and Event Center is finished, we must furnish the building, speaking with the architect he thinks we can be in there by December that the project may be complete. So went ahead and put the funding in there for office equipment, computers, furnishings for the art gallery and the dining space itself. Will the \$52,500 cover that? I'm not sure. We have no bids in yet. We may have to hold off until June and amend the next budget. With this we can surely get in and get things set up.

We increased our marketing bill from \$250,000 to \$300,000 this year, I think that's a fair budget. I think even the \$300,000 is a very small number going off numbers before Covid. Even down to \$300,000 is less, while Tourism State wants everyone pushing to recover, we have to market and consistently advertise and keep our town on top. With the excessive marketing that we need to do with the motorcoach and the event space promotion we need more dollars. I think going to \$300,000 on that is the right way to go.

Laura Carpenter: I agree, I think that is a good amount. With Buc-cees here people will stop there, we need to promote Berea as much as we can.

Donna Angel: Thank you. Any other comments?

The building and ground line was an increase with the landscaping costs and the additional properties in Old Town along with the new pavilion and the Tolle Building, that has added \$35,000 to our budget which left \$10,000 from last year. We were going to paint the Hotel with a mural we would like to do that, we have the funding we agreed to do that. That line went to \$45,000 for the landscaping and the mural.

Postage and shipping an increase there, it has tripled or more with FedEx, Avery, or more. We ship to at least six states that have Welcome Centers along the way, we ship rack cards. Those have to be out there. That has increased a lot for us, we are picking up two more states we will be creating a new brochure as well, those are low. Shipping and Printing/Design work increases. Starting to track the packages sent out and the return. Cutting down on printing costs with cutting down on printing maps around town, we are creating QR codes for maps, hiking trails, and restaurants. The next thing is our special programs, due to major expenses, we have cut the programs down, we have allotted Halloween in the Park, Celtic Festival, Spoonbread, KY Guild, Japanese Program, Christmas Event – we will sponsor these for the year, they are community and tourism driven. We have so many visitors and travelers for the Christmas season. And for Halloween in the Park, we have a huge return.

Our concert series funding will come from our reimbursable marketing fund, we will have something going on each Saturday night that will pull more and more folks out for the night. We have had great interest for more music. We will split the \$20,000 RMF, use \$10,000 for marketing funds and use the other \$10,000 for our concert series. Those are the major changes.

Last page building improvements for Tolle Building, we are estimating using \$400,000, as Rick said we don't know if that will cover it, a beautiful gallery, meeting space, dining space, catering kitchen, to people

renting. Dining area can facilitate slide shows, board room can be separate and generate two incomes at once. But there are a lot of bills that go along with that. To keep things moving and looking nice for the community and visitors. For the budget we have the \$400,000 set aside for renovations for the building.

Bill West: What if we do make the numbers larger?

Donna: I think at that time we regroup and talk about what is priority.

Bill West: Hope to do same budget and achieve less work this year, the rest rolls into next year.

Donna: Yes, we'd have to.

Laura Carpenter: I'm encouraged that all of our properties are rented, and the pavilion is starting to bring income, when I came on a lot was not being used.

My other concern is the Tourism vehicle, is \$45,000 going to buy a new vehicle?

Donna Angel: Thank you, Laura, this is a new line item for us, our truck is a 1990 model we are constantly repairing and have had items stolen off it, but we do have that. I think our plan should be getting a used truck from Utilities for hauling things, potting soil, tables/chairs, that will be sufficient. I think we can also purchase a smaller SUV for under \$30,000, buying a used truck, surplus the two existing vehicles, we should be able to purchase two better vehicles for the \$45,000.

I know our budget is heavy but here are some things that we added that we didn't have last year- we took our advertising from \$250,000 to \$300,000, an additional \$50,000 increase. Purchase of two vehicles, \$45,000, which we didn't have last year. If we do the trails that is \$185,000, we didn't have that last year, only the \$131,000 total. New computers, we built in \$2500 on furniture line because we now have a great inventory system from IT tracking age of computers, one we will replace in the new budget and one we will replace in the new year. We added \$500 to the line item for the Car Show we haven't had that in several years, we do get a lot of calls about that, and it is done through our Volunteer Fire Department. Our payroll increase went up \$26,500, the Tolle renovations \$400,000, and the landscaping/maintenance \$35,000, a lot of new and necessary items that went into the budget this year. Susan and I sat down and went over everything and even with all of the additions we are in the \$46-50,000 range to where we were last year, but keep in mind we paid off \$610,000 on the property and interest. Anything else?

Bill West: Debt is zero?

Donna Angel: Yes, debt is zero.

Rick Thomas: With the capital expenditures we are spending more than we're bring in, correct? When I see special programs, I'd like to see that later in the year we look at a couple of these special programs and see if we can add back into that.

Bill West: I second that. I have a hard time imagining that the income from these buildings will ever catch up to the money spent on the buildings. It's like we're in the business of buildings.

Laura Carpenter: I think that as a steward of our buildings and property, it seems like a positive direction. A lot of buildings in Berea they gotten dilapidated. And I think it may be hard to find a new vehicle for less \$30,000. And some of these cars if you buy new, they will give you free oil changes. And I love to hear about pay increases for your employees, if you take good care of your people, they will end up paying their own salary in worth.

Donna Angel: Any other questions?

Patrick: Any questions?

Laura Carpenter: I'm okay with the way it is. Even with the way it is the \$185,000. Because we will discuss before we decide.

Rick Thomas: I'm not sure if we budget \$185,000 then we're not going to spend it. It doesn't require another vote to spend the money.

Bill West: I propose we change it to \$135,000 and revisit the other \$60,000 later in the year after we get more information about the Tolle Building.

Laura Carpenter: I second that vote.

Patrick: The motion is that we reduce the line item from transfer to other funds of \$185,000 down to \$135,000 and we can revisit it later in the year pending final bids for Tolle building. They can still move forward with the trail.

Rick Thomas: We don't have a firm bid on the Tolle building yet.

Motion passed unanimously to reduce line item from transfer to other funds from \$185,000 to \$135,000

Patrick Huston: We will revisit later in the year.

Bill West: When do we revisit the budget?

Donna Angel: We can have an amended budget in January 2023 if we need to amend the budget.

Patrick Huston: It changes the total revenue to \$1,264,600.

Patrick Huston: Motion to approve budget for 2022-2023 fiscal year. Total revenue, \$1,264,600 and total expenses, \$1,526,300.

Bill West: Move to accept budget as is.

Becky Brown: I'll second that.

Motion voted on and passed unanimously.

Patrick Huston: Motion approved.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Kristy Napier: Do we have a date when we will get plans from architect?

Donna Angel: He should have them by this Friday. When we have them back, we will have a meeting to discuss.

Laura Carpenter: Do we have an answer back on the grant for the kitchen?

Donna Angel: That is still a work in progress, based on the time details, we are still reviewing that.

Bill West: I just want to say that we are getting a lot of value for our payroll dollars.

Laura Carpenter: Thank you for joining our team, you all are going to be team players.

Becky Brown: Thank you all and I'm excited to be here and to be a part of this.

ADJOURNMENT:

Kristy Napier moved to adjourn. Laura Carpenter seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:23 PM.