

**BEREA TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
BUSINESS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, March 8, 2023, 3:00 PM**

**City Annex Building
304 Chestnut Street**

Called to order at 3:07 PM; Patrick Huston presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT:

- Donna Angel
- Liz Todd
- Dani Gift
- Nancy Conley
- Ethan Cima

GUESTS PRESENT:

None

APPROVAL OF Agenda:

Rick Thomas moved to approve the agenda. Second by Becky Brown. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Kristy Napier noted that the date was incorrect on the January minutes, listing the year as 2022. Laura Carpenter moved to amend and approve minutes. Second by Kristy Napier. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

DIRECTORS REPORT: DONNA ANGEL

1. **Farmers Market:** Tourism Presentation updates at annual board meeting.
2. **Sign copy** installed at Hwy 595 & the KAC: Thank you for visiting Berea.
3. **Jamin** on the Porch was invited to use the Mitchell Tolle Building during certain Thursday nights due to the Folk Center being booked.
4. **Updated Flooring:** We completed a new epoxy entrance way flooring for the Old Hotel in Old Town.
5. **RPM:** we met to review our first quarter ads and to plan the BCF ads.
6. **The Farmer's Market:** Awning for the Ford Building by Ag Credit
7. **Electronic Sign for the Pavilion:** We will go before the Board of Adjustments on March 22, 6:00pm to request a variance on the size of sign allowed vs. size needed of 3x10 or 30 Sq. Ft.
8. **Brochures & Maps** in design stage: Ne Brochures/New Historical City Maps/New African American History Map.
9. **Amended Budget** reading: First reading before city council was 2/21/23, 2nd reading will be March 7th: ARPA funds were added & EDA grant (brochure distribution)
10. **BCS** has canceled the "International Student Art Fair" June 9 & 10th due to lack of hotel accommodations in Berea and will reschedule for June 2023: TBD
11. **Berea Ignite:** AMTEC Presentation on advanced manufacturing technical education-electrical: hosted student food items: A special treat from the culinary art school-Biscuits were the best.
12. **Music Concerts: Permission to use 4,000 for June concerts from RIG funds: ***
13. **Tourism staff** in conjunction w/the city continues the developing stages of the 2023 BCF: We currently have booked 65 booths w/paid deposits: We are very pleased w/the new applications of artist that applying to attend this year.
14. **Budget 2023-2024 is now here and I am starting to work on detailed preparations to review w/you : It will be a very tight year for us, as we start renovations on the Tolle, the furniture, the electronics for the building. I have also set aside funds to replace the lighting system in the Welcome Center-Train Depot along with reserved funds for our Trolley, Electronic Sign,**

OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT: Nancy Conley

1. Berea Welcome Center Visitor Count (See full chart on separate sheet)

January 2023: 493 (plus 18 grab and go bags)

February 2023: 636 (plus 45 grab and go bags)

We had the greatest number of visitors (87) for this year on February 25 (LearnShops Weekend)

Intercept interview visitor data collection shows top 5 places visitors are from: Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, Wisconsin

*6 visitors from Canada

2. KY Visitor Guide Leads January-February 2023: 206 leads received.

3. School Groups:

- a. **Bethlehem Catholic School Group of 26 visited 1/10/2023.** Provided tour of train station and historic information as well as information on What is Tourism and what we do. Group attended an etiquette luncheon at Boone Tavern and took a candle making class at So Yum.
- b. **Kingdom Kids** (31 Pre-K and 25 Elementary students) will be visiting and touring the train station on March 9.
- c. **Sunshine Friends** Pre-K and Elementary Students planning to visit in April.

4. Skill Development: Working with reception staff team members to grow computer and office skills; training Robert on recording BTC meetings.

5. Reception Staff Team Projects: Deep clean welcome center, conduct inventory/create lists, update MSDS binder, maintaining grounds etc., increased collaboration with full time team members.

6. Exciting New Look:

- a. Hotel Entranceway: new floor coating; soon will be sanding and staining wood at entranceway.
- b. Creating themed displays in our display case located in the front lobby.
- c. Updating displays of local artisan items
- d. Rearranged the lobby – giving the welcome center a fresh look.
- e. Updated and rearranged train memorabilia displays and Churchill Weaver display.
- f. Completely reworked the HO scale model train layout – a must see.
- g. Cabin of Old Town projecting instrumental music for shopper's delight
- h. Working on adding more color and brightening up the lawn of the welcome center with colorful umbrellas and picnic tables.

7. L&N Day: June 17. Collaborating with Berea Volunteer Fire and Rescue to add a car show to the event line up.

8.

Media Manager Report: Dani Gift

Digital Media Projects (Completed)

- 1) Valentine's Day Paid Marketing with RPM
- 2) Berea Craft Festival Logo Re-design
- 3) Berea Craft Festival Correspondence
- 4) Two videos: Spotlight Behind the Scenes and the Model Train re-vamp.
- 5) Shopping, Dining, and Recreation Map is now live!
- 6) KDT Social Media Takeover

Digital Media Project (Ongoing)

- 1) 2023 Website Calendar Updates
- 2) Website look and feel Updates.
- 3) Website Blog post – Greathouse Inn
- 4) Valentine's Day social media advertisements (Organic and Paid)
- 5) Spring LearnShops Marketing Design

Print Projects (Completed)

- 1) Berea Craft Festival Rack Cards, Posters, and Banners
- 2) New design for "Thank you for visiting Berea" sign (Kentucky Artisan Center)

- 3) New design for "Welcome to Berea" signs
- 4) Craft Festival and L&N Day Posters and Rack Cards have been designed.
- 5) Craft Festival T-Shirt Design
- 6) Advertisement Design for Berea Magazine

Print Projects (Ongoing)

- 1) New signage for the Berea Craft Festival
- 2) New pop-up banner design for motorcoach conferences

Additional Projects

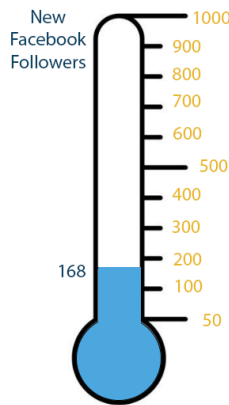
- 1) Securing entertainment for the Berea Craft Festival
- 2) Continue to encourage our local businesses to share events, promotions, sales, etc. with us.
- 3) Visiting Greathouse Inn for updated photography
- 4) Working with Ted Kinson and Robert Elam on an ongoing series of photography assignments.

Progress toward Annual Goals:

<p>New Videos Goal (2 per month) January – 1) Behinds the Scenes at Spotlight 2) Model Train Revamp February- 1) Shopping in Berea (KDT) 2) Take a LearnShop (KDT)</p>

<p>Facebook Engagement (Likes, Comments, & Shares) Goal- 4,000 Per Month</p>

January 2023	3,610
February 2023	4,426



Motorcoach Specialist Report: Ethan Cima

Good afternoon commissioners, I hope you have been well since last time we met. I gave end of the year totals last time and provided charts that shown us how well we have recovered out of the pandemic. Since we last met, I have been traveling to conferences to gain our business here in Berea with motorcoach and group travel.

Attached in this report is my experience at the American Bus Association conference, which was held in Detroit, MI. All went very well, besides me not knowing how to drive in such a big city. I think that this conference was very beneficial for Berea, our appointments were filled with companies who are eager to put Berea on their maps and books. I did a lot of business for the Berea Craft Festival and Spoonbread Festival, as companies are looking for unique experiences such as these; something that they can not get elsewhere.

Currently I am at the Heartland Travel Showcase in Cincinnati, OH, where I am meeting with other group tour companies. Compared to my list from ABA in February, I have possibly 1 or 2 repeating appointments with the same company. The rest are filled with new companies that I have not previously met or dealt with, which we hope to bring to our city. Heartland Travel Showcase offers 42 appointment slots total for everyone, at this time we have 27 appointments scheduled. This allows for scheduled meetings but opens my table to meet with others who have not scheduled with us.

I have had great feedback from our time at ABA, I have groups reaching out that are wanting to be scheduled for 2023 and 2024. Recently, a group had contacted me about having a niche group that dealt with trains, I am eager to see if they would be interested in coming to Berea for L&N Day followed by the Pavilion Concert Series that night.

For what the future holds as far as my agenda, I am going to be representing Berea in Huntsville, AL for the Southeast Tourism Society Conference. Our operations manager, Nancy, and I, will be traveling to this conference April 17-19th. This is one that I look forward to, because of the opportunity we have at hand. STS allows for the southern states to have a conference for themselves and really targets our neighboring states. STS allows up to 60 appointments to be made, but there be 120 Group Tour companies present! Lot of opportunities for networking and connections made in our favor.

Outside of the motorcoach role, I have been helping where I am needed. I have helped our Program Manager, Liz Todd, with our LearnShop classes in the month of February. WE hosted 4 Blacksmithing Classes at the Berea Welcome Center; all classes were sold out and participants were eager to find out when our next classes would be available. I have been working with Nancy on our L&N Day activities and events, for what I can do to help. It has been great to cross-train with my co-workers, as this allows me t know their role better and truly know what responsibilities each of us have.

ABA Conference 2023 – Detroit, MI

Summary:

The American Bus Association held a great conference in Detroit, MI. While being new to the industry I was brought in welcomed and assisted all throughout my journey. On Saturday, I got checked into the hotel and conference where I got all the information I needed to get started. There are two “floors,” one was for networking and the other for the appointments that would take place tomorrow. I was new to all of this so I took the time to wonder and figure out how everything worked, so I started by seeing where my day would start on Sunday in the morning and where the first appointment would take place.

Fast forward to Sunday, I started my appointments at 9:00am with the first of many group travel companies. American Bus Association conference is different from others, CVBs and Attractions are usually seated at their booth, but at ABA it is vice versa. This means, I was the “seller” who would travel from booth to booth. I had 43 appointments by the end of the day at 5:30. While I had some openings or breaks in between, I used this time to meet with the companies that were also on a break and just drop information by on their table. The average amount of appointments that CVBs usually receive are between 20-25 only, with us having 43 we were able to expand our network and hopefully receive more business in the future. It was great finally meeting people who I have spoken with in recent months, and finally getting to put a face with a name coming through my emails. Overall, I think we did well at ABA, and it will do us good for the coming years. The group travel companies were eager to see all the new offerings Berea had, wondered if we still did certain things after the pandemic, and knew that their groups always loved stopping in Berea.

I only receive 7 minutes with each company, which is not much time to explain all that our city has to offer. But I rehearsed my lines and each appointment it continued to get better and better. I hit the high points and some new points. Talked about our classes being offered again, accommodations in Berea, food, and shopping throughout our town, and also about Berea Craft Festival and Spoonbread Festival. Groups want to see new things, go to new experiences, so I would not be surprised if our bus numbers go up during festival dates. Companies were represented by people who I knew, and this was able to make the appointment much more business focus, rather than trying to make a sale. I am in discussions with a group about how we can do the day trips to Berea from all over KY, Indiana, and Ohio. This company has busses located in all states and said that it is certainly doable, they are very interested in the idea.

I have already followed up with my appointments after ABA, I sent an email to all the companies that were at ABA. I have received great feedback in reply to emails regarding Berea as a destination of theirs. I look for our ROI to be well worth it, ABA is one of the best conferences that we could attend in order to continue to keep a steady flow of tourists in and out of Berea.

PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT: Liz Todd

Meetings/Events:

- Organized class trip for Bethlehem High School, tours, etiquette luncheon Boone Tavern, activity (candle making “Soyum”) – facilitated by Tourism team
- Jackson County students from “Gear Up”- tourism impact on community, tour
- International Art Expo Meeting planning for 2024
- Craft Festival 2023 Marketing Meeting
- Vetting event/ticketing platform

Make it, Take it, Give it LearnShops 2022:

- Finished up MTG 11/25-11/27
- 2 new artists – Dustin Cecil (“Introduction to Broom Making: Cobwebber Broom”, broom making/fiber art/woodworking), Christina Jones (“Holiday Jolly Cookie Decorating”, pastry chef)
- 9 new unique class offerings
- MTG Email Rates: *Open Rate: 52.7%*, Industry Avg.: **36%** *Click Rate: 11%*, Industry Avg.: **.86%**
- rosters/instructor packets
- student communication/questions
- oversee classes
- troubleshooting
- instructor payments
- post-event surveys: attendees/artists
- analyzing results for future classes

Spring LearnShops 2023

- April 29-30 – 2 new artists, estimated 7 classes
- April 15-16 (glassblowing)
- Collecting proposals
- Theme (Enchanted Spring)

- Locations
- Marketing plan

FOL 2023

- July 21-30, 2023
- Booking locations (several new locations)
- Vetting/interviewing new artists for program
- Reviewing proposals
- Call for new artist instructors, 4 new thus far
- theme
- Marketing plan with Donna, Dani, and RPM
- Instructor discussion, Town Hall meet-up before

Trends

- Keeping a close eye on similar cities with similar culture and feel, demographics. Things that may be a success for us, but not others
- Food, spirits, unique-hard to find classes, sustainable efforts, vintage, pets/animals, homesteading (soap making, fabric dyeing, paper making, log inoculation)
- Classes that can be done with a group
- Want to adapt quickly, stay on top of trends, also identify what makes Berea KY Tourism stand out

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT: Laura Carpenter moved to adjourn. Kristy Napier second. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:26 PM.