

# Minutes

## TOURISM BOARD BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. June 3, 2024

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Meaghun Darab, Rainbow Cabbage, Barry Hupp, Megan Kimball, Smita Patel and Scott Czechlewski, Eryk Pruitt, Barney Caton

Absent: Chair Victoria Pace

Staff: Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell

### 1. Call to order

Megan Kimball called the meeting to order at 5:31p.m.

### 2. Agenda changes and approval

Motion: Kimball called to approve any changes to the agenda and approvals. Barry Hupp motioned for the approval of the current agenda. Barney Caton seconded this motion

Vote: 8-0 approval of the agenda.

### 3. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on May 6th, 2024

Motion: Member Eryk Pruitt moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Member Meaghun Darab seconded the motion.

Vote: 8-0.

### 4. Open the Public Hearing

Kimball opened the public hearing.

Shannan Campbell read the list of persons present to speak at the public hearing, which only included Jim Cone from the Eagle Lodge Foundation.

Campbell asked Mr. Cone to present his public comments on the budget.

Cone started off by saying that the confusion the Board had expressed in previous meetings at the lodge's grant proposal request was due to errors made by the applicant when applying for the requested grant. The Eagle Lodge has requested that the Board approve a \$6,300 grant that Cone explained would be used for funding for a number of maintenance projects to the building that houses the lodge. These projects include painting soffits, repair and repainting windows, and spot paint and repairing cracks in the walls.

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Member Rainbow Cabbage asked about the events that the Eagle Lodge may host or be a part of in 2025. Cone clarified that the Eagle Lodge would be looking to piggyback on a number of events that happen through town in order to bring people into the lodge. This event could include the Holiday Home Tour if that happens for this year. The lodge foundation expressed an interest in possibly purchasing period costumes and embracing more of the historical side of the property by providing more information to the public about the lodge's history.

Board members expressed concerns that the proposed use of the funds were more related to the restoration of the building than to go toward any tourism efforts.

Kimball asked Cone what other grants the Eagle Lodge had applied for. Cone stated that two grants had been applied for including this one. The Board had discussions regarding the differences between restoration and beautification. Cabbage quoted the minutes from the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting that stated that the board would be more supportive of this grant application if it was related to beautification efforts. Member Scott Czechlewski asked Cone to confirm if any of the required repairs to the building are structural in nature. Cone confirmed that these repairs listed are not structural. He indicated that some of it was correcting previous repair work.

Board members questioned how the Board could be sure that the funds will be used to ensure that this work is done correctly. The Board members presented questions about a golf tournament mentioned in the grant application such as what was the location, fund raising goals, and how the funds of the golf tournament were used after last year's event. Cone explained that the location of the golf tournament is in Mebane with this year's proceeds also going toward the building repairs and maintenance. The funds from last year's event went towards various charity efforts. There were no additional questions.

Kimball closed the public hearing.

## **5. FY25 Tourism Board & Summary**

Campbell went through the history of the budget development and budget review up to this point, the structure of the budget itself, and what was required to legally adopt it. Campbell stated that the objective of tonight's meeting was to make a final decision on spending decisions and vote on the FY 2025 budget. Campbell indicated that following this vote minor adjustments can be adopted through the board process later in the year.

Darab asked Campbell about an update regarding changes in the audit fees after her discussion previously with the Town Manager about possibly bringing this budget item in house instead of contract through a third party. Campbell stated that the Town is under contract with the existing audit company and therefore no changes can be made to the audit amount. Czechlewski asked Campbell if it was possible to invest the board's fund balance. Campbell indicated that she did not think it was legal to invest public funds in that way, but that she was waiting on some guidance from the Town's finance department on this item.

Darab began a discussion regarding the funding of the Eagle Lodge's grant request based on the section of minutes from the prior board meeting and public hearing information from the applicant. The topic was opened for discussion by the board members, since it would change the budget. There was concern from the board regarding the location of the golf tournament not being in Hillsborough and a lack of clarity on how the planned building improvements would be tied to events or tourism to or around the lodge property. Cabbage stated that she believed there was a disconnect from the boards' original comments on the application and what had been stated in tonight's meeting. Board member Barry Hupp stated that at this time there does not appear to be enough incentive from a tourism standpoint to fund this grant application. Joined by Barney Caton who stated that the issue is in regard to the impact that the funds would have on true tourism to the Town. Caton states that if the Eagle Lodge can provide additional information for the next funding request for things like the number of visitors to the lodge, events happening where lodge maintenance/beautification would benefit as a backdrop, etc. then the board might have a better understanding of the tourism impact the lodge might have.

Kimball called for a vote and suggested a motion was in order to move forward.

Motion: Hupp moved to deny the addition of the Eagle Lodge grant application to the FY 2025 budget.

Second: Eryk Pruitt seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-2 to deny.

Board member Kimball asked for any additional comment relating to the 2025 budget.

Cabbage stated that she would like to see additional information related to how funds are used by the visitors center and the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough. Board member Kimball stated that all of the contract partners applications state the entire breakdown of how each uses each of their funding amounts and that these had been reviewed at prior meetings.

Amanda Boyd from the Alliance of Historic Hillsborough, who runs the Hillsborough Visitors Center, requested to speak. The board allowed it.

Boyd stated that the use of funds for visitors' services are for the public who visits and requests information from the visitors center and needs local information on shopping, dining, historic sites and the like. Board member Cabbage indicated that she had concerns about the large amount of budget that is designated towards the visitors center. Boyd confirmed that the budget is used for visitors services and any additional projects or initiatives that the Alliance does that's not part of running the Visitors Center is funded through the Alliance's own budget. Cabbage requested information regarding the number of people who come to the visitors center each year. Boyd indicated they would have year end numbers after the end of June.

Kimball called for a motion or updates to the budget.

Motion: Caton moved to approve the 2025 budget as presented

Second: Pruitt seconded the motion.

Vote: 8-0 to approve the budget.

- A. Board comments and updates  
There were none.

Campbell reminded the group that there is no July meeting, the next time the board meets will be August 5<sup>th</sup> 2024.

## **6. Adjournment**

Motion: Kimball moved to adjourn the meeting at 6.26 p.m.