

OAK ISLAND BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES – Tuesday, March 24, 2026 – 9:00am

Location: Oak Island Town Hall, Police Training Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Joe Yeager, Chair, called the meeting to order at **9:03am**

Members Absent: Zach Fisher, Hugh Fosbury, Ronnie Russel and Jensen Caudle

Motion: Lisa Fitzgerald made a motion to excuse Zach, Hugh, Ronnie and Jensen from the meeting; Mark Turner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

II.1 **Approval of Agenda:** Mark Turner made a motion to approve the agenda; Ken Guhse seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. No changes noted.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III.1 **Approval of January Minutes:** Lisa Fitzgerald, made a motion to approve minutes from January Ken Guhse, seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III.2 **Approval of February Minutes:** Lisa Fitzgerald, made a motion to approve minutes from February, Mark Turner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PRESENTATION

John Sneed, Executive Director, Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

IV.1 The BC Tourism and Development Authority (TDA) was established in 1997 and has 10 board members

- o TDA is funded by 1% county-wide occupancy tax, generating about \$3 million annually.
- o Visitors' spending reached \$1.22 billion in 2024, up 4.8% from 2023. 2025 numbers are expected to be a record year.
- o County ranks 6th in NC for Travel economic impacts and the state ranks 5th nationally with \$37 tourism impact.

- Marketing targets visitors within an hour's drive to maximize overnight stays; promotes major festivals and events that attract tourists.
- Annual brochures and websites are updated regularly; website relaunch planned to improve user experience
- TDA uses digital marketing extensively, including social media platforms (Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube) and influencer partnerships, generating 68 million ad impressions yearly.
- TDA tracks ROI using ad agency formulas and digital analytics; print advertising is minimized in favor of digital.
- Challenges include limited funding flexibility due to state legislation restricting use of accommodations tax primarily for beach renourishment.
- TDA collaborates with local towns and chambers but faces challenges due to multiple municipalities and diverse tourism areas with our county.
- Efforts underway to promote off-season tourism, targeting couples without children for short stays to increase occupancy
- TDA supports events like marathons and races through blogs and social media but focuses major marketing on festivals that attract overnight visitors.
- To promote events, the TDA requires data on out-of-town visitors who stay at least one night to ensure a strong ROI. A Pacer report is needed to identify those areas.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comments noted

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VI.1 Business of the Month for March

- Topsy Tuna

VI.2 Brochure Review

- Brochure is currently still in the process of being created; Hallie will have a draft at the April Meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VII.1 Business Survey initiative Discussion:

- Annual business surveys are conducted to gather data on local businesses,
- Plans to improve data collection and outreach are in progress
- Hallie to draft letter for survey
- Board members were encouraged to complete the survey
- Challenges for honest feedback may include political issues around home-based businesses and restrictions on accommodations tax usage.

VII.2 Medallion Hunt Planning & Discussion

- Hallie has received at least 3 emails wanting to know when the medallion hunt will be held for 2026...families wanting to plan their vacations around the hunt.
- June 8th was the start date for 2025- June 8th for 2026 also falls on a Monday so the board agreed that would be a great opportunity to start with the 1st clue being posted at the Monday Market.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

- Hallie invited the board to the first CoastWise Speaker Series on April 9th at 6pm, located in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. The presenter will be Dr. Mouhcine Guettabi from the UNCW Cameron School of Business.

IX. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- Heather Kinlaw notified the board of the Loggerheads Golf Tournament on March 28 at the Par 3 and they still have openings for teams to join
- Heather also discussed the Oak Island Loggerheads and Doodles Hometown Heroes Game set for July 2 this year and sponsorships are needed to make this game bigger and better than last year for our Active Duty and local Veterans. Fireworks sponsorship is a big current need. Last year's game hosted approximately 3500 fans.
- Loggerheads still need 5 host families
- Alec informed the board that the ONSL All Star Game hosted by OKI Loggerheads is a possibility for 2027.
- April 11-12 a Pickleball tournament will be held on OKI

X. ADJOURN

- Mark Turner made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55; Heather Kinlaw seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.