

Minutes

TOURISM BOARD

Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. June 2, 2025

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



Present: Chair Victoria Pace, Vice-Chair Megan Kimball, Rainbow Cabbage (5:40pm), Barney Caton, Meaghun Darab, Scott Czechlewski, Smita Patel, and Eryk Pruitt

Staff: Planning and Economic Development Manager
Shannan Campbell

1. Call to order

Chair Victoria Pace called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

2. Agenda changes and approval

Pace asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Motion: Member Meaghun Darab moved to approve the agenda. Member Eryk Pruitt seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

3. Minutes

Chair Pace inquired if there were any changes to the minutes from February 3, 2025, and December 2, 2024. No changes were proposed.

Motion: Darab moved to approve the February 3, 2023, and the December 2, 2024, minutes as submitted. Pruitt seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

4. Discussion/Action Items

A. FY 25 End of Year Budget Adjustment

Campbell explained that there were two adjustments. One adjustment was due to the town forgetting to pay itself last fiscal year for the 6% holdback for administering the tax. The other adjustment was also payment to the town, totaling \$26,000. Campbell clarified that for FY24, they put that amount in revenue and then expensed it back out.

Motion: Chair Pace moved to approve the FY 25 End of Year Budget Adjustments. Darab seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

B. FY 26 Budget Public Hearing

Chair Pace opened the floor for any comments and speakers. Campbell noted that it appeared everyone present had a contract with the tourism board. There were no speakers present.

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Motion: Darab moved to close the public hearing. Member Barney Caton seconded.
 Vote: 7-0.

- Draft FY26 Budget

Shannan Campbell explained that she had adjusted the FY26 draft budget based on the conversations from the last meeting and the requests for various contract partners to make cuts and reductions. She noted that the Alliance, Burwell School, and Arts Council had made modifications, while the Orange County History Museum and Chamber of Commerce were not asked to make any changes.

- Contract Partner Responses/Budgets for FY26 (continued discussion/review, if needed)

This item was discussed as part of the Draft FY26 Budget discussion.

- FY26 Grant Projects and Scoring

Campbell presented a summary of the grant projects discussed previously. She mentioned that a TDA meeting had occurred since the last tourism board meeting, where they were asked about potentially hearing the unfunded grant requests, specifically the Hillsborough Holiday Nights and the Mars Hill mural. The TDA expressed interest in hearing these requests but made no commitments to funding them.

The board discussed the scoring, pros and cons, of various grant projects:

- Wendy Olsen project scored 62.8
- Mars Hill mural scored 70.5
- Thrift Crawl scored 75.3
- Seussical scored 80.7
- Holiday Nights scored 90

The board engaged in a detailed discussion about funding the Hillsborough Holiday Nights and Seussical projects. They considered the budget implications and the possibility of TDA funding for the Holiday Nights project. After deliberation, the board decided to fund the Hillsborough Holiday Nights (\$10,000) and the Seussical (\$7,025) projects, with the intent to have the Alliance also ask for some funding from the TDA for holiday nights to reduce some of the cost burden to the Tourism Board since they were spending so much of their fund balance to fund contracts.

Motion: Pruitt moved to fund the Hillsborough Holiday Nights and Seussical projects. Member Darab seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

Campbell then requested a motion to recommend the budget for adoption to the town board with the modification of the grants expense from \$20,000 to \$17,025 based on the discussion. Member Rainbow Cabbage arrived at 5:40pm.

Motion: Caton moved to recommend the budget for adoption to the town board with the specified modification. Pruitt seconded.

Vote: 7-0. Member Cabbage abstained, explaining that she wasn't there for the first part of the conversation to know what had been discussed.

Member Cabbage asked about the cuts to the Hillsborough Arts Council budget. She expressed concern that cuts were made to Last Fridays.

Julia Workman, chair of the board of directors for the Hillsborough Arts Council, representing the Hillsborough Arts Council, clarified that the \$5,000 cut from their budget was taken from the Solstice Lantern Walk expansion to the West Hillsborough, not from Last Fridays as described in the staff report. She explained that they would still look for ways to incorporate additional entrances to the walk but would not be able to provide full programming in West Hillsborough.

Matt Hughes, commissioner for the town of Hillsborough, Burwell School board member, and representative on the Orange County Visitors Bureau, informed the board about potential reductions in county funding for tourism promotion due to budget constraints in Chapel Hill and Orange County. He suggested that Hillsborough might need to invest more in tourism promotion to compensate for these changes in the next fiscal year.

After discussion about the budget and fund balance, the board decided to maintain the original vote on the budget without further adjustments.

5. Staff Updates

Campbell mentioned that she was unable to obtain updated food and beverage revenues from the Finance Department but would email them to the board members when available. She noted that the next meeting would be in August, as the board typically takes July off. She also informed the board that the TDA and tourism board's budget would be on the consent agenda for the next town board meeting unless pulled for discussion.

6. Board updates

No board updates were provided.

7. Adjournment

Chair Pace adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough
Planning Technician
Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Board

Approved: August 4, 2025