



Visit Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area

Board Meeting Tuesday September 22, 2026

Members present: Andy Hofmann, Kelly Miller, Matt Hausser, Nick Picerno, Natalie Dean-Hawkins, Linda Parsons, Pat Molamphy, Caroline Xiong

Not present: Tom Pashley, Warren Lewis, Christa Gilder, Wayne Vest,

Staff present: Phil Werz, Donna Murphy, Melissa Holt

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Hofmann.

Chairman Hofmann entertained a motion to approve the June 29, 2026, minutes. Member Picerno made the motion to approve the minutes, Member Miller seconded it, and the motion passed.

Financial Report-Pat Molamphy

Given only the month of July was available for the current fiscal year, he stated that we were slightly over budget. He added that this is typical for the first quarter of any fiscal year, as we typically pay external vendors by the quarter. He concluded by saying the budget would expect to balance out for our next board meeting in December.

Chairman Hofmann entertained a motion to approve the Financial Report. Member Miller made the motion, Member Picerno seconded it, and the motion passed.

President & CEO Report-Phil Werz:

Claire Oakley, with our ad agency of record, Boone Oakley, joined us via Zoom to give a brief presentation of the HOME campaign that they recently did for us. This stemmed from the sheer number of remarks from visitors that when they come here, it always feels like coming home. Claire mentioned that she also felt the same vibe, as she visited our destination, and moved about here during the video shoot they did. The basic concept was to make people feel like they belong in the Sandhills. Phil showed several of the video spots that Boone Oakley prepared for us, and that will be used in our future marketing endeavors.

Room Occupancy tax collections for July were \$740,769, which is up 14.2% from July 2025 at 3%. July hotel Occupancy was 67%, which was flat compared to last July, but the ADR was up 19.9%. We ended fiscal year 25/26 strong and look forward to another record year. VisitNC recently released visitor spending data from 2025 and we ranked 10th out of 100 counties at \$901 million. This was an increase of 4.9% over 2024, which is a huge accomplishment following a U.S. Open year. Our goal is to reach \$1 billion in visitor spending by 2030.

The T.E.A.M. grant committee met recently to go over the applications. The attached list of recommended grant awards was emailed to each board member prior to today's meeting. Phil went over the list and expanded on each one and what required category it fell into. With no discussion, Member Miller made a motion to approve the recommended grant awards, Member Hausser seconded it and the motion passed.

Next Phil introduced a proposed budget amendment of \$300,00 from our fund balance into the operating budget for the contribution to the minimum revenue guarantee (MRG), for commercial flight service, that was approved at the last meeting. Member Picerno asked if the pledges, for the MRG, had currently reached \$2.7 million. It was mentioned that the airport did not receive the \$1 million grant, they had applied for to help reach the \$3 million needed for the MRG. Member Picerno made a motion to table approving the budget amendment until the pledge amount reaches \$2.7 million. After some discussion, member Miller seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Phil updated the board about the upcoming concerts we've sponsored for this weekend. Friday, Phil Vassar will be performing at the Sunrise Theater and Saturday we will be having a Dustin Lynch concert at the Gilliam McConnell airfield in Carthage, along with a 300-drone light show at the end. Both of these are Sandhills Celebrates America's 250 events. Also, we will be sponsoring the Sandhills Garden of Lights at the Sandhills Community College Horticulture Gardens. It will start in November and run into the beginning of January. We anticipate this will draw visitors to the destination, during what is typically a slow time during the holiday season.

Board Member Reports

Linda Parsons mentioned there will be a talent symposium on October 9th at Sandhills Community College. It will be on mental health and she invited the board members and any employees they might want to send.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Member Picerno stated that he felt there needed to be a committee formed to begin determining what major project the additional funds from the occupancy tax increase will be used for. He said the commissioners increased the tax rate, with the understanding that the additional funds would be used for a major capital project that would bring visitors here. So far, they have not seen any real movement towards that happening and would like to see some progress being made.

The next meeting is scheduled for December, but date TBD.

Chairman Hofmann entertained a motion to adjourn, Member Molamphy made the motion, Member Miller seconded it and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Note: Member Picerno left the meeting at 4:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Molamphy

Pat Molamphy, Secretary/Treasurer



2026 T.E.A.M. GRANT PROGRAM
T.E.A.M. GRANTS – COMMITTEE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tourism Enhancement and Area Marketing (T.E.A.M.) committee has recommended the following grant awards for the following organizations. The total sum of these projects totals \$248,750.00 of the pool of \$250,000.00.

North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA)

- Support annual NCTIA Convention at Pinehurst Resort, Dec. 1-2 (Meetings & Conventions category).
- \$25,000.00

N.C. Field Trials

- Support more than 30 annual events/meetings in Moore County (Meetings & Conventions category).
- \$25,000.00

Carthage Mural

- Funding for next mural in downtown Carthage (Public Art category).
- \$23,750.00

Town of Cameron

- Seeking \$25,000 for support of bi-annual Antique Festival and Dewberry Festival (Multi-Day Festival/Special Events category).
- \$25,000.00

Sandhills Community College -BPAC

- Seeking \$25,000 for marketing support at Bradshaw Performing Arts Center (BPAC) – (Multi-Day Festival/Special Events category).
- \$25,000.00

Village of Pinehurst (VOP)

- Seeking \$25,000 for VOP accent lighting project through the Village. Tree (Tourism Improvement/Enhancement/Wayfinding/Beautification category).
- \$25,000.00

Friends of Southern Pines

- Seeking \$25,000 for large downtown Holiday Tree (Tourism Improvement/Enhancement/Wayfinding/Beautification category).
- \$25,000.00

Town of Southern Pines

- Seeking \$25,000 for downtown holiday displays (Tourism Improvement/Enhancement/Wayfinding/Beautification category).
- \$25,000.00

Aviation Museum (Carthage)

- Non-profit seeking \$25,000 for new museum located at the Gilliam McConnell Airfield. Property signage and enhancements. (Tourism Improvement/Enhancement/Wayfinding/Beautification category).
- \$25,000.00

Southern Pines Land & Housing Trust

- Seeking \$25,000 to support and marketing for special exhibit honoring black caddies. (Multi-Day Festival/Special Events category).
- \$25,000.00

Project Type Breakdown:

Meetings & Conventions	\$50,000
Improvement/Enhancement/Wayfinding/Beautification	\$100,000
Multi-Day Festival & Events	\$75,000
Public Art	\$23,750

Total: \$248,750