



November 18, 2025

Bertie County Tourism Development Authority

Board Meeting 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Roanoke River Center

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Laura Orsini called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was established.

2. Attendance

Board Members Present: Laura Orsini, Tim Bazemore, Kelsey Reside, Patricia Ferguson, Vivian Saunders, Brenda Cooper, Pastor Gregory Gilliam, Brianne Godwin, Kate Jordan

Latricia Hines-Miller arrived at 11:33

Non-Voting Members Present: Robin Payne, Willie Mac Carawan

Absent: Allen Castelloe, Jodie Rhea

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- a. Motion approved to remove Item #5 (“Guest Presentation”) from the agenda and reschedule for a future meeting.
- b. The revised agenda and the October 21, 2025 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Updates:

a. Board Terms

- i. Chair Orsini reaffirmed the previously established board terms for all 11 members (as decided during the October meeting).

b. Occupancy Tax Update

- i. Bertie County Finance Officer Willie Carawan provided an update on the occupancy tax received to date
 - 1. \$3,797.91 collected to date (note, October tax due by 11/20)

c. Finance Update / Accessing Funds / Create Finance Committee

- i. A 2026 budget will be developed.
- ii. Kelsey Reside will serve as Chair of the Finance Committee, joined by Laura Orsini and Patricia Ferguson.
- iii. Committee tasks include: Creating the 2026 budget, Meeting with Willie Carawan regarding available funds, Ensuring an audit is completed, Reviewing promotions/marketing needs, Reviewing bond premium requirements, Drafting a proposed budget for public hearing and posting on the website

- iv. Committee emphasized the need for clear goals, vision, and next steps for financial planning.
- d. Hotel Feasibility Study Update**
 - i. Robin discussed hotel feasibility study
 - ii. Study will be revisited during the board's broader visioning session (allocate 30–45 minutes).
- e. TDA – Business Presentation Roanoke River Center**
 - i. Brianne Godwin shared updates on the River Center.
 - ii. Goal: Increase visitation, especially ahead of River Fest in early May.
 - iii. Discussion on how TDA can support event awareness and whether transportation is a limiting factor.
- f. History of the TDA**
 - i. Robin Payne gave background on the BC TDA from 2018-2024
 - ii. Recommend watching 2019 – PBS – NC “A Peninsula with a Future”
- g. UPLIFT itineraries – for DestinationBertie.com**
 - i. Circulated itineraries for review & edits
 - ii. Website committee will review UPLIFT itineraries
- h. Rack Cards**
 - i. Chair Orsini presented updated rack card designs.
 - ii. Vivian Saunders is integrating the Vitality Center as a West Bertie Welcome Center.
 - iii. Discussion included smaller QR window decals and “You Are Here” signage. Recap
- i. UPLIFT Rural Tourism Summit**
 - i. Key takeaways included:
 - 1. Engage Bertie County residents on desired events and tourism priorities.
 - 2. Identified potential partners for the Festival Committee:
 - a. NC Agritourism Networking Association
 - b. NC Association of Festivals & Events
 - c. NCSU Tourism Extension Program
 - 3. Board discussed opportunities in Heritage Tourism, including local stories, markers, and historic documentation.
- j. Heritage Committee Formed**
 - i. Members: Robyn Payne, Laura Orsini (Chair), Patricia Ferguson
 - ii. Approved unanimously.
- k. Media Opportunity – Business View Magazine**
 - i. Digital feature planned (6–8 pages) focusing on rural community growth.
 - ii. Kelsey will introduce Laura Orsini to the publication.
 - iii. TDA will share that it is updating the hotel feasibility study.
- l. Tourism Businesses Initiative**
 - i. Kelsey and Tim will create a shared drive for scheduling and storing ideas from businesses presenting to the TDA.
 - ii. December presentation: Bertie Arts Council (also hosting the meeting).
- m. Website Committee**
 - i. Kate Jordan, Committee Chair, presented the selected domain and site direction.
 - ii. Reviewed website goals and layout options.
 - iii. Robyn will design the site.
- n. Social Media Committee**
 - i. Social media committee encourages TDA members to start using hashtags in media posts to help grow our online presence
 - 1. #VisitBertie

2. #VisitBertieNC
3. #DestinationBertie

o. Festival Committee

- i. Festivals: Riverfest, Juneteenth, Pecan Pickling Festival
- ii. Additional item: July 3rd parade
- iii. Committee emphasized stronger marketing for existing events.

p. BertieCountyTDA.com

- i. Will include: board roster, goals, headshots/bios, guidelines, legal documents, agendas, and minutes.
- ii. Jodie will post the online occupancy tax form; Robyn will present the site at the next meeting.

q. Miscellaneous

- i. Tim Bazemore shared reflections from a recent event at Bub Jackson Reserve and discussed ways to strengthen community connection and inclusivity.

r. Pecan Pickling Festival – Announcement

- i. Festival named a Silver Winner at the 2025 Anthem Awards (Art Education category).
- ii. Minutes will formally include the press release announcing the award.

s. Bylaws

- i. Bylaws were approved on 10/21/25 and officially signed on 11/18/25.

5. Member Departures:

- a. Willie Mac Carawan departed at 11:20AM
- b. Brenda Cooper departed at 12:15PM

6. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 12:55PM
- b. TDA will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 11AM
- c. Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 11:00 AM at the Arts Council
 - i. Bertie County Arts Council
 - ii. 124 S King St, Windsor, NC 27983
 - iii. Kate & the Arts Council will give the business presentation