



January 20, 2026

Bertie County Tourism Development Authority

Board Meeting 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Bertie County Arts Council

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

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

2. Attendance

- a. **Board Members Present:** Laura Orsini, Brenda Cooper, Brianne Godwin, Allen Castelloe, Tim Bazemore, Kate Jordan
- b. **Non-voting:** Robin Payne, Jodie Rhea, Willie MacCarawan, Joe Wallace
- c. **Guests:** Turner Sutton (Hope House), Ken Ludwig (B&K Coffee Roasters)
- d. **Absent:** Vivian Saunders, Latricia Hines-Miller, Patricia Ferguson, Pastor Gregory Gilliam,

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- a. Agenda approved
- b. Prior meeting minutes conditionally approved

4. Public Input/Questions

- a. Moved this section to the beginning of TDA meetings
- b. No public comments at today's meeting

5. Occupancy Tax Update

- a. Willie – suggests scaling back budget draft to allow for flexibility for future events
 - i. Suggests between \$15,000 and \$17,500
- b. **ACTION:** Finance committee will meet virtually before Feb. 17th to scale back budget draft
- c. **ACTION:** At Feb. 17th meeting, board will vote on new budget then will open for public comment
 - i. ACTION: TDA will need to advertise for public comment meeting on our website and newspapers and have budget flyers at the county office, town hall, and library at least 10 days before meeting is scheduled - most likely the March 17th TDA meeting
- d. Allen is now on the Finance Committee
- e. Jodie's reports will reflect revenue amount before the county takes out taxes
- f. \$9712.77 for July 1st to Dec 31st, 2025

6. Guest Presentation – Ken Ludwig (B&K Coffee Roasters)

- a. Ken is meeting a lot of people from all over the world – sending them the Bertie businesses for needs (facilities, something to eat/drink and instruction of what's to do in town)
- b. Lots of users at EV station – taking time to tour around town
- c. He would love to see a directory of town offerings – possibly a food truck corral and using the side of the building to project community movie nights

7. Discussion and Action Items

- a. **Town itineraries - ACTION:** Laura will finish and disperse to board - maybe include a "Talking Points" sheet for businesses
- b. **D&O Ins. – ACTION:** Wille will follow up with Jonathon Huddleston (Pritchett and Burch) to see if TDA is covered by Bertie County's insurance

- c. **Business View Magazine** – Allison Browning (BC Econ. Dev Officer) and Laura will be meeting with commissioners Corey Ballance and L.C. Hoggard to coach them on what to say in the interview
 - i. Robin suggests including how Bertie County’s natural and cultural assets lead to the creation of the TDA and the travel and tourism master plan – highlight specific assets that lead to area’s growth and visibility
 - ii. Promoting waterways, woodlands, cultural history, exposing Bertie County as a gem
 - iii. ACTION: What offerings would you like to see Bertie County implement to increase visibility and tourism? (Please have your list by next TDA meeting.)
- d. **Visitor Center/Welcome Center Report** – I-87 project has a Bertie County Visitor’s Center proposed over by the State Employees Credit Union on US-17
- e. **Outreach to Community Groups** – Laura was at meeting with mayors – ACTION: - she will meet with Allison Browning to fold in what the Bertie County requests are to leverage for larger financial support
- f. **Birdwatching/Photography Report** – ACTION: Kate and Laura will talk about Bird Atlas and how to get Bertie County in their directory
 - i. Historic Hope has a listed birdwatching trail
- g. **Historic Preservation Committee Report** – no report
- h. **America 250 NC** – ACTION: Robin will talk with Dan Brosz to see if Vivian can become Bertie County’s liaison.
 - i. What is Bertie’s Role for this celebration? Laura’s goal is to bring awareness of USA’s anniversary to Bertie County residents
 - ii. Robin wrote two grants that were used for Blue Jay Recreation Center – “Bertie’s Forgotten Black and Native Patriots of the Revolutionary War” event
 - iii. Laura suggested coloring a flag or coloring pages for students – where could we bring colored pages all together to highlight?
 - iv. Robin suggested vertical flags in each town displaying America 250 imagery
- i. **Certified Local Government (CLG)** – Many municipalities partner with National Park Service and with the State Historic Preservation Office and enables historic groups to obtain funding.
 - i. Multi-step process to get certified: 1. Update the historic resources (what already exists and what needs to be listed – sites of interest that are not identified) 2. Reach out to historic group to see if they have a representative who can attend a meeting 3. Meeting of current historic groups (Historic Hope, Colerain National Register, Indian Woods Historic Preservation, etc.) 4. Meeting with County Government to endorse becoming a CLG
 - ii. ACTION: Robin will research more into this opportunity
- j. **Tourism Business Invitations** – no report
- k. **Website Committee Report**
 - i. Getting quotes for video/photography at the list of sites that Kate made
 - ii. ACTION: Looking at budget to get cloud storage or larger Wix photo storage
- l. **Social Media Committee Report** - Kelsey putting together calendar of Social Meeting topics picture/video and will bring calendar to March meeting
 - i. Committee will plan and schedule a month at a time – Kate, Laura, Kelsey will take turns on responding to comments – Kate will post a standard reply to comments
 - ii. ACTION: Board members should submit short bios (to folder on Google Drive) that Social Media team can post, and members can share with friends to increase exposure
- m. **Festival Committee** - Conversation in progress for music festival
- n. **Website Report** - Robin will continue her work on the website.
- o. **Discuss Bertie County Tourism Master Plan** - Robin says commissioners need to approve the strategic plan for downtown revitalization/economic development
 - i. First - Towns will need to adopt their part of the master plan – go to towns first to see if they are willing to adopt individual plans in whole or in parts

- ii. ACTION: Make decks for each town to schedule break out presentations:
- iii. Robin – Colerain, Aulander, Powellsville – suggest town to make a Downtown Revitalization Committee (include property owners)
- iv. Laura – Lewiston, Windsor, Kelford - suggest town to make a Downtown Revitalization Committee (include property owners)
- v. Leave Roxobel and Askewville to the last
- p. **TourismTheWorks Offerings** - Push to next meeting
- q. **Discussion about funding for bigger projects**
 - i. Outfitters - Charter boat related for nature watching (Robert Jordan), Tuscarora kayak tours down the Cashie River, etc.
 - ii. Tim suggests that we remember Bertie County has a lot to offer people that have never been here before. Just because it's old to us, doesn't mean that others won't find something new!
 - iii. Visitors need to have a place for these people to eat and stay
- r. **Discussion about managing information/invitation** –
 - i. Could we talk with towns to see if there is “Incentive Money” to offer businesses
 - ii. Meet with property owners (sellers vs. renters) – Would renters be willing to consider offering lower rent to help get established

8. Member Departures: (maybe change timing of meeting to increase attendance and efficiency)

- a. Jodie Rhea, Allen Castelloe, Willie MacCarawan departed at 11:42am
- b. Brenda Cooper departed 12:04pm
- c. Tim Bazemore departed 12:30pm

9. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 12:52 pm
- b. TDA will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 11:00 am
- c. Next meeting scheduled for February 17th at 11:00 am at the Town Hall
 - i. We will take a field trip to the tree houses at the beginning of next meeting
 - ii. Business presentation – Allen to talk about tree houses