



Ocoee River Recreation and Economic Development Fund Board
March 27, 2025 Meeting Minutes
***1:00 p.m. Central Time**
The Nashville Room
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave, 3rd Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Roll Call:
 Quorum ✓

Voting Members	Attendance
Macy Brower	Present
Carlo Smith	Present
Ryan Cooke	Present
Angelo Giansante	Present
Lamar Davis	Present
Lynne McClary	Present
Drew Freeman	Present
Mayor Robby Hatcher	Present
Tim Henderson	Absent
Additional Attending	
Deputy Comm Tidwell	Present
Deputy Comm Carlton	Present
Rep. Dan Howell	Present
Sen. Tom Hatcher	Present
Rob Sherrill	Present
Brandon Wear	Absent

Also in attendance: Keith Jenkins, Sara Page, Kari Moates, Amanda Latham, Travis Stover, Director Kim Moore, Christina Treglia, Brian Bivins, Scott Grammer, Robin Robertson, Todd James, Blair Beaty, Taylor Barnard, Jason Sublette

Vice Chair Keith Jenkins gavelled the meeting to order. Chairman Dan Howell was delayed due to legislative session.

1. Motion to nominate Ryan Cooke as vice chair:
 - 1st: Lamar Davis
 - 2nd: Angelo Giansante
 - All approve

2. Motion to approve September 30, 2024, Minutes:

- 1st: Angelo Giansante
- 2nd: Lamar Davis
- All approve

3. Motion to approve December 5, 2024, Marketing Committee Minutes and March 3, 2025 Marketing Committee Minutes

- 1st: Angelo Giansante
- 2nd: Carlo Smith
- All approve

4. ORRED Fund Balance Report – Angelo Giansante

Total revenues as of January 31st, 2025: \$775,171.38

Total expenditures: \$443,582.20

Net change in fund balance: \$331,589.18.

Total: \$1,998,466.46

- a) Lynne McClary questioned: The “third party processional and admin services” is where the marketing expenses are included in these totals? Angelo Giansante confirmed this is correct.
- b) Ryan Cooke questioned: When we base the amount of income we had taken in to calculate our CAP numbers it was \$669,943.23. Why is that number not on these budget reports? Kari Moates responded: Based on the way the reports are pulled some numbers fall within a 12-month calendar year while others fall within the fiscal year of July 1st through June 30th.

5. Polk Co. Reimbursement 2024 Rafting Season – Ryan Cooke

Motion to reimburse Polk County for the cost they incurred on rafting customers based on the middle Ocoee \$.18 / customer at 136,167 customers for a total of \$24,510.06.

- 1st: Ryan Cooke
- 2nd: Angelo Giansante
- All approve

6. Polk Co. Chamber of Commerce Funds -- Ryan Cooke

- a) Lynne McClary has volunteered to recuse herself from votes regarding Chamber of Commerce funds.
- b) Angelo Giansante questioned: Are we giving the Chamber enough money? Are we “capped” at \$10,000? Christina Treglia clarified limits have changed recently to allow for \$25,000 without sending out for bids/invoicing.
- c) Is it possible for the board to pre-approve a set amount of funding, allowing the subcommittee to approve individual Chamber of Commerce projects as they are proposed, provided they fall within the pre-approved budget?
 - a. Per Sara Page: since the board wishes to enable the Chamber and subcommittee to make timely decisions between full board meetings, the board could approve a set amount of funding for the Chamber. As part of that motion, the Chamber would be required to report back on how the funds were used. The board doesn't necessarily need to authorize the subcommittee to approve anything only the main dollar amount.
- d) Motion to approve an extra \$10,000 to the Polk County Chamber of Commerce in addition to the normal funds they receive to expend the money as they see fit based on the plan from the chamber.
- e) Motion to approve \$9,995.00 be given to the Polk County Chamber of Commerce to be used as the chamber sees fit, billboards etc.

- 1st: Ryan Cooke
- 2nd: Lamar Davis
- All approve (with Lynne McClary recused)

7. Meeting Notifications -- Ryan Cooke

- a) Request to share subcommittee board meeting invitations, minutes and more to whole board for their reference and to share information with others.

8. Marketing Contract Discussion..... Keith Jenkins

- b) Keith Jenkins: Recent national data shows a 6% to 10% decline in whitewater rafting and related recreational activities. In contrast, visitation numbers for the Ocoee River remained stable or slightly increased, suggesting that some of the marketing efforts by Liquid Spark are having a positive impact. With the current contract set to conclude in approximately 13 months, this may be an appropriate time for the board to begin considering next steps.

c) Ryan Cooke requests the need to revise the composition of subcommittees to reflect the addition of new board members over the past year.

d) Motion to appoint additional members to the subcommittee: Lynne McClary and Carlo Smith, joining the two remaining existing members, Lamar Davis and Angelo Giansante

- 1st: Ryan Cook
- 2nd: Lamar Davis
- All approve (with L. McClary passing her vote)

e) Motion to move Carlo Smith to a voting member instead of advisory member:

- 1st: Ryan Cooke
- 2nd: Lamar Davis
- All approve (with C. Smith passing his vote)

f) A motion was made to divide the agenda item into two separate motions to allow for clearer discussion and decision-making on each

- 1st: Lynne McClary
- 2nd: Angelo Giansante
- All approve

g) First motion to approve influencer campaign with existing funds

- 1st: Carlo Smith
- 2nd: Angelo Giansante
- Approved with Lynne McClary & Ryan Cooke voting No.

h) Second motion to approve photo shoot on the upper section with existing funds

- 1st: Carlo Smith
- 2nd: Angelo Giansante
- All approve

9. Rules Update Sara Page

- a) Rulemaking hearing on Ocoee rules 4/2/25 at 1:00pm eastern time at the Chattanooga Environmental Field Office (1301 Riverfront Pkwy, Chattanooga) and virtually by searching the Secretary of State's website for TDEC notifications for rulemaking.
- b) If you have comments to share on the rules, please submit them to Sara Page by 4/4/25.

10. Other Business..... Chairman Howell

- a) Ryan Cooke asked the board if it's able to "purchase or hold" permits.
 - a. No purchasing of permits per Sara Page.
 - i. There is a moratorium on new permits so absent an "application for transfer," they are inherently held.
 - ii. The rulemaking, if it passes, provides a procedure for the Commissioner to determine when application windows are open and closed. This would give the department some authority to close applications and choice on when to reopen.
 - iii. If Ocoee management witnesses any outfitters on the river without a permit or knows of those not up to date on their paperwork, they'll be turned away from conducting business.
 - iv. Angelo Giansante: since outfitters are not currently operating at full capacity, the decline in the number of permits should not impact the number of guests they are able to take down the river.
 - b. No rafting on Nolichucky this year & Pigeon will begin later in year.
 - c. Ryan Cooke: in 2008 Ocoee outfitters rafted 269,574 customers vs 2024 when they only rafted 136,167. Until the river gets back to that point, there should not be a need for 24 permits. The outfitters that are in business can meet the needs of the customers.
 - d. Angelo Giansante: In reference to Ryan Cooke's point, it is noted that in 2008, there were only 18 outfitters actively operating and available to customers. Limiting revenue to outfitters by allowing more permits will only create safety issues because of budget restraints.
 - e. Commissioner Tidwell: no intent from the Commissioner's office to add/issue or draw in more permits.
- b) Ryan Cooke asked for clarification on money still owed to the board. Are there any outfitters owing money?
 - a. Angelo Giansante: there is still some owed, all has been reported.

There is an active plan to recover owed revenue.

Sara Page: for the current situation, a settlement agreement has been executed that would give us the authority to issue severe consequences. New rulemaking should give clearer authority to suspend permit from operating and to pursue revocation.

- c) Christina Treglia: Ryan Cooke participated in the First Annual Outdoor Day on the Hill
- d) Lynne McClary: Chamber of Commerce actively targeting marketing and increasing research marketing toward hurricane hit area in east TN.
- e) Sara Page: Lamar Davis's outfitter position expiring 6/30/25, so Angelo Giansante will be sharing out to all permitted outfitters the application to apply to be a board member. Lamar Davis will have the option to seek reappointment also.

11. Schedule Fall Meeting.....Chairman Howell

Scheduled for September 18th, 2025, at Hiwassee SP Office local time of 1:00pm eastern

Adjournment @ 2:08pm