

**Minutes**  
**Page County Tourism Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**July 12, 2023**

**Members Present**

Karen Riddle, Chairwoman / District 2  
Randy Howan, Vice Chairman / District 3  
Brittany Montgomery, District 1  
Bart Price, District 4  
J.D. Cave, At-Large  
Helen Morton, Industry Representative

**Staff Present**

Nina Fox, Economic Development and Tourism Director  
Rebecca Armstrong, Communications and Marketing Coordinator

**Others Present**

Bill Huffman, Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors / Luray Caverns

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Karen Riddle called to order the regular meeting of the Page County Tourism Council at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, in the Board of Supervisors' Room, located on the second floor of the Page County Government Center at 103 S. Court St. in Luray.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Councilman Price **moved** to adopt the July 12, 2023 meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Cave and carried unanimously.

**Special Welcome: Brittany Montgomery**

Chairwoman Riddle welcomed Brittany Montgomery as a new member of the Page County Tourism Council, representing District 1. Montgomery told fellow council members that she was excited to join the group. The Luray resident works with a vacation rental company, managing and cleaning Page Valley properties.

**Action Matters**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A **motion** made by Councilman Cave to approve the meeting minutes of June 14, 2023 as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Morton, passed unanimously.

## Old Business

### **virginia.org banner/mobile footer ads**

The council reviewed a banner ad promoting Page Valley on the state's visitor website, [virginia.org](http://virginia.org). The monthly click-thru banner ads began on July 1 and will serve as the hero image on the site's regional Shenandoah Valley landing page ([www.virginia.org/places-to-visit/regions/shenandoah-valley/](http://www.virginia.org/places-to-visit/regions/shenandoah-valley/)) through December 2023. Also featured are mobile footer ads promoting Page Valley as Virginia's Cabin Capital. Those ads, which appear on mobile devices, currently link to Page Valley's cabin page at [www.pagevalley.org/places-to-stay/cabins/](http://www.pagevalley.org/places-to-stay/cabins/).

### **Page County VA250 Committee**

The council discussed the official formation of a Page County VA250 Committee. A resolution to support America's 250th commemoration by forming a VA250 (<https://va250.org/about/>) committee and begin planning for statewide commemorations in the coming years was approved by the Page County Board of Supervisors on Nov. 7, 2022. Fox reported that she and Armstrong recently met with Rod Graves, Senior Vice President of the Luray Caverns Corp. and local historian, to discuss serving as vice chairman of Page County's committee. Councilman Price and Councilwoman Montgomery both volunteered to serve on the committee as tourism council representatives.

### **Taste of the Valley report**

Fox reported that this year's installment of Taste of the Valley, held on June 17 at the Page Valley Fairgrounds in Luray, saw increased attendance. The event, presented through a partnership between the Page County Office of Economic Development and Tourism and the Page Valley Fair Association, made more money through ticket sales compared to 2022, said Fox. She noted that because advertising costs increased this year, overall margins were not as high. Fox reported that plans are underway to continue growing the annual event and that 80 percent of 2023 vendors indicated in a survey that they would like to return in 2024.

### **Calling All Families update**

Fox reported that a "Calling All Families" campaign — a digital and social media campaign open to families and influencers — drew more than 70 responses. Four were selected for interviews via Zoom for a chance to vacation in Page Valley, in exchange agreeing to have the trip filmed and photographed, and two families were selected. The first family — a mother and father with four young children from Vienna — recently stayed at Red Gate Cabin in Page Valley, visiting local attractions including Luray Caverns' garden maze and ropes course and Storybook Trail. A second family is scheduled to visit this fall.

## New Business

### **Visitor Guide production and distribution**

Fox reported that she is still working with the Virginia Tourism Corp. to distribute Page Valley guides through the state's in-bound program, noting that DMOs are given complimentary placement in Virginia rest stops and welcome centers. Fox noted that distribution through Northern Virginia was priced at \$14,256 for 10,000 guides, but recommended funding the distribution of 40,000 copies. She noted that the guide's creative and a portion of distribution costs are funded through ARPA Tourism Recovery dollars and said that about \$25,000 is needed to distribute 40,000 copies.. Councilman Cave made a **motion**, seconded by Councilwoman Montgomery, to recommend that the Page County Board of Supervisors approve the allocation of \$25,000 in TOT funds for the distribution of 40,000 copies of the Page Valley Visitor Guide and that ARPA Tourism Recovery funds, as approved by the state, be applied toward other distribution and production costs.

### **Event venue property discussion**

Following a July 10 property tour led by Jeff and Daphne Dinges, tourism council members discussed a proposed event venue in Stanley that's owned by Mr. and Mrs. Dinges. Council members noted that the proposed venue during the tour and during discussions with Mr. and Mrs. Dinges was referenced as a community event space. For that reason, the tourism council by consensus agreed not to write a letter for or against the project. The council by consensus recommended that the Page County Economic Development Authority review the project and that Page County Director of Economic Development and Tourism Nina Fox draft a letter to Mr. And Mrs. Dinges.

### **Director's Report**

Fox reported that the EDA and its agriculture subcommittee continues to look for a location for a proposed meat processing facility in Page County and that support from surrounding communities will solidify it as a Shenandoah Valley solution rather than only the Page Valley. She said that the project could potentially be eligible for about \$100,000 in grant funding in September. Fox reported that she was working with the Town of Luray to schedule a meeting regarding earmarked TOT funds. She said that economic development and tourism specialist English Henry recently met with staff at the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center to begin a collaboration utilizing the CRM for [pagevalley.org](http://pagevalley.org).

### **Open Public Comments**

Bill Huffman, member of the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors and Director of Public Relations for Luray Caverns, noted that during a recent meeting at the Luray Town Office with the Luray Downtown Initiative, several community members asked about visitor guides. Huffman said that Luray as a whole was feeling "less represented and loved" in Page Valley's marketing efforts. Armstrong noted that four pages promoting the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah were recently added to the Page Valley Visitor Guide and that those pages were not included in a draft digital version previously shared with Huffman. Councilwoman Morton noted the importance of sharing the quarterly industry partner newsletter by email with stakeholders. The tourism council by consensus asked that a staff member reach out to Jackie Fox Wood of the Luray Downtown Initiative and request that she share the industry partner newsletter with community members in Luray.

### **Council Members' Time**

Council members commended Riddle as the group's 2023-24 chairwoman.

### **Adjourn**

A **motion** made by Councilwoman Morton to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Cave, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at about 5:15 p.m.