Downtown Boone Development Association

February Board Meeting – February 24, 2026
8:30 a.m. – Jones House

Board Members Present: Suzanne Livesay, Joe Lynch, Renee Boughman, Fulton Lovin (virtually), Jordan Humler, Stephanie Boozer (virtually), Kendra Sink, Melody Pineda (virtually), Julia Moretz and Megan Kevorkian

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody and Brad Farthing

MSD Members Present: Hope Thingelstad, Kevin Mendoza (F.A.R.M. Café) and David Stuart (F.A.R.M. Café)

Call to Order

At 8:40 Kendra called the meeting to order.

Announcements

Lane opened the meeting and shared two brief updates.

First, she provided an update on the upcoming Odyssey of the Mind event, which will be held the weekend of March 28. Organizers anticipate approximately 1,500 participants and roughly 3,000 total attendees on campus that weekend. Lane is working with event organizers to develop a one-page informational sheet highlighting downtown businesses, along with coupons and discounts to encourage visitors to explore downtown Boone. She noted that she has received limited responses from businesses thus far and would like to include at least six offers. Kendra and Joe expressed interest, and Lane will follow up with them after the meeting.

Second, Lane shared that Jessica Mitchell from Planning and Inspections reached out regarding the Stoneman's Raid Civil War Trails marker and expressed gratitude for DBDA's financial support of the project. Planning is underway for the marker's unveiling, and Board members will be invited to attend. Jessica also offered an opportunity for a Board member to speak during the event. Lane will continue to share details as plans are finalized and will confirm whether any Board member would like to provide remarks.

Request for Approval of February Agenda

Lane noted that she reached out to Real Boone Studios regarding the proposed parking videos included in the work plan and requested that a discussion be added at the end of the Organizational section to review that conversation.

Jordan made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Renee and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of January Minutes

Jordan made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Renee seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Budget Retreat Minutes

Renee noted that the word "manager" was misspelled in the second paragraph. Julia added that she was in attendance at the meeting but was not listed in the minutes.

Renee made a motion to approve the minutes with the two suggested corrections. The motion was seconded by Jordan and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements

Jordan inquired about the Office Equipment line item and why it was overspent. Lane explained that the overage was due to the purchase of a new desktop computer. Following a brief discussion regarding the computer purchase, Jordan made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Joe and passed unanimously.

Organizational

Request for Approval of Updated NC Main Street Work Plan

Lane opened by noting that she had refined the work plan following the strategic planning session, primarily cleaning up language with no significant changes to the content. She shared her excitement about the proposed Downtown Boone 101 training sessions, noting that there has already been interest in the program and that she plans to use several upcoming presentations to further develop the content.

Kendra suggested offering branded swag as part of the training. Lane agreed and added that she hopes to incorporate the business guide that has been discussed for some time.

Kendra also noted that a parking lot currently closed after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends could potentially be made available to support downtown businesses. Suzanne asked Fulton for his thoughts on how to encourage property owners to offer their parking. Fulton shared that he initially saw the need during special events but has since expanded availability to daily use. He acknowledged that opening private lots is not always straightforward and may present challenges, noting that some property owners may be hesitant.

Following a brainstorming discussion about private lots downtown, Lane stated that she would identify the property owners and begin outreach.

With no further discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the work plan. The motion was seconded by Megan and passed unanimously.

Update on ARC Non-Profit Board Development Grant

Lane noted that the grant application is due Friday and that she hopes to submit it today. She acknowledged that the process has been extensive and shared concern that, because several components require Requests for Proposals and therefore do not yet have fixed costs, there may be questions regarding the budget. She explained that issuing RFPs is necessary to comply with procurement best practices for the initiatives being proposed.

There was a brief discussion regarding reporting requirements and whether personnel costs would be covered, noting that some reporting responsibilities could potentially be assigned to the proposed part-time position.

Kendra inquired about the status of the part-time position and recalled that the interim Town Manager had been supportive. Lane shared that she has discussed the position with Dale and that he is supportive. She noted that while the marketing/communications strategy and leadership training may utilize a significant portion of the grant funds, funding was intentionally set aside during the strategic planning session to support the part-time position if grant funds are not available.

Kendra also noted that Sherry Adams has expressed strong support for both the addition of the staff position and the proposed change in Lane's title from Coordinator to Director. Jordan asked if there had been any progress on the title change. Lane stated that she and Dale have not yet had an opportunity to discuss it further in depth, though Dale has acknowledged it and indicated that he is continuing to work through it.

Lane added that she was encouraged that ARC identified the need for part-time assistance, which aligns with recommendations from NC Main Street and strengthens the rationale for the proposed staffing changes.

Suzanne, Jordan, and Kendra expressed their willingness to provide letters of support if needed. Kendra added that during the strategic planning session, Dalton appeared receptive to and supportive of the proposed changes. Jordan emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum.

With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion of NC Main Street Conference Attendance
Lane noted that there is one hotel room and registration funding still available for the NC Main Street Conference. She briefly reviewed the proposed travel plan.

Kendra shared that she is willing to attend but would step aside if another Board member was interested. Suzanne asked for clarification as to whether anyone else wished to attend and noted that, if not, the group would move forward with confirming Kendra's attendance.

No other Board members expressed interest, and Kendra confirmed that she was happy to attend.
With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Request for Approval of Proposed 2026-2027 Budget
Lane opened by noting that, aside from items identified in the work plan, specifically parking signage, no significant changes had been made to the budget since the retreat. She explained that for planning purposes, she prefers to outline specific projects in advance so funding can be committed and projects can move forward smoothly. She added that if additional projects arise during the year, the Board can allocate funding at monthly meetings as needed.

Kendra inquired whether the pole supplies needed for Howard Street had been incorporated into the upcoming budget. Lane responded that she still needs to obtain cost estimates and begin planning accordingly. She noted that those expenses would fall under streetscape improvements, which currently holds the largest allocation of funds, and referenced the contractual obligation with the Town related to those funds.

Kendra asked whether the organization has spent the full 30% allocation in a given year and, if not, whether that presents a concern. Lane stated that the full amount has not been spent recently due to the near completion of sidewalk work and explained that unspent funds roll into the undesignated fund balance.

Jordan inquired why the organization is paying for Canva when discounted or free options are available to nonprofits. Lane thanked Jordan for raising the issue and noted that the account was established during a lapse in nonprofit status and that she will work to update it.

With no further discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the proposed 2026–2027 budget. The motion was seconded by Renee and passed unanimously.

Discussion of Real Boone Studio Proposal
Lane opened by noting that, while updating the work plan, she reached out to Real Boone Studios regarding the proposed parking videos. She shared that the initial conversation was positive and that the goals of the videos would be to clarify how parking works downtown and to humanize parking staff. A discussion followed regarding potential communication strategies.

Lane reported that Real Boone Studios submitted a proposal with significant associated costs and reviewed those estimates with the Board. There was general consensus that it would be prudent to seek additional quotes for the initiative. Lane clarified that no decision was needed at this time, but noted that as the Board develops a broader marketing and communications strategy, a parking communications initiative could align well with that effort.

Suzanne suggested reaching out to the producer of the Boonerang documentary, and Megan recommended identifying a professional who specializes in social media, noting that it may be more cost-effective. Suzanne also recommended contacting Second Story Media, and Renee shared that the firm had previously completed a successful campaign for F.A.R.M. Café.

Kendra stated that before launching a new marketing and communications strategy, it would be wise to establish full oversight of DBDA's social media platforms and suggested that the proposed part-time position assume responsibility for that work. Megan agreed, noting the value of having someone directly involved in DBDA operations manage social media channels. Kendra expressed appreciation for the Town's support but shared that she believes social media oversight should be more closely aligned with DBDA initiatives and goals, noting that the current approach feels unintentional. Suzanne and Renee briefly shared their experiences working with Second Story Media.

Lane reiterated that her intent was to gather feedback on whether the Board wished to pursue parking communications as outlined in the work plan. Kendra added that parking signage details may need to be finalized prior to developing a communications campaign. The discussion concluded with a general desire to pursue full oversight of DBDA's social media moving forward.

Promotions
Discussion of Downtown Restaurant Week Planning
Lane shared that she was recently contacted by Natalie Harkey with the Watauga Education Foundation regarding a potential partnership for Downtown Restaurant Week, modeled after a similar collaboration in Catawba County. Lane noted that expanding Restaurant Week is included in the current work plan and suggested this partnership could also provide an opportunity to more efficiently utilize parking

passes.
Kendra stated that she thought the partnership was a good idea. Lane added that, if the Board was supportive of exploring the concept further, she would plan to meet with WEF Board members to outline a potential framework and report back at the March meeting.
There was general consensus from the Board to explore the partnership. The dates for Restaurant Week were confirmed as May 18–24.

Update on Blue Ridge Food Tour
Lane shared that Jenny Banes, owner of Blue Ridge Food Tour, invited Lane and other media/tourism partners to participate in the tour. Lane provided an overview of her experience and noted that Jenny is considering expanding to an evening tour option.
Lane concluded by sharing that she believes the tour is a positive addition to downtown and invited Board members to reach out with any follow-up questions.

Update on DBDA Google Profile Photography
Lane reported that she and Steve had planned to meet the previous week regarding updated photography for the DBDA Google Profile, but the meeting was postponed due to a work conflict. Lane noted that she hopes to move forward with Steve on updating the photography and will bring a proposal to the Board in March if available.

Design

Update on Alleyway Public Art Project
Lane thanked the Board members who attended the joint Design/Promotions Committee meeting the previous week. She shared that the committee reviewed 30 submissions and narrowed the field to two finalists, pending additional follow-up before a final selection is made.
Lane noted that Amber Bateman, Director of the Watauga Arts Council, who attended virtually, has been tasked with following up with the artists.
Lane also shared that she is working with Mosca Design and the adjacent property owners to finalize details related to the lighting component of the project. She stated that she will continue to keep the Board updated as the project progresses.

There was a brief discussion regarding recent graffiti activity, specifically repeated tagging of “IHOP” or “IHOPPER.” Fulton shared that he has filed a police report. Lane noted that she had not yet received an update but would follow up with the Town’s Downtown Officer.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project
Jordan noted that recent weather conditions appear to have impacted construction progress. Lane agreed that weather has slowed progress but shared that crews are back on site this week.

Lane reported that a water line installation is planned at Appalachian Street and that the team is hoping to coordinate that work during the University’s spring break to minimize disruption. She added that crews continue working on the duct bank and anticipate beginning additional duct bank installation within the next one to two weeks.

Lane also expressed appreciation for the construction crews’ efforts to address potholes, noting that a significant amount of gravel has been used since the start of the project to keep the roadway as passable as possible.

Lane concluded by stating that she will share an updated project timeline once it becomes available.

Call for Adjournment