

**Keep Carter County Beautiful (KCCB) Board Meeting Minutes**

Chamber Conference Room, 615 W. Elk Avenue, Elizabethton & Zoom

November 20, 2024, at noon

***Board Members Present:*** Don Hlavaty, Lisa Vezzosi, Seth Hice, Ed Jordan, Dave Nanney and Ed Basconi

***Board Members Absent:*** Caleb Krebs, Ross Garland, Simon Maddock, Mike Simerly and Melinda Maddock

***Guests Present:*** Mary Ellen Hlavaty

***Call to Order:*** Lisa Vezzosi opened the meeting at 12:01 pm. A quorum was not present. An opening prayer was given by Ed Jordan and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Don Hlavaty.

***Approval of today’s agenda:*** A **motion to approve today’s meeting agenda** was made by Ed Basconi, seconded by Don Hlavaty, and **unanimously approved by the members present.**

***Approval of last month’s meeting minutes*:** A **motion to approve the October 23, 2024, meeting minutes** was made by Don Hlavaty, seconded by Ed Basconi, and **unanimously approved by the members present.**

***Public Comments:*** None.

***Next Board Meeting:***The next KCCB board meeting will be on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at noon in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 615 West Elk Avenue, Elizabethton, and available by Zoom.

***KCCB Treasurer Report:***

* The October month-end balance was $14,897.09.
* October revenues are $10,868.42. This includes 2024-2025 Carter County funding of $5,000.00, City of Elizabethton 2024-2025 funding of $3,750.00 (first 2 quarter payments of $1875.00 each), a refund of the fraudulent $9.49 Tik Tok charge on KCCB debit card account credited by Northeast Credit Union, and Microsoft Benevity donation of $2,108.93 specifically designated for *“Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery and Relief”*. The Microsoft Benevity donation includes 125 hours Melinda and Simon Maddock worked at the Hurricane Relief Center on behalf of KCCB and donations received by Melinda and Simon Maddock’s Microsoft fellow team members and other Microsoft employees via the Microsoft Benevity program to Hurricane Disaster Relief in KCCB’s name. **These funds will be specifically added to the KCCB budget as “Special Funds” and these funds will be exclusively used for Disaster Relief and Recovery projects in the coming year.**
* We continue to have issues with the Northeast Credit Union debit card. Lisa received a scam call phishing for information on out of state fraudulent charges. Don Hlavaty contacted the credit union but security is sub-optimal so it may be time to change banking institutions. Seth suggested another banking institution with authentication codes to improve security measures. We will review banking options.
* October expenditure is $926.94. This includes the $40.00 participation fee for the Elizabethton Christmas parade, $250.00 for the Elizabethton High School Environmental AP class project, $192.11 for the purchase of 3 replacement trees on the Tweetsie Trail including fertilizer/soil/mulch. Also included in October’s expenditure is $444.83 reimbursement to the Maddocks for Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief supplies purchased as KCCB. This expense will be itemized in the “Special Funds” designation of the KCCB Budget exclusively used for Disaster Relief and Recovery projects. All the expenditure is reported on the spreadsheet and Don Hlavaty will add the Special Funds as a line item with notes for funds used.
* November expenditures so far include $26.49 in office supplies for card stock to print KCCB 2025 Calendars. We also need to order more stickers for use next year (previously approved at the last meeting).

***Review of Previous Events:***

* The Tweetsie Trail tree replacement project went well. We got a good price for the trees from Evergreen Nursery, and they were easy to install in the holes from the removed dead trees.
* Lisa Vezzosi reminded everyone to log their hours on the KCCB website for both our trash pickups and all Hurricane Helene Recovery Relief projects as well. In addition to Melinda and Simon Maddock’s volunteer hours at the Carter County Hurricane Relief center, Ed Basconi volunteered at the Bristol Hurricane Relief Distribution Center loading/unloading trucks of supplies and other KCCB volunteers logged their work hours on the KCCB website. Lisa Vezzosi and/or Don Hlavaty will log hours/projects on the Keep America Beautiful and Keep Tennessee Beautiful website portals for KCCB credit and reimbursement recognition/credits.
* Dave Nanney reported that Elizabethton Parks & Recreation is partnering with Elizabethton High School AP class to develop a “Landscaping Plan” for both the new Parks & Recreation Tetrick building and restoring and beautifying flood damaged areas. The flooding washed away many trees, plants, and park structures/equipment including the mulch, grass, concrete, and pathways. He suggested we use some of KCCB’s designated “Special Funds” and Keep America Beautiful’s matching reimbursement funds (up to $10,000.00) for purchase of plants, trees, lost/damaged items (trash bins, picnic tables, trail signs, etc.) that would not be covered by County/City recovery plans. We can submit projects to KAB for reimbursement approval funds for education, recycling, litter cleanups, beautification, and hurricane damage restoration. If approved, project expenses would be reimbursed up to $10.000.00. We could re-plant trees that KCCB had in the parks and Linear Trail and add pollinator gardens to the restored areas. He will share upcoming plans and projects in next year’s meetings.
* Carter County Hazardous Waste Day 10/12 cancelled by the state due to flooding. It may be rescheduled to a spring date due to recovery projects.
* The Keep Tennessee Beautiful “No Trash November Cleanup” event held on 11/16 was a success. We had 18 volunteers who picked up 26 bags of trash and larger debris (car bumper, folding chair, bucket of mystery fluid perhaps used oil). We cleaned the Tweetsie Trail from the Snap-On trailhead through town to Bemberg Road at the high school. There was also television coverage by Johnson City WJHL and Lisa Vezzosi was interviewed. The coverage was shown on several WJHL station news reports over the weekend.

***Proposed Events and Projects:***

* At the KAB No Trash November event, Caleb Krebs identified four (4) homeless encampments that could be cleaned up as a future project in partnership with the City of Elizabethton. He will discuss with city officials and create an event plan.
* The Elizabethton Christmas Parade is scheduled for December 14th at 6pm. The parade route has been changed due to road/bridge closures from flooding. The new route will be along G Street from Bemberg Drive to Roan Street. The parade staging will be along Bemberg Drive and Jason Witten Drive at Elizabethton High School. Hudson Drive will be open for parking and lining up. We decided to carry our lighted banner like previous years and any KCCB volunteers are welcome to join us. Seth Hice has a prior commitment to direct traffic for the parade as an “Elf costumed” Chamber of Commerce employee. We will meet at 5pm along Jason Witten Way. We discussed handing out candy vs give-a-ways (stickers/pencils) and Don Hlavaty decided he will hand out candy at his own expense even though it may be a litter issue, and anyone is welcome to join him.
* Lisa Vezzosi addressed the purchase of seeds for next spring. In addition to our Pollinator Gardens, we will need seeds for the Carter County Landfill, Roan Mountain Erik Anderson Park, the Seed Bank at the library and any other beautification projects. We had 700 seed packets made by the Elizabethton High School Environmental AP class last year and still have some paper/envelope supplies left over to use this next year. We will need several pounds and can order a variety of spring/summer/fall blooming options. Ed Basconi will research seed options and pricing for the next meeting. Dave Nanney will have Parks & Recreation staff mow the pollinator garden flower beds for winter, but staff have been busy decorating for Christmas and Candle Lighting event next week.
* There will be a Farmer’s Christmas Market at Kiwanis Park on Tuesday 12/3 4-7pm. There will be crafters and produce vendors with holiday items for sale. The last Fall event was canceled due to the flooding, so this is the rescheduled last event planned for the season.
* Lisa Vezzosi emailed information from Caleb Krebs regarding flood restoration projects, storm water management and information for beautification projects from TN state/county organizations. Please review the information and we can plan 2025 projects and partnerships at the January meeting. As we receive information on river restoration and cleanup events, we will forward it to our members via the KCCB website and emails. Caleb Krebs also sent information on Kingsport project where they painted information at sewer drains to inform citizens storm water drains into lakes and rivers and to not pollute. Could be a new 2025 project. Don Hlavaty expressed a concern about paint on pavement and noted other cities paint dumpsters about littering.
* We surveyed damage along the Doe and Watauga Rivers last week, and it is devastating. Damage in the towns, national forest and along the Tweetsie Trail extension is extensive and will probably take years to recover. Don Hlavaty suggested that when Caleb Krebs and Dave Nanney plan cleanup and restoration projects with the city and county, please keep in mind our volunteers are available to help. Many KCCB volunteers have expressed interest in these events and helping the community in any way possible.
* Caleb Krebs is also researching cigarette disposal options within the city, perhaps purchase of cigarette butt containers on downtown streets and businesses. Cigarette butts are a huge litter problem in Carter County. KAB has a cigarette disposal program available but the criterion for participation is labor intensive (they provide containers, but litter must be collected, weighed, physically sent to KAB for recycling and only then will expenses be approved/reimbursed). Lisa Vezzosi suggested we could purchase our own cigarette containers/buckets for personal or commercial use and label them with KCCB stickers. We could partner with local businesses to provide containers so that the business would then be responsible for properly dispose of litter. KAB offers for sale pocket ashtrays for personal use. This may assist with proper disposal versus littering. Don Hlavaty said we should advertise cigarettes/vaping items as litter at both point of sale and places of use/disposal to educate the public that this is trash/littering (do not litter – cigarette butts are litter).
* Lisa Vezzosi discussed “garden signs” that fit on a short display post to advertise KCCB versus our current cardboard KCCB yard signs. These are made of printed fabric and more durable than cardboard. They could be printed with our KCCB & KTB/KAB logos and any educational message (like do not litter). They cost $4.00 per 100, which could qualify as a project for reimbursement. We could use them at events (Farmers Market/Information booths) or at our Pollinator Gardens/Trails. Another item is painted posts as informational signs, they are painted on 4 sides and advertise and provide educational messages at parks, trails, or buildings. Elizabethton schools/libraries have similar posts on their property. We will propose projects at the January meeting because we do not have a quorum for a motion/vote. Don Hlavaty still has concerns that these will become litter and says we should use more permanent options or use them only when we are present to post/remove at events.
* Lisa Vezzosi also discussed the need to connect County Roads management to get the rest of our county wayfinding signs installed. Installation was delayed at some sites due to construction at the County courthouse and Covered Bridge Park. She will contact the county for a project plan on road signs. Ed Basconi suggested we go ahead and install signs that do not require the road department.

***New Business:***

* Ed Jordan donated a generator to the Hurricane Helene Relief. We will add disaster relief donations for credit. He also caught a high school student littering in the neighborhood and spoke to the High School Principal about students littering on the grounds and surrounding streets. He was able to identify the student for disciplinary actions and told Ed that the high school will be conducting cleanups and education to the student body on littering as restitution. Ed Jordan also suggested another plant/tree planting for next fall since this year’s event was so successful.
* Ed Basconi again discussed our need to get a designated person or purchase services to update our Facebook pages. Advertising always helps recruit more volunteers. KCCB volunteer Suzette Clark told us she re-posted the KCCB No Trash November event on her personal Facebook page and several volunteers at the event mentioned seeing her post and decided to join the event. However, she is not interested in maintaining our Facebook website at this time. Dave Nanney said he may have a Parks & Recreation student employee doing marketing work and may be willing to update our Facebook website. He will discuss this with the employee and report back to us at the next meeting about a possible arrangement/project plan for next year. If interested, he will have the employee attend the next meeting via Zoom.
* Lisa Vezzosi reminded everyone we have enough cleanup supplies (trash bags/grabbers/gloves/vests) to loan to other people/groups doing cleanup events, including Parks & Recreation or other county departments. Caleb Krebs said at last month’s meeting that he also has supplies available through Stormwater Management that could be used as needed for events.
* Lisa Vezzosi discussed the replacement of the Roan Mountain Trash Trout Trap lost in the flooding. The waterway trash traps were purchased from Ashville Greenworks (Ashville, NC). It was installed and maintained by a local group of Carter County employees, Roan Mountain businesses/volunteer organizations (Trout Unlimited, Friends of Roan Mountain, KCCB, etc.). Carter County is working on Disaster Relief Grant funding for replacement. Fortunately, the trash trap on Buffalo Creek was not damaged. KCCB shared maintenance costs and removing trash from the trap/river for several years.
* Ed Jordan also expressed a concern about items collected at litter cleanups that require special disposal like the pail of mystery fluid at the last cleanup. Some items and materials may be considered hazardous waste and need to be handled differently from trash/litter in bags that can be placed in dumpsters. We currently have Sharps Box disposal for needles/drug paraphernalia that we bring to each event. Don Hlavaty suggested we contact both the Carter County Landfill and Elizabethton City Sanitation departments for disposal options. We may be able to dispose of waste oil at the Elizabethton city services garage.

***Adjournment:***

* A **motion was made to adjourn the meeting** by Ed Jordan, seconded by Ed Basconi, and **unanimously approved.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:12pm.

Submitted by: Mary Ellen Hlavaty, Secretary