



**Board of County Commissioners
Tourist Development
Gadsden County, Florida**

**MINUTES
Regular Public Meeting
September 16, 2013
3:30 p.m.**

Present:

Lee Garner, Chair of TDC, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector (absent)

Matt Thro, Vice – Chair of TDC, H & H Furniture

Jeff DuBree, Sportsman’s Lodge, Bed Tax Collector Lake Talquin

David Knight, Midway Councilman

Keith Dowdell, City of Quincy Commissioner

Hemant Patel, Hotel Industry (absent)

Gene Morgan, BOCC (absent)

Clarence Jackson, City of Gretna

Sonya Burns, TDC Administrator

Mary Kelly, Legacy Marketing

Terry Kelly, Legacy Marketing

Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk

Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Matt Thro, Vice - Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 3:30pm then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll was called by the Deputy Clerk and noted above.

Mr. Thro welcomed Mr. Clarence Jackson to the Council.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes (August 19, 2013)

(Matt Thro, TDC Vice-Chairman)

Amendments to the minutes were listed by Mr. Thro and Mr. DuBree for clarity. Comment concerning the City of Quincy, where Mr. Hayes said there was no mention of the City of Quincy. "Mrs. Kelly stated she had tried to reach out to Quincy before, but there was a new connection made with Mr. Hayes and that was a good thing. There was an attempt before that if it could be reflected in the minutes." There were stipulations that were given to CRA, if those could be recorded for the record being contingent upon the strategic plan, existing ad plan and submit. On page 5 of 9 IFAS, grants to come out of 2012-2013 Budget Year. Havana Merchants clarification should be total for all three events.

Deputy Clerk Wood said she would listen to audio and make necessary corrections to the minutes for clarity.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 19, 2013 WITH THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS.

2. Robert Skrob, Executive Director - Informational Presentation

Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (FADMO)

Mr. Skrob came before the Board with a powerpoint presentation and discussed ways to provide the best way to attract visitors to Florida and especially Gadsden County. The information provided was strictly information only. Florida welcomed 49.6 million visitors – an increase of 4.2 percent. He discussed County Tourism Promotion Models. Public – division with county government. Private – contract with a non-profit agency set-up by industry. Membership – similar to private but agency accepts memberships. He also mentioned the VISIT Florida Welcome Center Reservations. He said about the last 2 months they having been helping travelers make their hotel reservations with 127 reservations made in the Northwest and 19 in North Central. He discussed the Strategic Plan and the opportunity he had to look at it. He expressed its usefulness and commended the Council. He mentioned additional resources and contact people such as Tammy J. Heon (Hernando County), Carol McQueen (Levy County), and Harry Campbell (Columbia County).

Mr. DuBree said they made every effort to try to follow what is presented in the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Skrob also mentioned the FADMO meeting in Panama City Beach, FL and encouraged them to attend. He then left his contact information Robert Skrob 1390 Timberlane Road Tallahassee, FL 32312.

Mr. DuBree asked what they could do for rural communities.

Mr. Skrob said they offer a variety of resources, such as what is a pool view versus a garden view?

Mr. Jackson asked why some counties wouldn't take advantage of tourism dollars.

Mr. Skrob stated he really couldn't say, but a lot don't have hotels, so by implanting the tax would not generate a lot of funds.

Mr. Knight asked why folks would travel without booking reservations.

Mr. Skrob replied he is not sure why they would leave home without designations. He said some representatives to help navigate tourism to your county through the tourism welcome center.

Mr. DuBree asked how they are making the reservations.

Mr. Skrob said he was not sure. It's just a way to reach out to people who are in transit.

Mr. Dowdell asked where they a member of FADMO.

Mr. Skrob said yes and he was here only to provide information. He said they are not a tourism marketing company. He said they can help them connect to other counties to get insight and material.

Mr. DuBree asked what kind of advice they could give them to get real benefits.

Mr. Skrob said there are a lot of online resources trainings on the website about destinations marketing. "If you like additional contact on the newsletter, to see what other communities are doing." He said also networking at the Annual Meeting is a big help.

Mr. Thro said often they look at sales taxes as progressive taxes, things that hurt the lowest income. This is different from that it more of a use tax with bed nights. He asked had he seen a level, does it become a burden how effective the dollars are spent. Is it providing measurable or noticeable burden. He asked was he aware of any studies.

Mr. Skrob said the only study he has seen where well beyond the 13%. If you have the maximum tourist development tax of 6% as well as the maximum sales tax I think that equals 13%. He said the studies that he has seen are when New York City went to 18% and they did find at 18% there is major negative fallout from that tax level, which resulted in them bringing their tax rates back down. It hurt them mostly in the meeting market. Folks that were booking for a big convention had a chance to book in New Jersey or New York City. He said in Florida it would probably get a lot of resistance. Miami mentioned going from 6% to 7% with that penny funding the stadium renovation and putting a roof on that. There was a lot of concern that would be too much.

3. **TDC Appointee Discussion**

Peter Patel

Mr. DuBree said that he spoke with Mr. Patel about continuing his service on the TDC Board and his schedule has been the problem with attending most meetings, but added he would like to continue to serve.

Mr. Dowdell recommended that they submit Mr. Patel's name.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DOWDELL AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF MR. PETER PATEL NAME GOING BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION FOR FINAL APPROVAL TO THE TDC.

Mrs. Burn said the Mr. Patel's name would go before the County Commission for approval.

4. **Policy & Procedure Process**

(Matt Thro, TDC Vice-Chairman)

Mr. Thro commented on the Policy and Procedure Process. He said they have a cycle that is supposed be once a year, where all marketing and grant applications are in and over the course of 3 or 4 months it would go through. "Once a year is probably a little too infrequent, but if we could get to a system that was allowed plenty of time and plenty of notice for people to apply. Allow a system where would could get together and discuss and then vote. He said he was thinking twice a year. Our initial per the Strategic Plan says it, is about a 4 month process and I would suggest streamlining that where it all could occur in a 2 months, twice a year. Timeframes that I am proposing are October and March funding cycles. Where October would be the first start and that's the start of our fiscal year. Then we would look at again starting in March that gives us every 6 months we would be doing it or looking into. Application deadlines for March fund cycling be December 15 and the workshop would be the second week in January. Then the following week when the normal meeting occurs, we would actually vote and direct the person to work with our Coordinator." The next is deadline July 15 and workshop in 2nd week in August and vote the 3rd week in August. He said he would like for it to start October 1 for that funding cycle. Deadlines direct person to work with coordinators on funding.

Mr. Dowdell asked Mr. Thro did he have this policy in writing.

Mr. Thro replied it was all in the Strategic Plan where it stated once a year and it was more spread out. He added this was basically to condense to make it easier by adjusting the numbers and by adding the additional time/date to facilitate more.

Ms. Burns conveyed she would get a copy of the Strategic Plan to the Council.

Mr. Thro added that it should include all amendments that had occurred.

Mr. Knight clarified the amendments that Mr. Thro proposed.

Mr. Thro reiterated that March and October would be the funding cycles. December 15 and July 15 would be the summation deadlines. He further asked, that they be submitted to the Coordinators, so they would have a chance to review and work with them by getting everything worked out. Get a real solid marketing plan by the time they come to us in the workshop to make sure we are doing our best for all who are involved.

Mrs. Burns said the funding cycles will be advertised in all the local newspapers as well as the County and Tourism Development Website.

Mr. Knight inquired would this limit others from coming throughout the year with their applications.

Mr. Thro said the goal would be for us to get to a point where we would only do it twice a year. "We spend the rest of the time focused on following the target market and everyday stuff that we are suppose to be doing within TDC." He said he would like everyone informed so they are not missing out. I think having it every 6 months would help. He encouraged everyone to go out to their individual Boards and use any other means to get the word out in the community.

Mr. DuBree inquired about the two dates October and March. "Are there specific 6 month periods that if I had an event and I was going to apply for a grant for, are there specific dates that would spear me into a funding cycle or would I just come before this Council when I knew about my event."

Mr. Thro said they would be funding things within that. "From the deadline time, there would be interaction between the coordinator and the applicant to make sure they had started working on a plan. He corrected his previous statement by saying the deadline dates would be October and April." He pointed out this was all discussion at this point.

Mr. Jackson clarified this was just a recommendation, he is not asking for approval.

Mr. Thro said he would like to make this an actual item and vote on. He stated they are only discussing at this point.

Mr. Dowdell asked about the funding budget line item, is it going to split into half. One for the 1st funding cycle and one for the 2nd funding cycle.

Mr. Thro replied starting the year out, that would make more sense and you can transfer whatever is not used from the 1st half to the 2nd.

Mr. DuBree expressed most events take place in the Spring and they have quite a few in the fall as well. He stated he wasn't sure if there was a balance there or not.

Mr. Dowdell voiced they should make sure they don't spend it all in the 1st cycle.

Mr. DuBree said, "that was why the Strategic Plan was written once a year because we use to be

twice a year and we found there was no problem with what you are saying. He said he doesn't have a problem with twice a year, just definitely have to watch that we don't allocate all our funding in the 1st cycle and hardly have anything left in the second."

Mr. Jackson spoke, "it would be helpful if the proposal was put in writing, so they could actually hash out details, before making an actual decision."

Mr. Knight pointed out that if they had it twice a year and they were running out of funding in the middle of the cycle. He said that was why they went to the once a year cycle. He asked would that create a problem.

Mr. Thro said he could send verbiage out and they could vote at the next meeting. He said the purpose it to fully utilize the tax dollars.

Mr. DuBree said that coming out on a monthly basis, could become a problem.

Mr. Thro said they have been operating as they come and not fully utilizing the funds to the fullest extent. He said the word needs to get out and get them funding.

Mr. Dowdell said limits and exceptions should be in place.

Mr. Thro said the more time they have, the better.

Mr. DuBree said in the 6 month cycle you could shift where it's 3 months out. He said one is through grants (directly to event) and marketing and it should be known. Maybe through cover letter.

Mr. Thro said he would get everything to Sonya so they can have discussion at the next meeting with all additions added by the Council.

Mrs. Brenda Holt stated, hopefully you are marketing the whole county this year. She mentioned dates and events that don't change. "All Longstanding events will they be placed in the budget. If you don't it's going to be a problem."

Mr. Thro said, "the goal is to market the whole county everyday." He said the subcommittee members are Mr. DuBree, Mr. Dowdell, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Thro. He also asked if current correspondences would go to the Coordinators as well.

Ms. Burns said they do share the information with the Coordinators.

5. Budget Update/Discussion

(Jeff Price, Budget Analyst)

Mr. Price discussed the budget. He said there were 2 pages in the package. He discussed the revenue budget by fund. He said as to date FY 2013 Actual Revenues \$92,294 that represents 10 months. They are about 2 months delayed in getting receipts. We based the average estimate the

total year to be \$110,753. He said that is little bit more than what they had projected. "Things are going together very smoothly on that."

Mr. Thro asked where the items that were approved at the last meeting shown in these figures.

Mr. Price said that has not been done.

6. Miami Heat USA Today Information

(Matt Thro, TDC Vice-Chairman)

USA Today's Miami Heat Preview, which hits the stands in mid - October is soliciting Gadsden TDC to purchase ad space in their publication through print and a digital version to promote Gadsden as a tourism destination in their popular special advertising section.

Prices (discounted rate)

- Quarter Page - \$3,500 and 2 complimentary premium Miami Heat tickets.
- Half Page - \$6,500 and 4 complimentary premium Miami Heat tickets.
- Full Page - \$12,500 and 8 complimentary premium lower level Miami Heat tickets

Mr. Thro asked Mrs. Kelly about her recommendation.

Mary Kelly said her recommendation was no, on this item.

After Mrs. Kelly's recommendation, no other action was taken on this item.

7. FADMO Annual Meeting (2 Attendees)

(Matt Thro, TDC Vice-Chairman)

Mr. Thro said Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (FADMO), October 16 - 18, 2013 is approaching in Panama City, Florida and they are asking for two 2 attendees.

Ms. Burns said that after speaking with Chair Garner, he recommended they send Mrs. Kelly.

Mr. Thro asked Mrs. Kelly was this meeting one she felt she needed to be at.

Mrs. Kelly responded, "yes, especially since it dealt with marketing and it shows what they have to offer and they could take advantage of networking, which is pretty valuable."

Mr. Jackson asked would it just be the Coordinators and no Council members.

Mr. Thro said the Council just attended the Governor's Conference where they received praise for Gadsden having a presence so large.

Mr. Kelly said of Legacy said he was going and stated they paid half themselves.

Mr. DuBree asked what the total cost was for an individual.

Ms. Burns said the total cost is \$558 per person, the more attendees you send the less registration is.

Mr. Thro asked was there anyone else wanting to attend.

Mr. Jackson showed interest in attending the 2013 Annual Meeting.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DOWDELL AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO SEND LEGACY MARKETING (2) REPRESENTATIVES AND MR. CLARENCE JACKSON TO THE 2013 ANNUAL MEETING OF FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS, OCTOBER 16-18, 2013 AT THE WYNDHAM BAY POINT RESORT, PANAMA CITY BEACH, FL.

Awards and Presentations - None

Marketing and Funding Request

1. Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

(Stacey Hannigon, Administrative Asst. County Administrator Office)

Ms. Hannigon came before the Council to ask for funding for the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Gadsden County Courthouse. The event will take place on November 22 -23, 2013. She was last before the Council at the August 19, 2013 meeting, where she was directed to work with Mary Kelly and the Marketing Committee. It was tabled until the September 16, 2013 meeting.

Mr. Thro asked had they talked with Legacy Marketing.

Ms. Hannigon said they have communicated via email, but not a dialogue yet.

Mr. Thro added he would hate to have her come back again, but all parties need to work together. He asked the Council for their opinions.

Mr. DuBree said, "maybe there could be a discussion on what they plan on doing with Legacy Marketing and make a decision today, since we did put them off the last time."

Ms. Hannigon asked would the approval of funding be contingent upon approval of the Coordinators.

Mr. Dowdell said "he couldn't understand how they could deny our funding source, they can easily go around us and go through the County Commission and get the \$5,000. I think it behooves us as a Board to not fund the County for an event they are doing for the entire County." He said he was sure it was something that would benefit the entire County. He suggested approval.

Mr. Thro said the main goal is to maximize dollars for your event and for the County. They are trying to make sure they are doing the best for all and to make sure they meet all county and state laws. He said as far as Mr. Dowdell comment they all must follow the rules of the strategic plan for funding. He said the goal is to work with this event and make it well.

Mr. DuBree said “the County Commission has the final say so, but it is our job to make sure the funds are being spent to promote tourism.” He said they have to evaluate each event, “will it bring tourism and market in such away?” He suggested 10-15 minutes of evaluation would be well benefited.

Ms. Hannigon asked is there a loophole in the approval process, where the meeting with the Coordinators would not be necessary.

Mr. Thro said it’s just a good business practice. It’s something the County has spent money on; it’s a service for all events to use.

Ms. Hannigon pointed out the only reason she asked was at the last meeting IFAS approached the Council and they were approved for \$2,000 funding.

Mr. Thro said it was contingent upon them working with the Coordinators.

She then asked if that could happen for BOCC. She recalled her comments from the last meeting that if working with the Coordinators would get them the funding, she is open to that.

Mr. Knight suggested tentatively approving and they follow all procedures and guidelines that are in place.

Mr. Jackson said it should be approved based on same premise that you used in approving IFAS.

UPON MOTION BY MR. JACKSON AND SECOND BY MR. DOWDELL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE \$5,000 REQUEST FROM THE GADSDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE GADSDEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE CONTINGENT UPON GUIDELINES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN BEING MET.

Ms. Burns said that Ms. Hannigon is aware of stipulations of the Strategic Plan.

2. Quincy Fighting Tigers

(Richard A. Burns, Owner/Operator)

Richard A. Burns came before the Council on the Ultimate Bash Extravaganza, which would be held November 9, 2013 from 11 – 9 at the Sheriff’s Transportation Building, 6949 Ben Bostick Road. He said he was working with the Gadsden County Sheriff’s Office and the Quincy Fighting Tigers Boxing Gym for this event and it will be held at the Sheriff’s Mobile Unit Division. This event will cover bikers coming from all areas in a Poker Run, boxing, ultimate fighting, wrestling, car show, live music entertainment, food and beverages. Tavares Cloud, Ex Light Heavy Champion will be brought in and recording artist such as Janelle Nadine, Total Kaos and many more. They are anticipating

more than 5,000 people. He said they are working with Legacy Marketing on the marketing and are asking for \$10,000 to help with this event. Funds raised will benefit nonprofit organizations such as the Quincy Fighting Tigers Boxing Gym and the Recreation Department for equipment and travel expenses for kids.

Mr. Jackson asked what \$10,000 cover.

Mr. Burns said it would cover the multi-media campaign. Amateur Mixed Martial Arts (AMMA) is actual sponsoring this event and they are covering the insurance. He said at the end of the day funding would go to Recreation and Quincy Fighting Tigers. Ultimate fighting has never happened in this area.

Mr. Jackson questioned the partnering with the Sheriff's Office, he stated what would be helpful is that they have a letter of support coming from the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Burns said he didn't have a letter and offered to contact the Sheriff via phone.

Mr. Knight inquired about the number of bikers and bed nights that would be needed for this event.

Mr. Burns said they are expecting to have a huge turnout of more than 5,000 people and over 600 hotel room stays.

Mr. Knight asked what the TDC cap was.

Mr. Thro said anything over \$5,000 would need BCC approval.

Mr. DuBree said the grant application is based upon bed nights. He said the maximum amount of bed nights is \$2,500 and could come out of the grant application and other funds could come out of marketing.

Mr. Thro stated their largest approval for a single meeting was the last meeting. We usually don't give that much out per event.

Mrs. Kelly said he did contact her about helping devise a plan. She mentioned there was a boxing event put on for the first time last year by a private boxing organization and they drew about 2,500 people. "Marketing is big." When he contacted me about marketing plan at about \$2,500 per week to market something like this. She said they have multiple people they are marketing.

Mr. Thro pointed out funds can only be for marketing, they can't be used for other purposes.

Mrs. Kelly said he did have an expense structure sheet that someone else is handling that is part of the business plan. She said net profits 50% of profit would go Recreation and 50% Fighting Tigers.

Mr. Thro asked what the total budget for the event was.

Mr. Burns said total expense is \$6,000.

Mrs. Kelly asked could he apply for a grant, because of the tax revenue they will drive.

Mr. DuBree said they are only allowed based on bylaws to support 50% of the total budget; he has to have other revenues. He said he was not sure, because he is going by memory. He asked what else was on the schedule for that date.

Mrs. Kelly said when he says 600 rooms are booked; he is meaning commitment to stay and no other events are planned locally.

Mr. Thro stated he thought this would be a great draw and event, but the most they can give is \$5,000. He mentioned that he has discussed with Mr. Spires and he also felt it could be a great event.

Mrs. Holt recommended approval of the \$5,000 marketing and half on the grant funding, which would total \$7,500.

Mr. Thro questioned the validity of that recommendation.

Mr. DuBree proposed they give \$2,000 out of grant funding and \$2,999 out of marketing contingent upon them continuing to work with Legacy Marketing and allowing the funds to come through Legacy Marketing.

Mr. Jackson said he would like to support this but would like to have more documentation. He said he would love for him to come in and tell us how it's going to be utilized. He asked that they provide documentation.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY DOWDELL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE \$2,000 OUT OF GRANT FUNDING AND \$2,999 OUT OF MARKETING FUNDING TOTALING \$4,999 FROM THE 2013-2014 BUDGET YEAR CONTINGENT UPON THEM CONTINUING TO WORK WITH LEGACY MARKETING AND ALLOWING THE FUNDS TO COME THROUGH LEGACY MARKETING.

Public Comments and Concerns on Non-Agenda Items (3 minute limit) – None

Ms. Brenda Holt commented on travel of the Coordinator, "you need to make sure travel is included in contract, if it's not included in the actual contract, you could get yourself in trouble." She mentioned it should be checked, "because you can't, how are you are going to pay for travel if it's not in the contract."

Mr. Thro mentioned the meeting in October would not happen. He asked was there a need.

Next meeting date would be November 18, 2013.

Other TDC Business

Quincy Music Theater

Quincy Music Theater Information (FY 2013-2014)- presented for information only.

Mr. DuBree said they were one of the organizations placed in the budget.

Mary Kelly said they would be working with the Quincy Music Theater shooting some rehearsals.

Video from Gadsden County Tourism

Mary Kelly did a presentation video on some of the aspects in Gadsden County. She mentioned they want people (the community) to know they are doing things in Gadsden County. They are focused on capturing the beauty and the nature of Gadsden. "We want interviews with real people in the County." She commented each municipality would have their own video.

Mr. Dowdell asked that she get in contact with Mr. Southerland on videos that happen in Quincy. He said he would like to know how we can get Billy Dean at the amphitheater.

Ms. Brenda Holt gave her family history; she mentioned that 50% of the population is not mentioned in the video. She mentioned the Pow Wow in Chattahoochee. She said they should try to capture all history in Gadsden County, pull from each municipality Greensboro, Gretna, and Chattahoochee, all areas.

Mr. Thro said the efforts had been made and they should reach out more.

She said they need people to tell stories.

Printed Materials Available

List of Strategic Partners

List of Approved Media

TDC By-Laws

Florida Statute

***Any TDC selected nominee/appointee will be approved at the discretion of the governing body.
(Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners)***

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE COUNCIL, THE VICE-CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

MATT THRO, VICE -CHAIR

ATTEST:

BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK