

**GADSDEN COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES FOR
Monday, October 20, 2014
Special Regular Meeting: 3:30 pm**

Present:

Lee Garner, Chair of TDC, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector
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 (arrived late)
Peter Patel, Hotel Industry
Clarence Jackson, City of Gretna
Brenda Holt, BOCC (arrived late)
Lynn Badger, Bed Tax Collector – Havana
Attorney David Weiss, County Attorney
Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant
Allara Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator
Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk

1. **Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

Lee Garner, Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 3:30p.m. with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll was called by the deputy clerk and stated above.

2. **Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

The County Attorney, David Weiss asked that they amend the agenda to move up Item 6 the County Attorney’s Report to 3a. for him to discuss an item of importance.

UPON MOTION BY MR. KNIGHT AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO ADD 3A FOR THE COUNTY ATTORNEY TO SPEAK.

Mrs. Gutcher introduced Joe Bouch with Chisano Marketing via Skype.

3. **Minutes Approval**

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2014 MEETING.

3a. County Attorney

Attorney Weiss commented they recently received demand letters from the prior consultants for payment on a couple of invoices they say were not paid for items that were approved by the Council and subsequently went unpaid. He said now they are dealing on the County level whether they can be paid or not. He discussed with the Council that he wants assurance they are doing business in the most appropriate way. When going through everything we need to verify everything has been appropriately approved. This will ensure we don't have problems on the backend as a lot is on a reimbursement basis. Then the Clerk doesn't have problems in terms of processing and cutting checks. He reminded them they are a public body dealing with public funds. "You really need to understand and follow all the rules, the statutes, the ordinances, by-laws, plans and any other policies or procedures that have been properly adopted, such as the grant application." He said some of this is a little unclear and not consistent and does not fault the Council for not understanding all of this concerning the rules and limits throughout the documents. He said the statute is very broad concerning funding and it states any money you spend needs to be spent promoting tourism and tourism is defined as an area outside of the County. He said the statute doesn't limit you to just bed nights. If there are activities in the community that you want to be able to fund that might not attract bed nights, you can't be limited by your plan or your ordinance etc., because they govern what you do as well. He said they need to know and follow the rules. He said the new contract with the new consultants was tweaked to not have this issue again. Anything over the monthly retainer amount would require a task order that would need to be signed to be clear on what amount and activities are approved.

Mrs. Holt entered at this juncture.

Mrs. Holt asked what the issue was.

Mr. Patel asked did they do anything wrong.

Attorney Weiss said it was not that you did anything wrong, there was just some confusion. He said in the future if the consultant is working for the County they must have a written authorized tax order authorizing it to do whatever you approve it to do. He said it dealt with the Fighting Tigers.

Chair Garner is there anything they can do as a Council, to help rectify the situation.

Mrs. Holt said they were to work with Mr. Burns. She recalled the situation how she remembered it.

Attorney Weiss said the prior consultants; Legacy Marketing needs to get with Mr. Burns to rectify their issues. If you can submit application and show where these vendors have been paid, then it could be processed and see what they're entitled to.

Chair Garner asked was that the only invoice that had not been taken care of.

Attorney Weiss said the only other thing was footage for the Lawn Mower Parade at \$1,000. When we get video it will be paid.

Mr. DuBree asked about doing things correctly, would we follow the Strategic Plan.

Attorney Weiss encouraged the Council to follow the rules as they stand today.

Mr. DuBree asked what the suggestion is.

Mrs. Gutcher said the word grant is a gift of money with no strings attached. Only non-profits such as the Art Center, Music Theatre and operations that are open to the public they are able to receive grant money to. All others have to apply and receive marketing funds because that promotes tourism.

Attorney Weiss stated the correct term is marketing grants. They are reimbursable marketing grants. This is different from your marketing funds, so you have to make that distinction. The promoters of the event some authorization that you will reimburse them for certain amount if they meet certain criteria. He suggested they decide as a Council the best way to promote the County generally. He said the grant applications as they stand right now are the most specific and most restrictive document that you have. It's what the public is using to apply for these grants.

Mrs. Holt said she felt it was essential to nail down who could receive the grant funding versus the marketing funding.

Chair Garner said as is stated now the Strategic Plan requires bed nights on special event grants.

Attorney Weiss commented on the grant application as long as it is consistent with the Strategic Plan. In terms of the eligible use of the funds, I don't think the statute mentions anything about 2/3 of the funds must be used outside of 150 mile radius of Gadsden County. He pointed out citizens should be aware of that. He said as far as bed nights, follow the rules and if you don't like it, change the rules. He said as they are going through the process of making the rules think about things that make sense.

Mrs. Holt felt it was essential to advertise to the public to bring in new events or ideas.

4. **General Business**

- a. Approval of Chisano Marketing Group Task Orders and Discussion of Additional Tasks
 - Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator

Mrs. Gutcher discussed the Task Order for travel for Chisano. She said the reason for going this route is to prevent what happened with Legacy Marketing.

Mr. Bouch suggested it was a good idea to have the task order for anything outside of the monthly \$2500 retainer.

Mrs. Gutcher mentioned the Joint Workshop with the Economic Development, BOCC, CRA Quincy, and MainStreet – Chattahoochee on October 28, 2014.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. THRO, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE TASK ORDER FOR OCTOBER 9, 2014 FOR TRAVEL NOT TO EXCEED \$300.00.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MRS. HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE TASK ORDER FOR OCTOBER 15, 2014 FOR MOBILE APP PART THAT IS COVERED UNDER VISIT FLORIDA FOR \$8,000.

Mr. Thro asked for basic information on a particular app, is this the correct time to do this?

Mr. Bouch said yes, they are going through a process, right now they need to put it together. We need to go through the process with preliminary approval.

b. Strategic Plan Revision Selection

➤ **Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator**

Mrs. Gutcher gave background and said this was prompted after the conclusion of two visioning sessions this calendar year.

Mr. Bouch said they had the first call with the TDC team. He asked what the potential stage to be set is. He gave overview. He truly understands everything that is going on in this County and would like to rally all the stakeholders. "You guys become mouthpieces for the county." The Initial cheat sheet on the planning would make it a list of possibilities. He said it was just some things for the Council to think about.

Mrs. Gutcher asked for direction.

Mrs. Holt said if they have updates often, they would be fine.

Chair Garner directed Mrs. Gutcher to continue working with Chisano and keep the Council update.

Strategic Plan - recommendation of consultant

Mrs. Gutcher commented they needed to choose a recommendation to be forwarded to BOCC.

Attorney Weiss asked that the Council consider both of the proposals from Pam Portwood and Carpe Diem Community Solution, Inc. and who they feel would do a better job. He stated if they weren't taking the low bid they should have a reason for it in terms of thinking the other firm is more qualified and would do a better job.

Mrs. Holt asked is it within your contract to do Strategic Plan.

Mr. Bouch said it was odd, because that is what they do. He said there would be a little bit of travel involved to handle what we are doing.

Mrs. Holt asked should they contract out.

Mrs. Gutcher said we pay Chisano a \$2,500 retainer for 28 hours a monthly. She said the other two parties interested are Carpe Diem and Pam Portwood and working on the Strategic Plan would be their primary focus.

Mr. DuBree asked where the money would be better spent doing Strategic Planning or Marketing Planning.

Mr. Bouch said he would rather do the Strategic Planning for the County. "It's what we do."

Mr. Jackson said Mr. Bouch and Chisano need to be a part of the Strategic Plan. "We need to trust who we hire to do what they do."

Mr. Garner asked about the budget where was it listed for the Strategic Plan.

Bob Lauther, Havana Merchants, discussed the revamping of the Strategic Plan and suggested they give it to Mr. Bouch and see if it makes sense, then go from there.

Mr. Knight asked about the RFP process.

Mr. Weiss she they didn't need a formal RFP.

Mrs. Gutcher said this ball has been rolling awhile planning for the revision of the Strategic Plan long before Chisano was hired.

Mr. Thro asked where the two proposals submitted public records. He suggested Mr. Bouch give a proposal as well with a time line for completion and then table a decision on this matter to the next meeting.

Mr. Bouch said it could be completed by the end of year and he would let us know what was needed. He said the only issues he could see arising are getting all the constituents together.

UPON MOTION MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE BOARD VOTED 8 - 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO RECOMMEND CHISANO FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND TO BE COMPLETED WITH THE MONTHLY RETAINER WITH THE COMPLETION DATE OF DECEMBER 31, 2014.

c. Appointment to the RiverWay South AC (RWSAC) Board (Two Members)

- Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator

UPON MOTION BY MR. THRO AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPOINT ALLARA MILLS-GUTCHER TO THE RIVERWAY SOUTH AC (RWSAC) BOARD.

d. Florida Governors Conference on Tourism Report

- David Knight gave a brief recap of the Florida Governor’s Conference that took place on September 21-24, 2014. He said they lodged at Woldorf Astoria Resort, great conference hosted by Visit Florida.
- Clarence Jackson commented he had a great time and the meeting was very informational. He said the one thing that was brought to his attention is that when we are all on one accord we can do great things.
- Jeff DuBree said he as well enjoyed the Conference and that tourism is helping carry the Florida Economy and they talked a lot about the Millennium Generation.

Mr. Clarence Jackson and Mr. Peter Patel left at this juncture.

e. Funding Requests – (Current Balance \$22,000.00)

- Rocky Comfort Farms - **\$3,000.00**

Mrs. Gutcher asked they table to next meeting in November to analyze and give recommendation. She explained they have \$22,000 in the budget. She said they have to follow the Strategic Plan for marketing funds.

Mr. Keith Dowdell entered at this juncture of the meeting.

A motion was made by Mrs. Holt and second by Mr. Knight to table until the next meeting to give staff time to do analysis and give recommendation.

Mr. Thro said in the past how they handled a budgeted item for organizations was they were able to submit bills as long as the bills they were submitting met the Strategic Plan, we reimbursed them.

Mrs. Gutcher said that is currently the process, but the budget amount of \$22,000 that’s listed as other events, that have not t been specified. She stated to how much and who has not been specified.

Mr. DuBree clarified the budget they approved had taken all that out except the Art Center and the Music Theatre.

Chair Garner said they should table.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 2, BY VOICE VOTE, TO TABLE UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING TO GIVE STAFF TIME TO DO ANALYSIS AND GIVE RECOMMENDATION. (MR. DOWDELL AND MR. THRO OPPOSED THE MOTION.)

Attorney Weiss said his take on the grant application was that it is a grant application for grant marketing funds that go to public or not profit. Marketing grants where you are telling an organization that you will reimburse for up to certain expense. They still have to meet statute. We want to use marketing funds to promote the county. These particular events weren't budgeted by line items instead lumped in one sum.

Mrs. Badger asked about the 2/3 mile radius and changing name to Marketing Application.

Mrs. Gutcher said they need to do analysis.

Mr. Dowdell asked that they get the tentative approval because it will already have occurred.

Mrs. Gutcher said there was no timeline; it could be submitted after the fact.

Mr. Bob Lauther, Havana Merchants, said they have put the advertisement out there with the logo in print media to receive funding.

- Pumpkin Patch and Hay Rides
- North Florida Education Corporation - **\$2,500.00**
 - Diversity Day
- Havana Merchants - **\$5,000.00**
 - Pumpkin Festival - \$2,500.00
 - Lawn Mower Parade - \$2,500.00

5. **Discussion of Bed Tax Collection Rate**

- Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator

Mrs. Gutcher commented that Gadsden County was one of the counties that aren't collecting all the Bed Tax Collection Rate and it could be increased to bring in additional revenue. She said Gadsden County collects 3 cents and 5 cents is allowed.

Mrs. Holt raised concern about raising of taxes and said she would like more data and where we fall.

Mrs. Gutcher said she would bring back additional information.

6. **Report(s) from County Attorney – this item was moved to 3a.**

- David Weiss, BOCC Attorney

7. **Items of discussion from Council members (no vote items)**

Mrs. Holt commented on the Apalachee Regional Planning Council selling tax credits. We need projects in the Hopper. We need to come up with some projects so they can be submitted for Gadsden County.

8. **Public Comments**

There were no additional public comments.

Upcoming meetings: November 17, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.

9. **Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FL

LEE GARNER, TDC CHAIR

ATTEST:

BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK