

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY,
FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 16, 2019 AT
3:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Carolyn Ford, Chair-Person of Tourist Interest
Jeff Dubree, Tax Collector
Brenda Holt, County Commissioner
Cathy Johnson, Havana Council Member
Keith Dowdell, Quincy City Commissioner

Absent: Linda Dixon, Tax Collector
Peter Patel, Tax Collector

Staff Present: Wesley Hall, Interim County Administrator
Olivia Smith, TDC Administrator
David Weiss, Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

CHAIR FORD CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 4:11 P.M. (HAD TO WAIT ON A QUORUM) AND CHAIR FORD LED IN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Roll call was taken by Deputy Clerk, Marcella Blocker.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MS. HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR AMENDMENT TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA WITH A SECOND BY MR. DOWDELL. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Chair Ford asked that they take a second and review the minutes.

MR. DUBREE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 19, 2019 MEETING MINUTES WITH A SECOND BY MR. DOWDELL. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Smith stated there were no presentations on the agenda but Penny O'Connell from Mainstreet would like to say a few things and also David Doll from 850 Magazine.

Penny Peacock-O'Connell, Executive Director of Quincy Mainstreet, appeared before the Board to introduce herself. She stated they were a citizen volunteer organization and the goal was revitalization and promotion for the downtown historic district. She stated she grew up in Quincy and she looked forward to working with each of the members and if there was anything she could do to help they could contact her and she left her business card.

David Doll from Rowlands Publishing, appeared before the Board and introduced himself. He stated Rowlands Publishing produces a number of magazines, one of which was 850 Magazine. In each issue they focus on a specific county within Northwest Florida. In the Spring of 2020, they will be focusing on Gadsden County. He stated they would be talking about the promotion, the industry and the strengths that Gadsden County brings to the economic development of the county and it was a positive piece. They were going to be doing an editorial story, depending upon the number of businesses that help with the advertising, they can expand the editorial content through their magazine. He brought a couple of samples to show the board stating it was their winter addition and the focus was on the Tallahassee business journal and it had its own section and there were advertisers and content directly related to Leon County. The Spring Edition will be Gadsden County and it will look a little like the one they did back in the Fall of 2018. He was hopeful the TDC would purchase a small ad to help offset the cost with the editorial. He stated he sent some information to Ms. Smith and was hopeful for participation from the TDC.

Mr. Dubree asked when the Spring Edition came out and Mr. Doll answered in March and would cover March, April and May. Then there would be a Summer and Fall Edition and then it would start over again. He further stated they typically focused on counties that were a little bit smaller, Bay County, Okaloosa County, Walton County and Leon County were big and they focus on them yearly so the smaller counties such as Wakulla County, Jefferson County and others were focused on every couple of years because there was not enough new economic things happening in those areas.

Ms. Holt asked what the deadline was for getting information to him and he answered the end of the month, to tell him if they want to participate. (December) He would need the ad copies sometime within a couple (2-3) weeks after that so they could get everything to the printer and run the 17,500 copies to all the CEO's and businesses. If you are a CEO of a company and you have 5 or more employees you probably get this magazine delivered to your office. He stated he had a PDF that explained in a brief summary who gets the magazine and Ms. Holt asked that he shared that with the board.

GENERAL BUSINESS

a. 2020 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Smith said the first date on the meeting schedule was MLK day. She stated it could be either the 6th, 13th, or 27th. Ms. Holt said the 13th would be better day and the others agreed. She asked if the other days were okay so far and Chair Ford stated yes, they would just take each meeting as it came and if they ran into trouble, they would change it.

MR. DUBREE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE TDC SCHEDULE WITH ONE CHANGE BEING THE JANUARY MEETING CHANGED TO THE 13TH AND ALL OTHER DATES AS STATED WITH A SECOND BY MS. HOLT WITH A COMMENT THAT IN JUNE THERE WAS A FAC MEETING. SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT DAY IT WAS BUT THEY MAY NEED TO CHANGE THE JUNE MEETING DATE. THE BOARD VOTED BY VOICE VOTE 5-0 TO APPROVE WITH CHANGES EXPRESSED.

b. Ratification of Payment for the Southern Soul Blues Music Festival

Ms. Smith introduced the above item. She stated the item seeks the council's approval to ratify the payment for the SSBMF.

WITH A MOTION BY MS. HOLT AND A SECOND BY MR. DOWDELL, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Ms. Holt commented she attended this last year and it was estimated to have an attendance of 5,000 people. She stated it was hard to find a place to park or stand.

Ms. Ford suggested the board show support and have a presence there.

Ms. Holt said they should have a TDC banner and the County logo should be displayed where it could be seen.

Ms. Smith stated when she talked to them about putting TDC on everything they told her there was already a banner there and the logo would be on it as well and he did mention it was sponsored by Gadsden County.

Ms. Ford said most times when you come into something, there is a county tent and brochures and Ms. Smith said she would bring something back for the purchase of those items.

Ms. Holt stated there was plenty of negative press and this was the opportunity for positive press. When 5,000 people show up, that was an opportunity to make money and the positive press made the businesses make money as well. The county's name really needed to be pushed for the events, not saying what 850 Magazine was going to do but what TDC was going to do to make sure we were doing the best possible. She further stated it was "Gadsden County TDC Week" and everyday something needed to be done to promote Gadsden County. If we can promote the County 7 days through Facebook, Newspapers, Radio and however needed to promote what the TDC was doing.

c. Updates

i. Paradise, Inc. Contract (with attachments)

Chair Ford said should they should have new marketing firm.

Olivia said it had been 5 months and they had not been able to get a quorum to push this through but she wanted to give an update on the contract. She said herself and Mr. Weiss had a conversation with Paradise and they did lag on giving the contract back to her, that was supposed to be on the Commission's agenda scheduled for 12/17 but when she got it back it did not have the specific deliverables on the contract stating what they would do or that everything in the contract would not exceed \$90,000 which was the set budget. She stated she and Mr. Weiss asked them to amend their contract, they would take a look at it before it was brought and signed. In the meantime, they asked for an example of a financial report. Paradise used Seminole County Tourism as an example (provided) and it was broken down.

Ms. Smith went through the handout with the TDC.

Ms. Holt stated there was no numbers on the handout except on the second page it gave a number for "total media" but no sample number for what they would charge monthly or what the item was. Ms. Smith stated that depended on the specific County's budget and what she could ask them is if they could provide actual numbers.

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Ms. Holt asked who pushes them to say “get the contract up here.” She further stated we were losing advertising time when Paradise did not send the contract back. Ms. Smith replied they did send it back and she did tell them they needed it. It was on the last agenda and there was no quorum.

Chair Ford asked where it stood now and Ms. Smith said they were waiting on Paradise to bring back the contract that TDC needed specific items per their direction. Ms. Holt asked if Ms. Smith could email and call them and ask them what they were going to do or did they need to choose another company because they were losing advertising time.

Mr. Dubree said in defense of Paradise, they would have to at least meet with the TDC once or twice to know what TDC wanted instead of guessing. Ms. Smith said that was the purpose of the document and when the contract is signed they will do an onboarding session where Paradise will come and meet with the TDC (2day process) and develop a plan and once they do, they will put together a budget and making sure the money was in the budget would reflect what was in the plan.

Mr. Dubree said it was hard for Paradise to put an amount in each category without knowing what the TDC priorities were.

Ms. Smith said she will make sure Paradise knows we need a contract as soon as possible. If she could not get them to budge, she would tell them the TDC would like to go in another direction if it was not back before the next meeting.

Mr. Dowdell asked if the TDC needed to set a deadline today. Ms. Smith said they could.

Mr. Weiss said the next meeting would be January 13, 2020 for TDC, next BOCC meeting was January 7, 2020. If the contract had to be approved by BOCC. He asked if TDC wanted to see the contract before it went to BOCC or try to get it to the BOCC on the 7th and then have the onboarding process on the 13th with TDC. He said that would be the quickest and if they waited it would be February before the onboarding process happened.

Mr. Dowdell asked if they could have a special meeting and Mr. Weiss stated that would be an option and if the TDC wanted to see the contract but did not need to meet but would recommend to the BOCC for approval. Timing was everything with this now.

Ms. Holt asked if they could have a meeting before the BOCC to give them an opportunity to look at it and asked if she had a copy of the items to look at now. (Olivia stepped out to get the items)

Mr. Weiss appeared before the Board and said there was a long laundry list that was in the RFQ. Paradise felt they could do a lot of things requested but not everything that was on the list for \$90,000. Paradise wants a contract before the onboarding process and TDC did not have much certainty about what we are getting until we do the onboarding process. He said TDC needed to figure out most important things on laundry list. The website was not included in Paradise proposal and we want that for sure.

Ms. Holt said Mr. Weiss and Ms. Smith knew what was on the list but the TDC members did not and they could not say take out number 15 because they did not know what number 15 was. She further stated the BOCC was counting on TDC to recommend them to the Board and no one has heard a presentation yet.

Chair Ford stated in the TDC discussion with Ms. Smith, she did not say no to anything, she said she said she would work with the board on the things that were important to them.

Mr. Dubree said his impression was not that they could do everything for \$90,000 it was the fact that they were capable, as a firm to do all those things, but still needed to get the deliverables and sit down with the TDC and prioritize. He asked what the cancellation policy was on the contract. He asked if they signed a contract now and then had the meeting and we did not like it and wanted to move on.

Mr. Weiss stated he has always included a 30-day termination clause. He stated they sent Paradise a proposal that included everything. It had the monthly retainer amount to cover the creative side and everything else was subject to approval by task orders. They sent a proposal back to have the \$90,000 budget amount just as a set number and they would do more than just the creative but it would be in the form of a plan. He said he felt like there was not much certainty there and it looked to him like Paradise was saying TDC had an obligation to pay \$90,000 and we do not know what we would get at the end of the day. They say they would do X, Y, and Z but were not sure what X, Y, and Z. He stated Paradise understood that and they continue to give him the message that they want to work with the TDC and will figure out a plan that everyone would like. He said that is what they were trying to work through and figure out how TDC gets everything they want and need included in the contract, which would be subject to further approval. Paradise increased the 30-day termination clause to 90-days and that would be something that needed input.

Mr. Dowdell said he was lost. He asked why TDC was going back and forth. He asked if TDC put out an RFQ and Mr. Weiss answered, yes, it was a very long list of items. Mr. Dowdell stated they either complete the list or not and if not TDC needed to find someone else. Chair Ford stated you could not do that unless you had them here. Mr. Dowdell asked then why are they not at a meeting or a workshop or something because right now the board was in the blind.

Chair Ford said she thought what was happening was Mr. Weiss and Ms. Smith had a conversation with Paradise and TDC does not know the details of that conversation, all they know was what they discussed among the board but she did not see a meeting of the minds. TDC needs to figure out what is appropriate for the TDC in terms of acceptance to them. She said she had the feeling from Paradise that they wanted to work with the TDC and set up a master plan and some things may be lower than others on the list of needs but that is how contracts work.

Mr. Dowdell stated Mr. Weiss and Ms. Smith know what they are negotiating and the TDC board did not. Ms. Holt stated after the TDC chose the company, Mr. Weiss and Ms. Smith talked to the company on the phone but the reason she asked for the information to be brought back was because there was a list of things that needed to be looked at and if it could be solved today that was good.

Ms. Smith said on August 15, 2019 she brought forth 5 marketing firms that submitted. In addition to that she also submitted to the TDC board an updated RFQ. The updated RFQ that was approved had the specific items that were talked about being needed. When Paradise decided to bring back the contract, they did not have certain things listed. (Ms. Smith had a video representation on the monitors) She stated there were 3 TDC meetings in between the time they brought the firm and selected the firm. (Paradise) In the RFQ she showed where it said account management and reporting, which was the most important part, which demonstrated exactly what TDC wanted Paradise to bring back and they did not have that. An example she gave had Paradise crossing out everything and that would not work. She showed the contract that Paradise provided back that showed things being crossed out, dated and where comments were made. The part her and Mr. Weiss were concerned about was where they listed all the things TDC wanted and a rate sheet. She told Paradise that she did not feel comfortable signing a contract with that rate sheet because that amount could exceed \$90,000.

Ms. Holt asked if what she was showing them on the monitor could be emailed to each of them and Ms. Smith said yes. Ms. Holt said they could not make any decisions by January 6th. She said she wanted each board member to have a chance to look it over and say if they want it or not.

Ms. Smith said she did not feel comfortable bringing back a contract that had nothing on it that TDC wanted. That was why she had Paradise do it again was so something could be brought back to vote on.

Ms. Holt stated she did not have a problem going with this or not if TDC had a chance to look at it prior to the discussion. She wants to do research even if she did not agree with everything they offered. Ms. Smith said she would forward the copy she had to the members.

Chair Ford said her concern was some services costs more than others. She stated you have to have a marketing plan. Her question was, how do we get out of this if we find out it is not what we want. Mr. Weiss said we both (County and Paradise) were trying to protect ourselves. Mr. Weiss said he felt what we do was have everything that was in the RFQ included as items we determine to be priority items, of course with Paradise input because they are professionals, and we will say yes or no. We would get a concrete plan with numbers attached to it, not to exceed \$90,000. He further stated if we were not able to develop that plan successfully and part ways, the County would have to pay them something for their time put into it.

Ms. Holt asked when we advertised for a marketing company, what was in the RFQ. Ms. Smith answered we included everything we wanted.

Mr. Weiss said the County had proposed the contract to be done the way it had historically been done which was creative was under a monthly retainer amount and then all the ad buys and media purchases were subject to a task order approval. Paradise said they wanted to do it a different way where we would develop a plan that everyone would agree to and it would be not to exceed budget amount. Mr. Weiss said it was too much obligation and not enough certainty. He stated if that was the concern then why not come up with a plan within that \$90,000 budget and go from there.

Chair Ford stated if you go back to the first thing in terms of our commitment to the development of this marketing firm, she believes that any marketing firm needs to do research on our County and what we want.

Mr. Weiss said Paradise needed something to get them to the point where they could start developing a marketing plan for TDC. Some items in the RFQ may fall out based on priorities and funding. The question of what happens if everyone could not come to agreement on a plan is still a question.

Mr. Dubree said one thing he liked that he didn't like about previous contracts in the past was they were not looking for a retainer. With this company TDC would know exactly what every penny was being spent on.

Ms. Smith said Paradise sits down with TDC for 2 days and develop a plan. What we want would be in the plan. She stated she asked them to send something that our TDC could look at and make a decision based on what was talked about in the contract without the retainer fee, but we need the things that were in the RFQ that was approved by the TDC. Before it was sent out, it was approved.

Chair Ford said for her to contact them and get the contract back to the TDC as fast as possible.

Ms. Holt said one option would be to just do the onboarding and then if we do not come to an agreement, they get paid for the 2 days and we keep moving.

Mr. Weiss stated it may not be quite as important that TDC see the contract but to get the onboarding process started so a plan could be developed.

Mr. Dubree said they probably wanted reassurance they would receive their money, whether it be in lump sum or nickel and dime them to death.

Ms. Holt said TDC would have to take it more seriously. TDC will need to meet more often and get input about what we need.

Mr. Dubree said the first company the TDC hired to do the same work has a similar way they did things but did not just invite TDC, specific people from the community were invited. (Chamber, TDS, Music Theatre, Art Center)

Chair Ford said Paradise knows how to do this, we need to get rolling. We know our County and we need to give them guidance.

Ms. Smith asked if the TDC wanted to have a weekly meeting until firm... Ms. Holt interjected saying even if it was every two weeks it would be more than was being done now.

Chair Ford stated there could be a conference call.

Mr. Weiss stated, thinking aloud, if TDC includes in the contract everything in the RFQ, and word it such that we are going to come up with a plan based on the item in it and the cost would not exceed X dollars, what was important was for Ms. Smith to know what was a priority

to each member individually. When TDC meets with Paradise for the on-boarding they know what priorities are.

Ms. Smith summed up said what she would do is send out the list from Paradise to each member and she would also send the RFQ that was approved and look over it again. Ms. Holt stated she would also like to meet every 2 weeks.

d. Items of Discussion

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR FORD CALLED THE MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M**

CAROLYN FORD, VICE CHAIR

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, CLERK