

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JANUARY 6,
2020 AT 3:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Carolyn Ford, Vice-Chair-Person of Tourist Interest
Brenda Holt, County Commissioner
Cathy Johnson, Havana Council Member
Linda Dixon, Tax Collector
John Garcia, Tax Collector

Absent: Peter Patel, Tax Collector
Jeff Dubree, Tax Collector
Keith Dowdell, Quincy City Commissioner

Staff Present: Wesley Hall, Interim County Administrator
Jeff Price, Senior Budget Analyst
Olivia Smith, TDC Administrator
David Weiss, Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk
Beth Gjemse, Clerk's Office

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

With a quorum present Carolyn Ford, Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. It was then followed with roll call by the Clerk's Office.

2. AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion by Ms. Holt and second by Ms. Johnson, The Council voted 5-0, by voice vote, for approval of the Agenda.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

Discuss and Review of Paradise, Inc. Contract

- Attachments
- Media Plan **As Requested**
- RFQ

Olivia Smith addressed the board stating this meeting was to discuss the contract that was submitted to Paradise with the changes that she and Mr. Weiss brought back to them, and for the board to look at and give feedback, also for the contract to be placed on the County Commissioners Agenda for 1/21/2020. She stated there was a Regular Meeting next Monday. She said if anyone had specific changes that they wanted included she would make the changes and get them to Mr. Weiss and they could have them ready by Monday and put on the Agenda for the Board Meeting on Tuesday.

Olivia said she had an update and stated she spoke to our representative from Paradise. They were still having issues with the contract. If we do not get anything back from them, I am asking you all

to let me know if you want me to say were ok with them and want to move forward and continue to try to get a marketing firm and we could look at the firms that had already been submitted and you could choose from the #2 rated firm or we could continue to work with them a little bit more. I also went back to them and asked them if they would consider doing a one-time marketing review for us. They said they would consider that, but I wanted your feedback. If you all say we do not want to wait any longer we could do that.

Ms. Dixon asked what is their concern, what is the hold up?

Olivia replied If you look at the contract, under exhibit C, page 18, The items in the exhibit C were what we put in our RFQ. Their main issue was that they did not want to put in a contract these exact things before getting together and doing a marketing plan and identifying that we needed all these things. They want the contract scratched, we do not. That was their issue the first time. Olivia spoke today with a representative from Paradise and she was not specific and told Olivia she would get back with her later today or first thing tomorrow. Olivia stated we really do not have that time.

Ms. Ford stated that what Paradise was saying really makes sense. We would not need all these things. She asked what County to Provide” was all about. Olivia asked Mr. Weiss, who appeared by phone, to talk about the specifics of the contract and how it was written.

Ms. Ford stated she was looking for a scope of work, or deliverables.

Olivia said that was exhibit C and asked Mr. Weiss again to help her explain the contract wording.

Mr. Weiss said the way the county set it up and the way we talk about it and the way we discussed it with Paradise was everybody understood exactly what Ms. Ford just said, that we need to develop a plan in order to determine what points would be in that plan. What everyone wanted to be able to do was include whatever in the RFQ we felt we needed collectively when we develop a plan. Exhibits A and B were the RFQ and the proposal. Exhibit C was directly from RFQ and all the items that may include were in the plan. In the body of the agreement it says once we develop a plan then we would select the items from exhibit C that we agree that we need and there would be a cost associated with each one of those items and it would be an amount not to exceed the \$90,000 budgeted amount. That was for this fiscal year because we don't know what funding would be for subsequent years, but it would be the same process once the budget was established. He did not know if that was what Paradise had an issue with or not. He had talked to them and they seem to be on-board with that process. It was hard, without knowing from them which items they had a problem with.

Ms. Ford asked if we could get them on the phone.

Olivia said they were in meetings all day today and that Barbara was in possession of the contract and she was out today. Olivia was more than happy to call them again and said she only got 15 minutes with her today and it was only because she insisted she had something to tell the committee at this meeting. The contact we had for Paradise was not their attorney.

Ms. Holt requested to ask them to come and speak before the committee and tell them what they would and would not do for the county so we know if we need to move on. If we could not get them on the phone they need to be here Monday for the meeting.

She asked if Monday evening would be too late, because you could not get a document to the BOCC between Monday and Tuesday, that's only a few hours.

Olivia stated she would ask them to come. She believes it would be worth something for them to be at a meeting. Ms. Holt said give them a call and see if they would answer the phone and that would be easier than trying to figure something out in the blind. She wants them to tell the board what they want and what they do not want so we could move on.

Olivia said when they spoke the first time they said they did not like the list that was in there so we came to the agreement that it was necessary to have it in there prior to getting the marketing plan off so we could at least insure we get what the county needed. We put it back in and sent it and now we don't know what we need to do on our end.

Ms. Holt said that was fine and if they do not want to do it we know to move on. But that would be an absolute, instead of us trying to guess and meet deadlines. If they could not make it to discuss this contract we could move on to the next 2 or 3 on the list.

Mr. Garcia agreed with what he had heard about getting clarification but he could not find any measurements. He stated we were not interested in getting more Facebook likes, we were interested in generating more bed taxes, more tourists. He said that was not in the contract so how would he evaluate the company from year to year. He wants to make sure they are being effective. He wants to see their measurements so the board would know what the baseline was. Mr. Garcia stated another thing about this company was, in the 5K study he read in the book, not one of the cities was like Quincy. They were all beach areas. We do not have a beach so what were you doing with our farming communities, our outside the downtown area communities, how were you marketing them. We need to see a little bit of that experience.

He was looking for case studies showing that they had worked with a dead town and proof they helped revitalize it. He thinks maybe an audit before they get started and any monies that were given was a good idea.

Ms. Ford said they had talked about that earlier. That was the reason they were dissatisfied with the last marketing firm. We need goals and objectives. She said Paradise did not read the contract, their lawyer did, and the problem was they should have had some input from the board in terms of what our expectations were and they did not do this. We gave them the RFP, but in RFP it did not say specifically what the board wanted done. Paradise develops their own process but we have to have our own deliverables.

That was where Ms. Ford thought the problem was. She could understand the concern of Paradise with the whole list of things we were tying them to. If you did not have it down in writing, it did not exist. She suggested another paragraph to explain.

Olivia said she asked them to consider coming to talk with the board and they said they would but needed a contract for any work they would do.

Olivia asked Mr. Weiss to answer Ms. Ford's question about exhibit A and B about the "County would provide." Mr. Weiss explained exhibit A was what we put out to them and exhibit B was their response to the RFQ. He said exhibit C was the more important exhibit which was the list of potential services that were pulled directly from the RFQ. The problem was we did not know at this point without having gone through the process of developing that we do not know which of the items on exhibit C were going to be priority items that would be included and what we could afford. That was why the language on page 2 that says; Exhibit C were all the items that it may include but we were going to go through the process of developing our plan if we were going to

figure out which of those items were priority items that we could actually include in our plan. We would have an amount associated with each one of those things that we pull off and those would be the deliverables. He said it would be hard until you establish a base line, until you have the data to have that baseline. He was not sure exactly sure how the board would chose performance measures. If we were not satisfied was why we had a 30 day termination clause. Our expectations were we develop this plan and Paradise was going to execute this plan. We would see how that increased the tourism in the County, how it increased our Bed Tax Collections and they would be responsible for reporting that to us. When they report that to us, if we were not seeing results, there was a 30 day termination clause, we could terminate them. The way this should work, if they were not doing what they were supposed to do and we were not seeing the results we wanted to see then we terminate the contract.

Olivia stated the reason Exhibit C is what it is, was because they were not going to do any work for us until there was a contract signed. If we take some of this out, sign a contact and they come back and we do a media plan and we decide we do need some of these things. It would not be in the contract for them to execute. They do not have to do everything listed in exhibit C, but they were there in case we needed them. They responded to the items in the RFQ so we felt like it should be in the contract.

Ms. Holt said everyone was holding their hand and we were running out of time. She suggested we sign a contract telling them what we wanted to be discussed at the initial meeting then after 30 days if they did not include what we wanted to include then we could back out of the contract. Olivia stated she would see if someone from Paradise could be here January 13, 2020 to address some of the questions and then if everyone was okay with it, it would go on the Board agenda. On the 13th we would also schedule a time for them to come back ASAP to do our on boarding.

Ms. Ford stated the board said in the very beginning that we wanted them in front of us so that we could guide them in doing research. Paradise assured us they could actually develop whatever we had. She stated we have rivers and wonderful things here. All we had to do was give them the information of what we had to offer. She liked the idea of a sports campaign. A campaign to tour our community. These were the conversations that need to be had with Paradise so the board could develop a strategic plan. She thought Paradise was concerned because even though we had all this listed, public relations, advertising, and some of the stuff we may not use, or we may use more than this. We had a 30 day clause and we could get out of it if it was not going anywhere. She said the board needed to move forward.

Ms. Dixon asked if this was the same company that was further out of town from us. Olivia said they had an office in Jacksonville and the main office was in St. Petersburg.

Olivia said it was originally on the schedule for the 7th, but it was pulled. She had a place holder because she knew it needed to get moving. Now it was going to be placed on the BOCC Agenda for the 21st. She would speak with the Interim Administrator and let him know that it was a priority.

Ms. Ford said if they could approve the contract based on them coming here so we could develop some TDC planning, that's what you ask. They did not say no, what they said was that they did not want just a piece, they want a whole contract, give them the whole contract.

Olivia responded saying that was what we gave them. We gave them what they asked for. What we agreed on was what you are looking at. We just want them to say Yes, this is what we agreed on and move on. They had not done that and she did not understand why they were not saying okay.

Ms. Dixon stated at this point, it's more feasible for them to come back up here, have a sit down meeting and get it hashed out because going back and forth on the phone was not going to work. You need to look at them face to face to make them say No, I don't want to do this for this little small country town because they may not want to come back to us anymore because we were small town and they don't think they were going to get enough money. The board needed to have a meeting of the mind with them.

Ms. Ford pointed out that this was the reason they were selected was because they said money was not an object, if you remember.

Olivia replied yes, they were not going to charge us for labor over the \$90,000.

Ms. Dixon said it may be that we were not paying them for the work but they were looking at the \$90,000 to give them what they want, so now Paradise was trying to trim it down and say, this was all we were going to do for that \$90,000.

Olivia stated we do not know that yet until we sit down with that marketing plan and they give us a little bit and we don't think it's enough.

Mr. Garcia said the first thing on their list on page 18, exhibit C was strategic research and plan development, which was what we were all talking about. He suggested the contract be broken up into two parts. Still the same contract, but the first thing they would help us do was the strategic research and plans development. That's the main thing we need them to do before we figure out if they could execute or even if we want them to. They could give us a number on what strategic planning and development would cost and if we feel comfortable after this process, then we execute the rest of the contract. So this way we are protected somewhat.

Olivia said that was what she suggested to Paradise today so we don't keep going back like this. She said she would call again and ask them to come here on the 13th and get this done. She stated she didn't think Paradise was trying to be dishonest. They were just trying to move ahead with the contract where there was a little more flexibility.

Mr. Garcia said the fact that we are having trouble getting them to come up here makes him a little nervous as to whether they want to come up here. We want somebody that is saying; "We really want this account! I know Quincy, I know Gadsden County." But what he was hearing was "We'll see". Why are we getting someone who could not jump in their car and come over?

Ms. Ford stated if they want the contract, we want them to have the contract. We do not want to start over, we want to move forward.

Olivia said that at the last meeting she was asked for an example of a Media plan. The spreadsheet was an example of how they carry out the plan.

Mr. Garcia wanted to give one piece of advice. He said the measurements they had were we put display banners up, including possible standard sizes of....(bla bla bla) But there was no measurement in any of it that tells us how much they increased traffic into Quincy from X amount of people to X amount of people. They were just telling us that they had a social media group that

makes great banners for Facebook. They said were going to do a video that gets 780 video views. I need them to tell me that video view was going to get people so excited that they were going to come to Gadsden County and go fishing in Lake Talquin. Unless I see that, telling me you are going to build me a banner and you are going to be on Facebook is not doing it. He said he could hire a student from Gadsden High School to do that.

Ms. Ford stated again they had to get together with them and come up with those deliverables, come up with those objectives. They had to develop that baseline so we have something to measure against at the very end and Paradise knows that. She likes the way they had it laid out, but it was missing terms. We want to develop a tour. It is okay to say how many people but we have general measurements, like how many beds were being used in Gadsden County. Another thing she wanted to say was about the letter Olivia sent saying we had a special event fund. Olivia said it was still there.

Olivia thinks part of the deliverables should be them coming to the meetings every month and providing a monthly recap.

Ms. Ford said that our overall mission was not in the RFP.

Ms. Holt asked if it was possible, could they Skype during the meeting if they could not be here. Olivia answered her saying we could do it on our part and she would mention that to Paradise. Ms. Holt would also like a weekly analytics update from Paradise instead of monthly. Olivia said January 13th was the meeting and she feels like they would be here in person.

4. UPDATES

- **New Member Application Status**

Olivia stated regarding the 850 Magazine ad, the price of the ad would be \$1,900 and Mr. Garcia said it was not worth it. If we had not figured out what our messaging was and what we wanted to market, it did not make sense to take out an ad and Ms. Holt agreed as did Olivia. They agreed that would happen later.

Olivia said regarding the New Member Application Status, 2 newspaper ads were taken out, some more Facebook ads and reached out individually and still had not gotten any new members to apply. She asked for recommendations.

Ms. Holt said we need to get recommendations for people who want to serve.

Mr. Garcia asked what this recommendation was for and Olivia explained there was a spot open for a 9th member on the Board for a person of Tourist Interest.

Olivia said she had not heard from Mr. Patel. It was stated that his father was ill and he was out of the Country. Olivia would reach out to the members for names/recommendations.

- **Revised Meeting Schedule**

May 18th was crossed off the schedule because it was in Olivia's notes that there was a meeting they needed to reschedule but it could be revisited and just half the year was done for now.

Ms. Holt asked Olivia to see if FAC was going to meet in June because usually about 3 County Commissioners go to that.

- **January 2020 Financial Update**

The financial update was included in the packet. Jeff would be at the regular meeting to discuss it. Mr. Garcia asked about January 2020, page 8. He asked where it says "Tourist Development Actual" across the top, if that was the actual money that was raised from the Bed Tax. She said yes. With her answer he stated that was one marker they could look at and include in the Paradise Case Study.

- **Gadsden Arts Center- Winter Gala Fundraiser**

Olivia asked the members to let her know if they wanted to attend the Art Auction Fundraiser on the 25th at 6:30pm and she would reserve table seats for TDC members. Mr. Garcia said he would attend. TDC by-laws were given to Mr. Garcia.

Olivia wanted to talk to everyone about Gadsden County at the Capital. She said some money was put in the budget for that but she had to get with the County Administrator to know how much. Ms. Dixon says she had attended Gadsden County at the Capital and she went for herself instead of for what it was designed to do so she wants to make sure there were objectives laid out. She wants to be sure we are known and make an impact on our Legislators and the rest of them.

Ms. Holt spoke about Gadsden County at the Capital. In the past they got a list of people on different committees and invited them and their staff into the room. It was to focus on the agenda we had for funding for the county and he filtered them through. All towns had a little something to put in their hand. Ms. Holt encouraged them to get to know families, introduce your County and get the agenda out there.

No date was set, but Mr. Garcia said this was the first CTQ that Paradise could execute on. Help us put a comprehensive plan that lays out elevator speeches and things like that. Ms. Holt was inviting everyone to an Economic Development Meeting with everyone in the County. She said if we could get on a tour bus and go to a county similar to this one, you would see what real development looks like. They did what they were supposed to do. Joe Max Higgins was on 60 minutes. He went into Columbus, Mississippi and he revolutionized it.

Ms. Ford wanted to know how we were going to attract people here when they had no where to stay. She stated that if her County Commissioners did not get their heads tied together, she did not know what they were going to do. She also stated she had attended workshops, and they did not even show up for them.

Ms. Holt would like to see Commissioners held accountable for not showing up to the workshops that were provided.

Ms. Ford said some good stuff was going on in Gadsden County but it was not being advertised. If you put a positive image out there that this County is moving, then people get interested.

Gadsden County Tourist Development Council
January 6, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no additional comments, the Vice-Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5PM.

**Carolyn Ford, Vice Chair
Tourist Development Council**

ATTESST:

Nicholas Thomas, Clerk