

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 30, 2020 AT 4:00 PM,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

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

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

**Staff Present:** Beth Gjemse, Deputy Clerk  
Jeronda Robinson, Spec. Prod. Coord.  
Jon Brown, Public Information  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney

**This meeting was had over audio/conference call during the COVID-19 shutdown.**

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

Roll call was taken by Jon Brown and then called the meeting to order at 4:23 pm and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag and read aloud the agenda to the council members.

**2. Amendments to and Approval of the Agenda**

**WITH A MOTION MADE BY MR. DUBREE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

None

**4. Presentations**

None

**5. Citizens Requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (3-minute limit)**

None

**6. General Business**

**a. Discussion of TDC Status**

**i. Quorum**

Mr. Knowles stated the issue with the Quorum was Mr. Garcia attended two meetings in January and February and his appointment was never approved by BOCC. At the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, his appointment was tabled and never brought back to the BOCC. Mr. Knowles did not know why but reassured the Council that it would be brought back before the BOCC. Because Mr. Garcia was one of the 5 members that counted as a quorum for the January and

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February 2020 meetings, the actions that were voted on by Mr. Garcia cannot be ratified. Action that was taken in those meetings were void.

Vice Chair Ford said the TDC needed notes to see what was approved with Mr. Garcia present.

Mr. Knowles said, with the help of the Clerk, and the PIO, they had gone back through the two meetings identifying what those items were. There were 2, maybe 3 items voted on and they would be brought back for another vote and Mr. Garcia's name would be brought back to the Board for ratification.

Vice Chair Ford asked when it would go before the BOCC so there could be a vote on Mr. Garcia's name.

Mr. Knowles said he was not sure. It was not up to him or Mr. Brown, but it would be submitted in an Agenda request and the BOCC will make a decision as to when it goes on the Agenda and when they want to vote.

Vice Chair Ford stated she thought the TDC had already voted to recommend Mr. Garcia.

Mr. Knowles said it was recommended to the BOCC but they have to take affirmative action to ratify that nomination to the council.

Vice Chair Ford asked who was responsible for putting that item on the BOCC Agenda, because she did not remember it coming up on the BOCC agenda.

Mr. Knowles stated he was not sure, but it was nothing that he had done. He further stated it had been on the Agenda in July 2019 and it was tabled. He further stated that the TDC had to make sure they had 5 people that have been affirmed by the BOCC.

Commissioner Holt asked if the TDC had to vote for the issue to be brought back to the TDC or if they could vote today to have it brought back to the BOCC.

Mr. Knowles assured them there was nothing to do today; there would have to be a request put in with the County Administrator to put the item on the Agenda for the BOCC. Nothing was being changed and the vote on July 2, 2019 was to table. There could be a vote to amend the agenda to vote on sending Mr. Garcia's nomination back to the BOCC.

Vice Chair Ford stated the TDC had already voted to send 2 names to the BOCC and she would like to know why the BOCC did not approve it. She stated she did not think it was ever on the Agenda.

Mr. Knowles assured them it was on the Agenda in July 2019 and it was tabled and never brought back to the Board.

Mr. Dowdell said regardless of why it was not brought back, TDC needed to go ahead and vote now for safety and send it to BOCC.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOLT TO SEND MR. JOHN GARCIA'S NAME BACK TO THE BOCC TO APPROVE FOR PLACEMENT ON THE TDC WITH A SECOND BY MR. DOWDELL. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Vice Chair Ford stated by the next meeting the TDC needed to have the Minutes so they could review what items were voted on when Mr. Garcia was voting.

Mr. Brown stated he would have those items voted on at the January and February TDC Meeting. He asked if the TDC wanted the entire Agenda or only the items voted on.

Vice Chair Ford stated just the items that were voted on.

**b. Updates**

**i. Marketing Agency for Marketing Services**

Mr. Brown said last time TDC met, it was recommended to re-engage Paradise Marketing. He stated he had met by phone with Paradise and had a great discussion. He sent Paradise a draft of a contract that, based on discussion, would work for everyone. Unfortunately, there was a loss in the family of the leadership with Paradise and everything breaking down with COVID-19, Paradise said they could not engage with the County at this time. They provided recommendations from partners they had. Mr. Brown said he spoke with the Administrator and the Attorney and they would take the direction of moving on to the number 2 Agency (Kerigan) chosen by the TDC. Mr. Brown said he contacted and had a great discussion with Kerigan. They were excited and willing to move forward. Mr. Brown explained to Kerigan they would have to come back before the board for direction. Kerigan was waiting on TDC to give the go-ahead. Mr. Brown's recommendation was to go into discussion with Kerigan (#2) and work to engage with them.

Vice Chair Ford asked if Kerigan was the firm from Panama City and Mr. Brown said yes. She said they had the least experience but maybe could come up with some of the things they wanted.

Mr. Brown stated the points between number 1 and number 2 for marketing picks were close and the recommendation from staff was to look at number 2 now. If Kerigan was not chosen, Mr. Brown would explore the others and that would be a lengthy process.

Mr. Dowdell asked if this was a yearly contract and Mr. Brown said he believed it was a 3-year contract with two 1-year renewals.

Vice Chair Ford stated that was what they had with the firm the County had just concluded with (78 Madison).

Mr. Dowdell said the yearly planning was half way finished and asked if the County would be paying the same as a yearly contract?

Mr. Brown said that was something the TDC would need a discussion with Kerigan about. He stated the TDC needed to figure out a plan. He added the media bought would be billable against the \$30,000 and media billed against the \$60,000; the amounts spent would be based on what was requested/required.

Mr. Dowdell asked because there was \$90,000 in the budget did they think they would get all of that. They needed to understand payment was based on their performance.

Vice Chair Ford stated that would be a question when Kerigan comes back before the TDC. The TDC would determine what the recommendation would be on what they wanted them to do. She further stated TDC wanted to do research. Everything is up in the air with this new firm.

Mr. Brown said the TDC needed to determine who to engage, and from there, need to share with them their wants and needs are and then they will determine how to spend against the budget the TDC had. He further stated the world needed to get beyond Global Lock down and be strategic. He also stated there would not be a contract signed to spend \$90,00, the contract would be signed to engage with somebody knowing that we have the resources of \$90,00.

Commissioner Holt stated she was puzzled listening to the conversation and asked if they needed to do this now. She stated the TDC did not get the company they tried to get and nobody knew how long the Covid-19 shutdown would last.

Mr. Brown said the TDC needed to be poised to have a partner helping to strategize. He did not recommend the TDC stop the process of hiring a Marketing Firm until we have clarity from the State/Government. He stated he would rather have direction from staff to work through the process and engage with someone they approve and have them on deck.

Commissioner Holt said she understood but was puzzled by what the reputation of the State was going to be by then. She stated she did not want a Marketing firm waiting to get paid while the County sat back to see how this is was going to play out.

Mr. Brown said the money in the budget was resources and the TDC would only spend those dollars based on what was requested and required of the firm.

Vice Chair Ford said she knew they wanted to be prepared, but TDC needed to catch their breath, catch everyone up to speed and look at the applications again. She further stated the TDC had their mind set on Paradise and did not look into Kerigan enough to move forward. She said she would like to wait 30 days and at the next meeting, they could go back over the application from Kerigan before a commitment was made to anyone.

Mr. Brown asked if he should invite Kerigan to the next Call/Meeting to present and answer any questions?

Vice Chair Ford answered no, the TDC needed to look at the application, discuss it and once they were past the virus, maybe the May meeting, could talk about bringing them back. Vice Chair Ford told Mr. Brown he could tell Kerigan they were being considered so they could be prepared. She stated the TDC needed time to make good decisions.

Ms. Johnson stated she was is in agreement with the Vice Chair that Kerigan should come back to refresh the TDC with their company.

Mr. Brown asked if Vice Chair preferred for Kerigan to come back later rather than sooner?

Vice Chair Ford said correct, the TDC needed to get together with the application and take a second look at it because their eyes were on someone else at the time. She further stated they would have specific things for them to do and needed to discuss it as a council first and it did not have to happen at the next meeting.

Mr. Brown stated he would get the application submission to the TDC and asked if the TDC wanted something beyond the RFQ response?

Vice Chair Ford said to ask Kerigan to send a Scope of Work. She further instructed Mr. Brown to pull the application, it may be in there and the TDC would discuss it. She had things she did not think Kerigan could do.

Mr. Brown said Kerigan put together a preliminary budget based on the \$90,000 and he will forward that as well as their response to the RFQ.

Commissioner Holt said she thought it was a good idea.

**ii. Next Meeting**

Mr. Brown said he was looking for feedback as far as the next meeting. He asked if the third Monday (April 20) was a good day, or another time as TDC saw fit.

Vice Chair Ford said the third Monday at 4 pm was when she thought the meeting should happen.

Mr. Dowdell, Commissioner Holt, Mr. Dubree, Ms. Johnson, and Vice Chair Ford, all agreed April 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm was a good day and it was so decided that would be the next meeting.

**7. New Business**

Commissioner Holt said there were two events over the weekend that the County had to do the curfew on. She stated that it was a concern to her that if the County kept getting negative press, it would be difficult to have multiple events in the County where people would want to come. She further stated the TDC will be marketing for people to come to the County for events, like the two activities during the 14-day stay-home request by the Governor. When the County goes out and breaks the rules and we have to have a curfew, it looks negative for the County.

Mr. Brown asked Commissioner Holt if she was saying there was a County sponsored event this weekend.

Commissioner Holt said no, but when the County decides to have events, it should not be negative for the County.

Mr. Brown stated no activities would be scheduled during this order and the TDC would follow the BOCC direction with the Resolution and the State of Emergency Declaration.

Commissioner Holt stated she knew what the TDC did but she was making a point that it becomes negative and with people outside of the County, it was showing them that we cannot follow directions.

Vice Chair Ford said the TDC will follow all direction from the Covid-19 order. She further stated, in this atmosphere, no event would be scheduled any time soon.

Commissioner Holt stated she was not saying this County would but she thought the TDC needed to monitor the County because we have to promote the image when it is all over.

Vice Chair Ford asked Commissioner Holt what she suggested the TDC do with the County.

Commissioner Holt said she was not suggesting anything, she was just saying to monitor. If you hear things, try to tell people to follow direction and promote the positive side to the public and it was harder to sell that positive side when negative things had been done as a County.

Mr. Dubree said he would like to warn the council with projected income of how the COVID-19 would affect the year's income. The budget was based on projected income from previous years, but this virus is having a dramatic effect on how much money the County will be bringing in from the TDC. He stated his property has lost quite a bit of money from a busy time of year for him from cancellations from people who cannot travel and if this continues it would be an issue as the County and TDC move forward as far as budgeting. But there would be a reduction in income coming in.

Mr. Brown said he agreed and was having a discussion with Jeff Price, and believed the budget for the coming year comes off of the last completed audited numbers. He further stated that at some point in the near future, the completed audit numbers are going to be for the time happening right now and it is going to be significantly different than what it has been in the past.

**8. Items for Discussion**

None

**9. Meeting Adjourn**

Vice Chair Ford adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.

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**CAROLYN FORD, Vice-Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**