

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY,
FLORIDA ON JULY 27, 2020 AT 4:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING
WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Carolyn Ford, Chair
Jeff Dubree, Bed Tax Collector
Brenda Holt, Commissioner Dist. 4
Cathy Johnson, Havana Council Member
Linda Dixon, Tax Collector
John Garcia, Bed Tax Collector

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

Staff: Beth Bruner, Deputy Clerk
Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney

Technical issues were had and the video begins 4 minutes into the meeting.

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

With a quorum present at 4:12 P.M. Chair Ford called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag followed by roll call by Deputy Clerk Bruner.

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

MS. HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH A SECOND BY MS. JOHNSON. THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

a. June 18, 2020 Workshop

MS. HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH A SECOND BY MS. JOHNSON. THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

b. June 18, 2020 Regular Meeting

MS. HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH A SECOND BY MR. GARCIA. THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

4. **Presentations**

None were had

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

None were had

6. **General Business**

Ms. Steele asked Mr. Price to give a brief estimate of what the 2021 Budget would look like.

a. Financial reports- June 2020, (Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst) (discussion)

Mr. Price stated on October 1, 2019, the beginning balance was \$144,424. Revenue taken in was \$93,165 and \$20,000 was spent to date. Currently in the Budget was \$217,697. He stated there was a need to look at the budget and improve it for next year. Revenues were down an average of \$11,000-\$13,000 per month and it was down to \$5,000 in May. The expense side had a journal entry that needed to be done to move money for personnel, in which the TDC would have to spend a little more but not much.

Ms. Holt stated the pages were not numbered and Mr. Price would need to let people know what page he was talking about.

Mr. Garcia asked Mr. Price if he could compare May 2020 to May 2019.

Mr. Price answered not now, but stated he would send it out tomorrow and would do the whole year.

Mr. Garcia said it would be very helpful to have the entire year to compare month to month.

Mr. Price stated so far in the budget, money was allocated for personnel, which would contain a portion of Ms. Steele's time. There was money put in for Professional Services, which was the attorney and the TDC still needed to find a project Manager.

Ms. Steele asked Mr. Price what the Project Manager would do.

Mr. Price said he was not 100% sure what the idea behind that was, he thought it was between 78 Madison and before another marketing firm the TDC was going to try to do something like a special event just for TDC, but it was open ended.

Chair Ford said a Project Manager had been discussed at one time. She further stated the TDC had one and she was transferred out of the department. She asked what Mr. Price suggested as far as squeezing an Attorney and Project Manager in.

Mr. Price stated the Attorney was what it was, and a Project Manager, he understood to be, if we had a marketing firm, they would need a manager.

Ms. Steele stated the TDC needed that because it made sure everything the marketing firm promised to get done, was done and to get TDC back on track. It may just be 10 hours a week and work on the TDC. If Ms. Steele was busy with meetings, someone had to be there.

Ms. Holt asked what that amount was and Mr. Price answered \$24,500.

Chair Ford stated under Personnel services there was \$12,400, with benefits \$15,911. She thought that was the person, but there was an additional Attorney and Project Manager for \$34,500.

Mr. Price stated Ms. Steele's explanation was the way the job description would be as project manager; her hours did not have to be entered.

Chair Ford stated Mr. Price had the column backwards.

Ms. Steele asked if the project manager should be in the \$48,475 amount or in the \$34,500 and Mr. Price said in the \$34,500.

Ms. Holt asked if Professional Services would be the Attorney and Project Manager at \$34,500 and everything under it was added with the \$34,500 to make \$48,475 and Mr. Price answered correct.

Ms. Holt asked what the \$64,386 was for and Mr. Price stated it was adding the \$15,911. Ms. Holt asked him to describe it better because it was confusing.

Mr. Price stated spaces were left blank because the TDC had not figured out who would have applications to offer anyone any payouts.

Ms. Steele said her recommendation to Mr. Price was this form was supposed to be out before she started. She started in the middle of COVID. She sent an updated application date with the start of August 2020 to start requesting and what those events would look like knowing they would go to fiscal year 2021. She wanted a place holder, to get people back to normal, for the same amount that was budgeted last year of \$12,500 in addition to the money the TDC provided for Gadsden County Day at the Capital, Gadsden Art Center and the Havana History Museum. She did not want to leave the small business out. She wanted to do the application online and the TDC may or may not get \$12,500. She further stated the Application process was not open yet, she said it was the same as last year and she wanted to do it on-line with free workshops via Zoom, so people would understand how to fill out the application and not leave people out.

Chair Ford thought people had already been left out and Ms. Steele stated the application process was not open yet.

Ms. Holt asked Ms. Steele what amount she recommend the TDC had for those events.

Ms. Steele stated the TDC had \$12,500 because that was traditionally the amount needed, if it was her choice, since not much money was used she asked that remaining money of \$18,000 be rolled over and up the amount to \$20,000 to give more groups and organizations an opportunity to participate if that was the will of the Board.

Ms. Holt asked if the \$12,500 was included in the 20,000 and Ms. Steele answered no, the \$12,500 plus the \$7,500 to equal \$20,000.

Chair Ford stated the \$12,500 was already allocated, just not carried through because of COVID-19.

Ms. Steele stated the Golden Knights, Havana Main Street (Hill Rides) and MLK Foundation in Chattahoochee requested their money. She was not sure if anyone else had requested money for their granted request. She thought the Tucka and Trucker

event already happened. Two events that the TDC would not have out of that \$12,500 that was awarded because they applied to do events.

Chair Ford said it was her understanding they all applied, but because of COVID-19 they did not have them. She asked what was left out of \$12,500.

Mr. Garcia asked if there was a protocol for knowing if event happened or if the money was spent and Ms. Steele answered yes, all supporting documents had to be turned in or they would not be paid. She further stated, quite often, they spend more than they requested but only get what was awarded.

Mr. Garcia said he was asking because in the conversation being had, it sounded like the TDC was asking if an event happened. He asked how that happened.

Ms. Steele stated she was not sure if any predated her employment and Chair Ford stated by the next meeting, she would like to have verification of who had not been paid.

Ms. Steele stated because the process was late, the process would be complete by the August 30th deadline for the Budget and would have applications. Her fear was if the County closed again. There was a first viewing Committee of Chair Ford, Ms. Holt, Ms. Steele and Attorney Knowles and after that it was brought back to the entire body.

Mr. Garcia asked what special events were and Chair Ford asked for members to recognize the Chair before speaking.

Mr. Price answered a special event was a contracted event like the Crappie Fishing Tournament and the Bike Race, and they were more of a brand name getting Gadsden's name out.

Mr. Garcia asked if that \$20,000 went back since the event did not take place and Mr. Price stated yes, back into the fund balance.

Ms. Holt asked if the County shut down would the TDC be liable, and with the case numbers for COVID rising, and questioned the TDC putting an application out for the grants.

Ms. Steele stated she wanted to be prepared. A Special Event brought money in to the County. Smaller events needed to go through the application process and allot the dollars properly. She stated they could put in a place marker for the funding and decide at a later date.

Ms. Holt said if the TDC was funding and the County shut down and the people had spent their marketing dollars and ours but could not have the event, she asked if there was anything in the policy that said they would get paid anyway. She further stated we were in a pandemic and she was not in favor of funding right now. If you say they could apply, and the TDC could look at it later. (next spring) She said the County was at 12% positive cases. She asked how to let vendors know. If the trend continued, they may not have the event until further notice.

Chair Ford stated once the TDC clarified who had not spent money, send something out telling them not to spend it.

Ms. Steele asked the attorney to get that ready and Mr. Knowles stated he would.

Ms. Steele stated her recommendation was to not start the application process until the County was at the end of phase 2, going into phase 3 of reopening and further stated the TDC had an allotted amount to spend.

Ms. Ford stated the TDC did not know what would happen and she thought the TDC should put everything on hold until notice of the whole County opening again. Concerning the Training and Educational part of the budget, she thought the TDC did not give to the Riverway South Annual Symposium and saw \$495 going to them. She thought it was cut.

Mr. Price said he would have to go back and look at minutes.

Mr. Dubree said he understood that item was only if a member of the Commission was sent there would be an invoice. It had been sitting in the budget for several years and was just left there, but no one had attended.

Chair Ford thought the TDC had been paying for it. Mr. Price stated he would check.

Mr. Dubree said there were two separate items. One was a membership fee that was opted out of, but the training was separate from the membership.

Chair Ford was concerned and asked if there would be a conference held because of the virus, as well as the Visit Florida Tourism Day.

Ms. Steele stated she thought they still put in as a place holder, and if not spent, funding would roll over to next year as they did this year.

Mr. Dubree said the Governor's conference on tourism was canceled, and that was probably a line item in the budget.

Chair Ford stated the Legislative Conference would probably be by Zoom. She further stated the TDC would not have money because hotels were closed and that was where the TDC received their tax dollars. She suggested to save money. She further stated to hold off until the fall on the Marketing firm and maybe longer. She asked Ms. Steele to pull out as much as possible to be saved for the year 2021 because 2020 was gone.

Mr. Garcia said he agreed with Ms. Holt about spending in 2020 but would caution to be prepared to hit the ground running in 2021 so the County was leading, not following. There was no need, this fall, to spend money. The TDC should be working on getting ready for 2021. He was not sure if that meant to spend now to get prepared. Two Museums were open at a small capacity and providing something and the TDC needed to support them and anyone who could open. He further stated it was the same way with the marketing firm, while not targeting the fall but to be prepared to go in the spring.

b. TDC Grant Application Process FY 2020/2021- (Leslie D. Steele, Public Information Officer (Discussion/Action))

Ms. Steele stated the TDC had decided to wait until phase 2, going into phase 3, in terms of the Grant Application Process

1. Gadsden Arts Center and Museum- Grace Robinson

Grace Robinson, Executive Director, gave her presentation and asked for \$16,000;
* \$1,500 per quarter for paid radio and paid, targeted Facebook ads (\$6,000)
* \$3,000 to promote three major exhibitions via combination Limelight print ads in the Tallahassee Democrat which include 50,000 online impressions in the USA Today Online network. (\$7,500)
* \$2,000 to produce a promotional marketing video for Gadsden Arts. This video will become the museum's primary link everywhere Gadsden Arts maintains a link on local, state, regional, and national websites (\$2,500) = \$16,000.
Ms. Robinson asked if there were questions. She further stated The Art Center would add a visitor's services sign just as a partner of the TDC no agreement or funding was needed.

Mr. Dubree stated the Art Center looked like they were not phasing down marketing efforts because they wanted to be prepared for when people were ready to travel and he thought the same. He thought Gadsden County could reap the rewards when people could travel. He asked if they were scaling down at all or running the same marketing as they had in the past.

Ms. Robinson said this year they had rescheduled but had not canceled any. She said it was important to keep branding so people did not forget about them. The key change was no events and no group events this year.

Ms. Steele stated there were two applications to consider. She stated it was the TDC Staff recommendation that the funding would be approved so the Art Center could continue to market the Gadsden County Art Museum, not an event but a place of tourism. She further stated she would get with the Attorney about a disclosure statement taking no COVID-19 responsibility.

2. Havana History & Heritage Society Bill Piotrowski and Berta Kemp

Mr. Piotrowski gave his presentation asking for \$13,800 for Gadsden County 'branded' materials, visitor events and promotions.

WHY: Educational, Social and Economic Impact

- Preservation of this area's rich history: agricultural, churches, schools, communities, business, civic leaders, sport notables, authors, historians, artists, educators....
- Educational programs: engaging, interactive exhibits; trained docent-led tours, and presentations; personal interactions with local notable residents & historians.
 - Priority on youth & community-wide involvement – ENGAGE, EDUCATE, & INSPIRE emphasis across all demographics.
 - Maintenance of visitor growth, with at target of 12,000 visitors per year by 2022.
 - Anticipated return on investment in excess of \$140,000 to Gadsden County in 2020-2021.

Ms. Johnson stated she had been to Havana History Museum and they were doing a great job and it was very educational. She stated she stood behind them.

Ms. Steele recommend to approve \$13,800.

Ms. Holt stated she needed to know what the revenue would be first. The county was down 15-25%. She asked what was funded last year.

Mr. Dubree said he thought the Art Center was \$5,000-\$6,000, and \$2,500 for Havana, and that was what was on the Budget as well.

Ms. Holt said she was not willing to fund more than last year because of the decrease in revenue.

Ms. Steele stated the recommendation now was to look at funding dollars and agree to fund them based on budget projections.

Ms. Holt said fund them at what they got last year and they could always come back before the TDC.

Ms. Robinson stated their funding last year was \$6,000.

Mr. Piotrowski stated their funding last year was \$2,500 from TDC and an additional \$2,500 from BOCC.

Chair Ford said her concern was how much money the TDC had first then she could recommend an amount. She further stated both were doing a fantastic job, but she was concerned about getting prepared for 2021 because the bed tax would be down and would be worse next year. She wanted to make sure the museum stayed afloat.

Mr. Garcia asked about \$20,000 of special events, which was going back into the budget and the reason he suggested being prepared for 2021 was because both museums really needed to be prepared for 2021, they were two of the places that were still open and they were being socially responsible. He suggested to fund them as much as possible. He asked to use the extra \$20,000 to amplify what was given last year.

Chair Ford stated the County had lost about 10 special African American Groups because of the COVID-19 virus. She was looking for them to come back and the TDC needed money to help them. Some groups could not maintain a social distance with inside events. She further stated the TDC needed to plan forward and make sure the whole county was covered as much as possible.

Ms. Steele said they key differences of the Museums was they were not special events; they were brick and mortar buildings. She further stated she would suggest to have a budget workshop after the county workshop and Mr. Price and herself would come back with budget recommendations for the TDC to look at. She thought it was right to make sure, if possible, everyone received funding. The TDC could not fund just the museum and no other organizations or other events. The budget numbers would be in by then.

Chair Ford encouraged the museums to ask for money from the County as well as the TDC.

Mr. Garcia said he agreed 100% that all groups were taken care of.

Mr. Dubree stated he also agreed but he thought the TDC needed to get prepared to get rolling.

MR. DUBREE MADE MOTION TO FUND ART CENTER \$6,000 AND HAVANA MUSEUM \$2,500 WITH A SECOND FROM MS. HOLT.

Chair Ford thought the TDC was going to find out how much was available. She stated Havana was doing great job and encouraged them to come back if things changed.

Ms. Holt told Mr. Piotrowski to make sure the museum knew the Resolutions and stated they should check back because the BOCC met every Friday.

Mr. Piotrowski stated they would and they were very concerned about the health situation and they would be consistent with the county.

THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

3. TDC Website Update Payment to Kerigan Marketing- Leslie D. Steele, Public Information Officer (Discussion/Action)

Ms. Steele explained the TDC website links were not working and she got with Kerigan to make the website usable. It had 9 errors on pages. She said the total cost was \$2,560 but there were other things that needed to be corrected on the site and she asked that the TDC to pay \$5,000 to bring the site into ADA compliance and payment compliance with Kerigan. She said she had been trying to get payment, however, with the payment policies, there was a lot to go through. The Clerk's office asked for approval from TDC. In addition, "Be Original" should be "Visit Gadsden, FL" Be Original was a campaign to get people to come to the area and she asked to go back to the original domain name. She further stated it was a beautiful site but there were things that were needed to bring it up to date. Kerigan had already done the work because an Agreement was signed by the Interim County Administrator on June 26, 2020.

Ms. Holt stated that was a battle every year and was an in-house problem. She asked if it was \$2,000 for the work that was already done and \$5,000 for further work to be done.

Ms. Steele stated it was \$5,000 total.

Chair Ford asked Ms. Steele when the TDC approved a website with Kerigan and Ms. Steele stated the website had always been the TDC website.

Chair Ford stated the TDC knew about Kerigan and she did not remember it coming before the TDC to approve them doing the website.

Ms. Steele stated it was not "them doing our website", they were doing maintenance on the website and Chair Ford stated it had still never come before the TDC.

Ms. Steele stated she was not sure it had to go before the TDC. She further stated the TDC did not have a marketing firm. When the RFP was put out, Paradise said no and

then yes. The second-place firm was Kerigan. Ms. Steele stated since she was the Administrator over the TDC, her recommendation was to put the RFP back out so the TDC could get a company that wanted to be working with the TDC and not just during COVID.

Chair Ford told Ms. Stelle she thought she was wrong. She further stated some of it was right, but it was her understanding Paradise did not have problem with TDC it was the lawyers, but not the new lawyer.

Attorney Knowles said there were contract issues that were not worked out. He stated Ms. Steele was correct, there was a contract and then COVID came in and Paradise said no. Mr. Brown reached back out to Kerigan and then Paradise came back and the board decided to go with a different firm. He thought it was safe to bid again to give everyone a fair shot.

Mr. Garcia said he agreed to not spend \$5,000 on a marketing project at this time. He thought \$500 was okay to fix broken links. He stated he was on the website and although it was not populated with content, there were no broken links. If the TDC wanted to spend \$500 that was fine, but not \$5,000 that may be completely revamped with a new marketing firm, did not make sense right now especially since there was not much to market at this moment.

Ms. Steele stated Kerigan had fixed the website already. The County Administrator had the authority to make these corrections and payments. If the TDC wanted to only pay for what was done and not the future work, they could, but the work was done already.

Chair Ford stated it did not come before the TDC, but since it was broken, the County Administrator took it upon himself to contract with Kerigan to do in-house repairs on the website and they needed to be paid.

MRS. HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE.

Mr. Garcia asked how much the TDC was paying them. He stated thousands to fix broken links was not ok.

Ms. Steele explained what Kerigan did to the website and stated the content was old. If the TDC decided to not make the payment, it would take the website down.

Ms. Holt stated this was not something that was not normally done. She stated the manager could spend a certain amount of money without TDC approval. She asked the TDC to pay what was owed and keep moving.

Ms. Johnson stated she thought the TDC should pay for work that was done.

MS. HOLT AMENDED HER MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF \$2,560.00 TO PAY KERIGAN WITH A SECOND BY JOHNSON. THE BOARD VOTED.

Mr. Garcia wanted to abstain from voting saying it was just another expenditure of money when the TDC needed a real marketing plan.

Attorney Knowles said Mr. Garcia had to give an “aye or nay” and Ms. Holt stated if Mr. Garcia did not want to vote it was a yes vote.

THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE (MR. GARCIA ABSTAINED)

Ms. Steele stated this was not a new expenditure, it was in the budget that had already been approved.

4. Updates

1. Next Scheduled Meetings

Monday, August 17, 2020 at 4:00 Via Zoom

7. New Business

Ms. Holt stated this happened sometimes through finance. She asked the clerk and people in finance, with their opinion, attach Ordinances or State Statute with the opinion. That way TDC was always covered by law. But when they just say we cannot approve it, that does not mean anything when it came to the law. BOCC, Clerk and Finance needed to hash this out. TDC procedures could be changed if the TDC wanted to and say, any work done by the TDC comes before this Board, but this was something the Manager saw needed to be done.

8. Items for Discussion

9. Meeting Adjourned

Chair Ford called the meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

CAROLYN FORD, Chair

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk