

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER  
19, 2020 AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING  
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Carolyn Ford, Chair- appeared remotely  
Jeff Dubree, Bed Tax Collector- appeared remotely  
Brenda Holt, Commissioner Dist. 4- by phone  
Cathy Johnson, Havana Council Member- by phone  
Keith Dowdell, Quincy City Commissioner- appeared remotely

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

**Staff:** Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer- appeared remotely  
Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney-appeared remotely  
Beth Bruner, Deputy Clerk

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

At 4:17 pm Chair Ford called the meeting to order and the Pledge Allegiance to the U.S. Flag was recited.

Roll call was taken by Chair Ford and Ms. Steele.

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

**MR. DOWDELL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH A SECOND BY MR. DUBREE.**

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

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**a. August 25, 2020**

**MR. DOWDELL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT.**

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

**4. Presentations**

None were had.

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

None were had.

**6. General Business**

**a. Financial Reports September 2020, (Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst) (Discussion)**

Chair Ford asked Mr. Price to give a summary.

Mr. Price said page 1 was the Fund Balance for the past couple years.

Chair Ford asked if under the beginning balance of 9/30/20, was that a projection.

Mr. Price said the bottom number was a projection based on the Revenues.

Chair Ford said the ending balance was \$100,781 and a projection. She asked if Mr. Price knew what the State was going to send.

Mr. Price said the amount listed was the best estimate based on Revenues. He said he was comfortable with the Revenue and the expense was what had been agreed on at previous meetings. Mr. Price said page 2 was Revenue for the past year and he was still waiting for one more number for September and thought it would be \$9,000-\$10,000. He said page 3 was the expense side and it was good. He said there were no major promotions in the County. He asked if there were any questions and there were none.

**b. FY 20/21 Final Budget (Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst)  
(Discussion)**

Mr. Price said the last two pages were what the TDC wanted as their Budget with corrections made by the Council over a month ago.

Ms. Steele said with the new Budget, there was \$179,341 for this FY with updates and corrections made.

Chair Ford said she did not understand. She said she did not know, with COVID, how much money would come in. She asked where the projection came from and if Mr. Price got a notice from the State saying what the TDC would get.

Mr. Price said he did not get anything from the State. He said last year \$180,000 was the Budget and now it was \$135,000.

Chair Ford asked if the Marketing Firm was adjusted. She thought they were budgeted at \$90,000 and asked if it needed to be readjusted.

Mr. Price said it was possible and it was the same as the past year or two.

Ms. Steele said when an RFP went out, the TDC would need a marketing plan to get people back to Gadsden County, Hotels, and Events. She thought it would be smart to leave it in the Budget. She said if it was not used it would carry over just like last year. She further stated the County would need marketing and was reopening. She said to be prepared and recommended the TDC had a plan to be ready.

Commissioner Holt \*inaudible\*

Ms. Steele said nothing would be done with Marketing but she wanted the TDC to start thinking about dates to put the RFP out. She suggested to be ready and have a plan in place. She understood the firm would get \$30,000 and the media plan and buys were \$60,000 for billboards, ads, video production, radio, etc. She said an RFP gave time to get a Marketing Firm in place.

Chair Ford agreed, except COVID was still in the County and at outside events. She asked to bring this back to the TDC in November and they would still be ready by January 1, 2021.

Mr. Dubree said his opinion was to be ready and leave marketing in the Budget as is. He said the TDC needed to get people in the County and Hotels. He said tourists come no matter if there was an event or not, they were coming to the lake, and to see the small towns. He stated they were missing the tourists coming now. He further stated some were ready to travel. He also said the County owed it to the industry that collected the tax, and it was money that was supposed to be used for marketing to the County to get people in the Hotels.

Commissioner Holt \*inaudible\*

Ms. Steele said the only thing needing approval today was the new website.

Commissioner Holt, at 4:39 p.m. said she needed to hang up but would call back.

Attorney Knowles said the meeting had lost quorum and could not conduct any further business.

Ms. Steele asked if there could be discussion with no action taken and Attorney Knowles said no.

Commissioner Holt returned at 4:42 p.m. and a quorum was again present and the meeting resumed.

**c. New Website Approval (Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer)  
(Discussion/Action)**

Ms. Steele said the new website would have no impact to the Budget and would be paid for as a result of the County getting a new website, and they offered the TDC to redesign their website for \$7,000. She said there would be no cost until next year and it would be \$2,500. The third year was \$2,635, fourth year \$2,756, and for the tenth year it was \$2,894 for the cost of living increase. She said now, the websites were being managed by different people and the TDC did not have control over the TDC website. She stated this would allow the TDC to have control over the website as well as meetings and the agenda to go electronic. She said there was a one-time fee of \$7,000 and it would be paid for with CARES money.

Chair Ford said content was the problem. She said places to stay were not listed or updated.

Ms. Steele said that was why this recommendation was being made. She said the TDC did not have much control over the current website and they were not managed by the same company the County's website was managed under. She stated the IT Department wanted all County technology under one umbrella. She further stated the County website was \$54,000 and they would give the TDC the same type of website in smaller capacity for \$7,000, which would be paid for with CARES money. She said the TDC would be able to control the content and at this time, no one knew the keeper of the records for the current website and this would allow the TDC to be the keeper of their

own records and give them the ability to keep current. She stated the original contract for the "Do something Original" website could not be found.

Chair Ford said it sounded different from what was talked about last time.

Ms. Steele said the difference was there was a company that turned links on through GoDaddy. She said there was no maintenance for what Mr. Dubree asked for.

Chair Ford asked if all changes would be corrected under the new website for only \$7,000.

Ms. Steele said it would not even be \$7,000 this year because CARES would pay for it because it would allow automatic applications where people would not have to come in, they could safely socially distance by doing everything online. She said RFP's could be submitted online as well. She said it would make the TDC more modern and the first year would be paid for through the CARES Fund.

Chair Ford asked how much was owed to the old firm.

Ms. Steele said she did not know who the old firm was. She said GoDaddy fixed some links. She said the TDC would be getting their own website.

Commissioner Holt asked if the TDC could add to the website or if it was only the marketing firm.

Ms. Steele said the TDC could add things themselves and would be in control of branding of the new website.

Commissioner Holt said the County was going to have to use the CARES money before time ran out.

Ms. Steele said the County would own the website and no money was owed under the current website.

Mr. Dubree said he was concerned the fee was high for the 2-4 years. He said to stay focused on the primary use of the website, and it was to attract visitors. He said it should not look like the County site. He thought \$30,000 to pay a Marketing Firm included a website. He asked to put in the RFQ, the TDC did not need a website. He stated content was the key to a successful website to bring people in. He wanted to update content with logs, stories, new restaurants and things like that. He stated currently, the Marketing Firm would do this for the TDC and he wondered if the TDC would be able to keep up with all of that.

Ms. Steele said if the County decided to have an event and needed something up quickly, she could do that. The Marketing firm would provide the look and feel and she said the website would not look like the County website.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT CARES FUNDING FOR A NEW TOURIST WEBSITE WITH A SECOND BY MR. DUBREE.**

**THE BOARD VOTE 5-0 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE.**

<b>MR. DUBREE</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER HOLT</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>MR. DOWDELL</b>	<b>Y DID NOT VOTE</b>
<b>MS. JOHNSON</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>CHAIR FORD</b>	<b>Y</b>

**d. Possible Marketing Firm RFP Dates (Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer)  
(Discussion/Action)**

Ms. Steele said she was hearing the TDC wanted to come back in November to give dates for the RFP to get it out in December.

Commissioner Holt said it could be brought back in November and did not think anything would happen during that time. She said put it on the agenda for November and decide then.

Chair Ford said the TDC would have time to look at items and then put an RFP out in January.

Commissioner Holt said a discussion in November did not mean an RFP would go out.

Chair Ford asked Ms. Steele to send a copy of the original RFP to TDC members to look at.

Attorney Knowles said members will need to be in chamber with a quorum by November 1, 2020 and the Commission would be notified if the Executive Order was extended.

**e. Updates**

None were had.

**i. Next Scheduled Meeting  
Monday, November 16, 2020**

**7. New Business**

None was had

**8. Items for Discussion**

Mr. Dubree said an RFP was needed to get out so the TDC could prepare. He said Mr. Price should be able to provide the TDC with numbers. Each time a sales tax payment was received, it showed what the month was and could be compared to the previous year, same month and not to expect letter from the State. He asked to meet in November and get something going.

Commissioner Holt asked if the TDC could get a count of visitors from the Hotels.

Ms. Steele said she would get on it and Commissioner Holt said it gave a better idea about marketing.

**9. Adjourn**

**MR. DOWDELL MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN WITH A SECOND BY  
COMMISSIONER HOLT.  
THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:05 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**CAROLYN FORD, Chair  
Tourist Development Council**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**