

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON
AUGUST 1, 2022 AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

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

Absent: Peter Patel, Tax Collector

Staff Present: Ed Dixon, County Administrator
Leslie Steele, TDC Administrator
Clayton Knowles, Attorney
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

There were technical difficulties for the first 15 minutes.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

Chair Ford called the workshop to order at 4:03 pm. The roll call was done.

2. General Business

- a) **Introduction Overview** – Leslie Steele said they are up by \$3,000. They will be getting the RFP done. It will go up September 30th of fiscal year. They will do the original campaign.

She directed to the first page in the booklet.

Keith Dowell entered workshop at 4:07 pm.

Ms. Steele said the budgeting office has caught up. The salaries and contracts are being taken out. There are legal services for Mr. Knowles. They have to do a budget amendment that was approved for special events. They have advertising when they do their meetings. They are at a good point and they need to decide on a good day to have a meeting and can approve the vendor for the marketing RFP. Also, so that they can approve the 4 companies that requested assistance with their events. After they make recommendations, they will have to approve those events.

Mr. Dubree asked what will happen if they can't get a quorum. Leslie said they will have a meeting. The reason for this workshop is because they needed to see the budget and make recommendations. Leslie said they can do marketing workshops. If there was a need for a meeting, they would go to quarterly meetings.

Commissioner Dowdell had a question about the rental and leasing.

Ms. Steele said the next page is the expenditure budget broken down. They did share with the budget office that they liked this style. After this year, they have transitioned.

Linda Dixon walked in at 4:16 pm.

Ms. Steele said TDC sponsored events are the events they decide to do that have not been allotted anywhere because they will be sponsored by them.

Commissioner Holt asked about the ones under the marketing reimbursement. She asked if they are only for right now? Ms. Steele said yes, she was just giving an example of the type of funding. Commissioner Holt said she wanted to ask a question. She asked if they are not permanent? Ms. Steele said yes.

b) 2022-2023 Financial Outlook

Ms. Steele referred to the budget worksheets. The budget team got together based off of where they are right now and the recommended budget is the \$12,648.00 for salaries, no pay increases there. The total amount for all the taxes comes from personnel services to \$16,393.00. She asked if everyone was okay with that and everyone agreed. For the professional legal component and travel per diem is \$10,000.00 for the legal team and \$3,600.00 for travel. The tourism conference is August 31st – September 2nd in Boca Raton and participation in that is \$549.00 per person. The tourism conference is August 31st through September 2nd in Boca Raton, for \$549 per person. In the past, they only wanted two members to go. It is already at \$1,700 without travel and hotel. They need to get with chairman on which direction to go. Communications was for \$100 and postage and freight for \$200. The Marketing Reimbursement Program is where they reimburse organizations that they partner with that do events and they help with the marketing of the County. This year they are asking for the \$45,000 so that they can have TDC sponsored events. The remaining of the TDC sponsored events is \$31,500. The Juneteenth event is out of the events grants fund of the \$20,000.00. Commissioner Holt confirmed that the category is different from the other events. Leslie said yes. Commissioner Holt said she asked for the numbers is because she wanted to make sure that the \$31,500.00 stayed. It's going to be a tradition to have Juneteenth. It should be funded separately. Ms. Steele asked if it will be in the marketing component and if the County will promote it? Commissioner Holt said that's what she wants. Ms. Steele asked if they want it to come out of the marketing dollars? Commissioner Holt said the fishing tournament is a good idea. It should be an annual event. They should do Juneteenth as a County event. They can decide where the money is going to come from but there should be two permanent events that they are going to do to bring as many people in as they can.

Ms. Steele said for the marketing dollars they have \$103,500.00 that's been allotted for the marketing firm. In that, the marketing firm would be responsible in the media plan they had them put together. They would be responsible for talking about the Crappy Tournament. Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Dubree how successful would it be if they brought it back. Mr. Dubree said it is expensive, they were spending \$20,000.00 to do the tournament. It brings people in but doesn't generate money for the county. He said right now, more people may be drawn to Lake Talquin because the state of Florida put a bass that they tagged in the lake that if someone catches it, it's \$5,000.00. Commissioner Holt said she asked that because it is a resource. Mr. Dubree thought that the \$103,500 was going to be used, not so much for events, but for bringing people here that just want to come to take a trip here

unrelated to an event. Ms. Stelle said for the media plan, that Juneteenth and the tournament would be included and it would be her recommendation that it be included in that \$60,000.00. Mr. Dubree said it doesn't bring a lot of money in his opinion. Ms. Steele said \$103,000 is not enough money for marketing. They need to think about making some adjustments. She said from going to the tourism meetings, the biggest complaint is that people can't find their website because it says it's "do something original" so they will be going to "visit Gadsden". Billboards and google ads come up when people are traveling.

Commissioner Holt said she wants people to come all the time but they have to have a hook. Mr. Dubree said we have a lot of hooks. Commissioner Holt said she understands, but she has some questions. She said if she comes through Quincy, she sees empty stores. In Chattahoochee she sees the river so they need to key in on some things. How do they get people here? Mr. Dubree said they need to run some advertising. Ms. Steele said that's what the marketing funds will be used for. Commissioner Holt said she's not debating it just wants a hook to get people to come. Mr. Dubree said he brought it up because they have the \$31,500.00 for sponsored events and then they have the \$20,000.00 in events. Whether that's the number they stick with, it's no problem. They need to separate on events and promoting the County that's not related to an event.

Ms. Steele said in other counties, they have smaller events, then the bigger event. They would need to know how to separate the money for the bigger event. The bigger event is like the calling card and will go under the events grant fund. The event that is expected to draw in 1,000 to 200 can only get this amount and then the event that draws in 10,000 visitors, this is a hypothetical number, that event can get \$20,000.00. Mr. Evans is providing her with his bedroom tax he generates from his reggae festival. She said Tallahassee does their events like that. Marketing funds is for marketing Gadsden to get people to visit. The other pot of money is for events specifically targeted for larger events.

Ms. Ford asked for the definition of the other grant. Ms. Steele said they had levels of those grants. Ms. Ford said she is just looking for the category. Ms. Steele said that's what she is saying. She said theirs can be community event grants funds and then it can be larger organization grant funds. She doesn't know the right name for it at the moment but she knows there's a separation.

Mr. Dowdell said they need marketing money for Gadsden County. Ms. Steele said that's why they need to add an additional pot of money. The \$103,000.00 needs to be spent just on marketing this County. Mr. Dubree said they only have \$125,000 a year income.

Ms. Ford said she is thinking about the county coming in for a big celebration to just market the County around May 10th to June 16th. It's in one month capsule leading up to the big days and plan. Even come up with a plan with the marketing firm to put Gadsden County on display. Ms. Steele said they need to have a separate pot of events. Ms. Ford asked for the special category. Ms. Steele said corporation events. Ms. Ford liked the community events. Ms. Steele would recommend they get back together to find out where they can get the funding to pay for the additional cost.

Commissioner Holt said it won't matter that much if they look at the \$103,000.00 they can use. She asked if the \$123,000.00 is what they have all together? Ms. Steele said yes. Commissioner Holt said they can talk about it but don't have the money. The kicker is if someone is going to buy something they have to have something to buy. They have to have something they want and then they'll buy it. They can market really hard but they aren't marketing what they want. She said what do they see

when they are driving by? She said they can spend X amount of dollars on marketing but what are they going to market? They will need to do some thinking about this once they leave and will need to have another meeting. Mr. Dubree said that information could be provided by the actual people that are collecting the money now. People that have hotels can say why people are staying there, whether it is for business, or for visiting family. They can say when their busiest seasons are. Commissioner Holt said surveying has been done with the cards for data. Mr. Dubree said it should be done digitally.

Mr. Dowdell said Coca Cola was Quincy's brand. He doesn't know why they left but if Coca Cola came up in conversation, they would talk about Quincy. He asked what happened? Ms. Ford said mainstream took over it. Mr. Dowdell said they need to get it back. Ms. Ford said a guy named Monroe, had it, then he got sick. From her understanding, there was some type of confusion around the whole thing, when they left, that was it. Commissioner Holt said how are they going to get money to go after some of these things. Ms. Steele said for the Tallahassee events, they get money from the TDC and from the Lottery and Walmart and other sponsors. As a smaller county, people tend to want the county to sponsor the whole event as oppose to getting other sponsors to help with an event. Another thing to focus on is what level of sponsorship do they want to have.

Ms. Ford said it's because they never asked. They have the biggest Trulieve and they don't give a dime to the county at this time. They responded to her by saying they got all this that's supposed to be opening up and then so many little small groups keep running. They want it organized. They never had a planning marketing firm to come in. Ms. Steele said that wouldn't be the county or the TDC, that would be the organization that would do it. What is happening with us, is everyone is coming to the county to pay for their event. They have to be careful with that approach. The county can't accept money from Trulieve for contributions.

Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Knowles what state statute says that. Mr. Knowles said they need to remit them to the clerk. Mr. Knowles said there was an issue that the clerk said they were taking money from one of the events. Commissioner Holt asked if there is a law for it? Mr. Knowles said another issue was that there had been some communications of vendors. If they want to raise money separately from businesses, particularly if they are not doing business in front of the county. Commissioner Holt said you can go to the state constitution and come on down. She said that is a research question they need him to research. Ms. Ford said the companies down south were donating. Commissioner Holt said they never took an initiative. She said she has not asked because she felt they need to be better organized. Companies do not want to be bothered. Mr. Knowles said she can send it to Ms. Steele and then she can send it to them. Ms. Steele asked if the CDC accept sponsorships. Commissioner Holt said the board has to approve it. Mr. Knowles said the statute for this board doesn't say it, it would be the ethics statute. Mr. Dubree said it is more customarily done in other places. Mr. Dubree said they have a hard time getting a quorum together and are now meeting quarterly for them to really put on a major event, especially 4 of them a year. He doesn't think they have the resources.

Ms. Steele went to the next item, which was books, publications and subscriptions and it came up to \$5,930.00. Mr. Dubree said he thought they weren't doing the FADMO. Ms. Steele said it was on the sheet for fiscal year '22. They agreed that they are getting rid of Riverway South. The entire budget would be \$212,568.00. She would like for them to have a meeting to approve some things. Commissioner Holt said they need the conference and they need to go. Ms. Steele said there is money to move around and recommends everyone goes to it and they make a budget amendment to it. Ms.

Steele asked who would be interested in attending. Everyone agreed to attend. Mr. Dubree asked if they still offer a discount. Ms. Steele said yes.

Summary Highlight

Fund Balance as of 8/1/2022

Revenue Details

Expenditure Details

c.) Special Events Request Update

Ms. Steele would like to have a meeting within the next 14 days so that they can approve those events. Once they decide whoever the marketing firm is, they can start doing workshops in September.

Commissioner Holt asked for deadline for events to be over. Ms. Steele said it is still open and for next year's events, it will open on August 31st. Commissioner Holt asked for this one, and Ms. Steele said no. Commissioner Holt said hopefully in the near future, they will be going on the Economic Development trip. They have to have other boards to go. This one is on the Tennessee and Mississippi border and Economic Development is what they need to go after. She said if people are not coming here to live and spend their money or visit, they are not going to get any more than what they are getting right now.

3. Next Scheduled Meetings

Ms. Steele asked if they can do August 22 or August 29? It would be a regular meeting. They confirmed the next regular meeting will be on August 29, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

4. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, CHAIR FORD DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:11 P.M.

CAROLYN FORD, Chair
Tourist Development Commission

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk