

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT  
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON AUGUST 29,  
2022 AT 5:00 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:** Leslie Steele, TDC Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

1. **Welcome** – Tourist Development Council Chairman, Carolyn Ford  
Chair Ford called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. She then led to the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.
2. **Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**  
Roll call was done and everyone was present except for Peter Patel and Linda Dixon (arrived late).

3. **Amendments and Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Ford asked for a motion to approve the amendments and the agenda.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER DOWDELL MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a) Budget Workshop, August 1, 2022

Chair Ford asked for a motion to approved the meeting minutes.

**COMMISSIONER ALLEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER DOWDELL MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

5. **General Business**

- a.) **Introduction Overview** – (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Director)

Ms. Steele said they were scheduled to go the Visit Florida Tourism Conference. However, in their efforts to schedule, she realized they do not have a credit card for the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council. There is a need for it in order to go to workshops and reserve hotel rooms and such. They will be able to go to the East Northwest Florida annual meeting at the end of September.

- b.) **Discussion/Action 2022-2023 TDC Budget** – (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Director)

Ms. Steele said in their workshop, everything indicated no changes. No changes in professional services, communications, and marketing reimbursements. Their RFP is out. She may need a little guidance to put the same RFP as they put out last time, however, there was no request for the budget proposal to be submitted. Three applicants, or people that have shown an interest have asked if they need to submit a budget. Zimmerman and two other firms asked for a copy of their budget. She wanted to know if they wanted to extend the time and allow people to submit a budget proposal? Or do they want to leave it as is? Ms. Dixon had a question. She asked how many applications do they have? Ms. Steele said 8 firms have asked for the RFP. Ms. Dixon asked if they will be sending out an addendum? Ms. Steele asked Attorney Knowles if they can send out an addendum and ask them to submit it. Attorney Knowles said usually they can withdraw it, but there is usually a timeframe. Ms. Steele said everything else stays the same in their budget. The budget starts on page 11 of 86. She said the entire budget is \$212,568.00. She mentioned the Board of County Commissioners had their budget workshop and there were no changes made with the Tourist Development Council, they accepted the recommendations for the budget.

*Linda Dixon walked in at 5:12 p.m.*

**COMMISSIONER DOWDELL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TDC BUDGET OF \$212,568.00 AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

There was a voice vote roll call:

<b>Carolyn Ford -</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Jeff Dubree -</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Brenda Holt -</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Decorkus Allen -</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Keith Dowdell -</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Linda Dixon -</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

c.) **Discussion/Action TDC Credit Card/Line of Credit** – (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Director)

Ms. Steele said this item is to allow her to apply for a credit card/line of credit for the TDC. Currently, the county has a \$25,000.00 credit limit with Bank of America. She wants to recommend the same company since the county is in business with them already.

**COMMISSIONER DOWDELL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

d.) **Discussion/Action Special Events Payment Request** – (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Director)

Ms. Steele said they have one from the grant for the Havana Reggae Festival, the Dr. Martin Luther King committee for the MLK event, Room Shade Lodge for the father/daughter dance, and the North Florida Education Development corporation total cost will be \$5,000.00 apiece.

**COMMISSIONER ALLEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER DOWDELL MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 6-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**6. Next Scheduled Meetings**

Ms. Steele said they need to determine when they will have the next meeting. She recommends getting some dates for some workshops regarding their marketing and tourism RFP so they know what they want for the applicants. She asked how they would like the process to happen, if they want to meet the top 3 applicants and interview them themselves. There is a select committee and they will be in placement order. They have the ability to do an in-person interview as a board.

Commissioner Holt said she would like for them to come before the board. She feels like as soon as possible, they need to have some locations and items for them to look at. They can't complain if they don't have some input.

Chair Dixon asked about the comments made before? She asked if they have copies of those minutes. Ms. Steele said they do. Commissioner Dixon asked for it to be brought to the next meeting. She said that has to do with the plan that they wanted to put together to change the whole image of Gadsden County. Ms. Steele said to include the information for the remaining firms. Then have 3 firms come before them and put a presentation on for them as to what they can do for the county. Chair Dixon said if she remembers correctly, they would have comments workshops for input before they say what they want to do. Most will come in cold and not know besides what's online. Ms. Steele asked her if she wants that to be the selected firm or all top 3 firms? Chair Dixon said the top 3. They need to have an idea when they come in. It should be standard so they can get a good plan from the citizens. Ms. Steele said they will bring the selected committee score sheet to allow them to make their own scores.

Commissioner Dubree asked how they have top 3? What's the criteria? Ms. Steele said they have a selection committee that is going through all of them. They would still have access to the bottom 5. Commissioner Dubree asked what was the criteria? Ms. Steele said it is the same as the last score sheet. Chair Dixon asked who is on the selection committee? Ms. Steele named all of them. Chair Dixon asked if all were from Gadsden County? Ms. Steele said two of them are. Chair Dixon said she feels comfortable with Ms. Steele being there.

Chair Dixon asked the board if there were any comments. Commissioner Holt asked Attorney Knowles about the request for donation to government. Attorney Knowles said he sent Ms. Steele a memo. Commissioner Holt asked for him to tell her about it. Attorney Knowles said they need to be careful about soliciting sponsorships. The board will accept or deny sponsorship requests. They need to make sure everyone can see it. The issue would be conflict check. Typically, counties do the sponsoring. He said he sent a form that shows what levels of sponsorship are. Commissioner Holt asked if Ms. Steele could send it. Ms. Steele said

she sent it to her. Commissioner Holt said they need to have a letter that would notify the business or individual that they are not obligating any type of special exception to them as far as contract. Attorney Knowles said they can tailor it to their needs. This board is more advisory. Commissioner Holt said he needs to forward it to everyone. Attorney Knowles said he doesn't have everyone's e-mail addresses.

Commissioner Holt said it has been done for years. They really need to see it. They are office made and need a policy in place. She was at Celebration Florida and there were people from Miami Dade that their school system received money from businesses up to \$3 million. If that's something they can do, they need to know how to draft some language that would fit the state statute. Attorney Knowles said they can and it can go before the board. He said the question was if they could do it, and the answer is that they can, they just need the proper guardrails.

Commissioner Dubree said if it is feasible to do, then they can cross that bridge when it comes. Commissioner Holt said no, they have to have a policy in place. It came up with the county commission too. Attorney Knowles said the memo was dealt towards both. They do need a policy but this body will probably not have many conflicts.

Ms. Steele said her confusion is where the document says, "the statute says that employees can accept gifts". Attorney Knowles said the goal of the statute is to prevent gifts being made for the purpose of some other gain later on down the line. If they accept something, sent it to the Clerk.

Commissioner Holt said it is probably better to have who accepts those gifts. Attorney Knowles said they need to be remitted to the clerk. Commissioner Holt said she is saying on this side of the street. If a gift comes in, who accepts the gift to give to the clerk. Attorney Knowles said the administrator. Ms. Steele said it is not a gift, it is a sponsorship. Attorney Knowles said it could be considered a gift. Ms. Steele asked why? Attorney Knowles said someone can say a commissioner told them if they did X, that they would get Y. That could be viewed as a gift even if it isn't true. Commissioner Holt said right, because people lie. Commissioner Dowdell said no one should be accepting money anyway.

Commissioner Holt said any board would be covered. Attorney Knowles if they could have a clearing house where it goes in one portal and goes to another portal. Ms. Steele said the difference is they are asking them to become a sponsor, if they do, fill out the paperwork. Commissioner Holt said if they plan an event, it's good to get sponsors. Commissioner Dowdell said just do not accept money. Commissioner Holt said it is not them, they want them to go to the county, but they need to have paperwork in place. Commissioner Dowdell said Nick (Clerk) has to do that. She said no, they write the policy, then he follows the policy. What came in before was implications from him that there may be something going on over here. So, this would solve the problem. They want to have their paperwork in place so that they can get this going. Commissioner Dowdell said if Nick thinks there's something, then they will tell Nick to write the policy. Commissioner Holt said no, they don't want Nick to write anything over here. Commissioner Dowdell said Nick can write the policy and they can still approve it. Commissioner Holt said no, they have to be separate elected officials.

7. **Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR FORD  
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:43 P.M.**

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**CAROLYN FORD, Chair  
Tourist Development Council**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**