

**AT A MEETING OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON  
SEPTEMBER 26, 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  
Keith Dowdell, Quincy City Commissioner  
Decorkus Allen, Havana Council Member  
Linda Dixon, Tax Collector  
Peter Patel, Tax Collector

**Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Leslie Steele, TDC Director  
Clayton Knowles, Attorney  
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

**1. Welcome**

Chair Ford called meeting to order at 5:16 pm.

**2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

The Pledge of Allegiance was done and roll call was taken.

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

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

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE BOARD  
VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**4. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

a) Regular August 29, 2022, Meeting Minutes

**UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE BOARD VOTED 5-  
0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**5. General Business**

**a. Introduction Overview**

Ms. Steele said they put their RFP out twice. They had 11 people requested the first time they put it out. The second time they put it out, they had 2 people requested. The first time they had only 1 respondent. Most people called and asked for copy of budget and \$103,000.00 scares them away because they are asking them to put together a marketing plan as well as make a media buy through social media. She spoke with the chair person for direction as the fiscal year starts 10/1.

**b. Discussion/Action Marketing RFP/Marketing Process**

Ms. Steele recommends that Visit Florida comes in. They are a part of Visit Florida and have them help them prepare a marketing plan. They can also do the media buy which is the \$103,000.00.

*Linda Dixon walked in at 5:20 pm.*

She wanted their permission to see what they offer. She wants to know what to do with \$103,000.00 not having a marketing firm.

Chair Ford asked if that was the only one submitted? Ms. Steele said she doesn't have the submission; she will send it to them. She said they are a local firm and their name is Greydog Communications. She asked if they want to piecemeal it or what do they want to do with the RFP so that it can work?

Mr. Dubree said Visit Florida would have magazine options.

Ms. Steele said she doesn't want to pay Visit Florida, she wants them to prepare their tourists destination plan for free. Mr. Dubree said they have all different kinds of packages. Ms. Steele wants permission from them to talk to Visit Florida for them to give them a workshop and possibly put together their tourist destination marketing plan.

Commissioner Dowdell asked what does Greydog bring to the table? Ms. Steele said they didn't select them because they only had one. Their rule is that they have to rebid it out again.

Commissioner Dowdell said she doesn't need their permission to do that, she can talk with whoever she wants to. Ms. Steele said when it comes to money, she wants to be overly cautious. Commissioner Dowdell said she can talk with them just can't offer them no money. Ms. Steele said she wanted to inform them that they had 13 submissions, once everyone found out about the budget, no one wanted to apply. Commissioner Dowdell said they can't let that dictate how much money they will spend. He wants to see what Greydog is bringing to the table. Ms. Steele said she will ask for a copy of that.

Commissioner Holt said they should talk to Visit Florida and have them do their presentation. Ms. Steele confirmed that \$103,000.00 is just for marketing and \$212,000.00 is the total budget. Commissioner Holt said she thinks Visit Florida can give more since they are doing the whole state instead of just them. She said it would be good to have the company that did apply to see what they are about to compare to Visit Florida. She said they can't change \$103,000.00 unless they sit it out a year and see what they are going to start paying for rentals.

Mr. Dubree said they spent more money on legal services and not marketing. Commissioner Holt said she told them they don't have to have an attorney every week. Mr. Knowles said he hasn't billed this fiscal year. Commissioner Holt said it doesn't hurt for them to sit down with the

commission. She said the budget is done but money can be moved around within the budget. It doesn't hurt to have a workshop.

Mr. Dubree said he likes the Visit Florida idea. He said one thing they would be missing out on is that they don't have marketing company they previously had. They got \$2,500.00 a month to manage all of their social media. They also paid \$30,000 a year for those services and another \$60,000.00 for media buys. Ms. Steele said it will still be laid out the same. She said media markets have increased and they would want to market to other places.

*Mr. Allen walked in at 5:29 pm.*

Ms. Steele said that destination marketing has changed.

Mr. Dubree asked if anyone had sources from one of the universities. Ms. Steele said they can reach out. She said she has a person in technology that can do the social media for the board and the TDC. Mr. Dubree said it gets the locals involved as well.

Commissioner Dowdell said do they want to spend money just to spend money. He said they have \$103,000.00, nobody bided but they have one company and they don't want to listen to what they got to say. Ms. Steele said not at all, when you have a marketing RFP go out, the Love Where You Live campaign had \$50,000.00 that lasted 60 days. The marketing cost has gone up, but because they haven't been marketing themselves, they don't have the hotel tax to provide to take care of their marketing budget. She said we can't live off of people in Gadsden County. Commissioner Dowdell said they have to have something going on. Chair Ford said that's the reason for the marketing. Ms. Steele wants to make sure she provides the firm that applied, but wants a realistic look for tourist destination plan.

Chair Ford asked for a motion to have Visit Florida come in to conduct a workshop.

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

Chair Ford asked when? Ms. Steele asked if they can do it within the next 2-3 weeks? Everyone said yes. She said she will make it a workshop.

Commissioner Dowdell said to give them the opportunity.

Mr. Dubree asked if there was any progress on the 9 members. Ms. Steele said she has 2 requests out but there are thresholds they have to meet. There has to be a minimum of 3 bed taxes. Mr. Patel asked if she contacted Mike Patel from Comfort Inn. Ms. Steele said she will contact him. Ms. Steele said that Maurice Grant expressed a desire to serve on their board, but he has Air B&B's. She asked if that qualifies. Mr. Patel said it doesn't. Ms. Steele said she will call Mike and Maurice.

## **6. Next Scheduled Meetings**

7. **Adjournment**

**WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR FORD ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 5:37 P.M.**

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**CAROLYN FORD, Chair**  
**Tourist Development Council**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**