

**AT A MEETING OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON
MAY 5, 2025, AT 10:00 A.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD VIZ:**

Present: Carolyn Ford, Chair
Alonzetta Simpkins, County Commissioner
Charles Williams, Midway City Councilman
Ronte Harris, Quincy City Commissioner
Richele Robinson

Staff Present: Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Director
Louis Baptiste, Interim County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk
Leann Jinks, Clerk Secretary to the Boards

1. Welcome

Chair Ford called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m.

2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance/ Roll Call

Chair Ford led into the invocation and pledge of allegiance. Clerk did roll call.

3. Regular Meeting

a. Approval of Minutes:

February 3, 2025, Regular Meeting

MR. HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES AND MR. WILLIAMS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

b. Discussion and Action FY 25/26 Budget- - (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Council Executive Director, Rose Raynak, Finance Director, Pheshe Bennett, Budget Technician)

Ms. Steele provided an update on the above item.

Ms. Robinson asked about the treasure hunt and asked that Ms. Steele provide an overview of the event; Ms. Steele stated it is a County wide event that brings people into the County from as far as Atlanta, and she just met with committee, and they are going to have 7 locations. Ms. Steele stated they will give prizes up to \$10k and they are required to advertise this event within a 200 mile radius like they did last year.

Ms. Robinson asked if the Treasure hunt committee prepared a written report for the board to view; Ms. Steele stated she did not have one but could ask for one.

Ms. Raynak and Ms. Bennett appeared before the board to talk about the preliminary budget.

Ms. Steele stated Lake 38 event is not included within the budget they are looking at but did need to be added; Ms. Raynak stated they would add \$7800 to line item 120-0020-54811 for the 25-26 budget year.

Ms. Bennett appeared and stated the budget will primarily mimic the following years budget with a few small changes.

Ms. Bennett stated there was a reduction in legal advertising from \$3k to \$1500.

Ms. Robinson asked about amount regarding grant fund; Ms. Bennett stated it was a total of \$87,800.

Ms. Robinson asked about black history amount; Ms. Steele stated they spent \$41k.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they allocated in the budget for events that may come up that were not already presented; Ms. Steele stated It was in line item 54811.

Ms. Raynak stated they had not added any additional funds for events that might pop up but they could at the request and direction of the board.

Mr. Harris requested to follow the same guidelines for pop-up events as those requesting ahead of time for events.

Mr. Baptiste stated moving funds to reserve was not an agenda item. He stated it would not be something they should vote on as it's not an agenda item. He recommends putting it on the next agenda to be voted on at that time.

Ms. Robinson asked about reunion funding cause she's only seeing \$25k but keeps hearing \$30k; Ms. Steele stated it was 30k, but they had already approved \$5k at their last meeting for Havana so the items listed for that meeting were the remaining reunions that they would be funding.

Budget meeting on May 27, 2025.

MR. HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULING OF THE BUDGET MEETING ON MAY 27, 2025, AND MS. ROBINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

c. Discussion and Action Marketing Funds and Event Grant Fund Request

2025 James A. Shanks Mega Reunion

2025 Greensboro High School Mega Reunion

2025 Chattahoochee High School Mega Reunion

2025 East Gadsden High School Mega Reunion

2025 West Gadsden High School Mega Reunion

d. Discussion and Action Stallworth Associates and Global Annual Juneteenth Celebration Event Grant Fund Request

Ms. Steele presented items c & d and recommended to approve these events.

Mr. Hayes asked about the Stallworth event; Ms. Steele stated it was an annual event highlighting Juneteenth now that it is a federal holiday.

Ms. Robinson mentioned Juneteenth breakfast and asked for an itinerary; Ms. Steele stated yes, they will receive an itinerary, and the TDC board will have their own table at the event.

Mr. Harris stated he hoped they do not lose focus on May 20th celebration moving forward.

MR. HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEMS C & D AND MR. HAYES MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

e. Discussion and Action Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism 2024 Payment Request and 2025 Participation

Ms. Steele presented the above item.

Ms. Steele asked for a motion to pay Peter Patel travel re-imbursement from 2024.

MR. HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE PAYMENT TO PETER PATEL FOR TRAVEL RE-IMBURSEMENT FROM 2024 AND MS. ROBINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

f. Discussion and Action for approval of Marketing Strategy- - (Leslie D. Steele, Tourist Development Administrator, Dante Fillyau and Michael Hall TDC Marketing Firm MediumFour)

Ms. Steele presented the above item.

Mr. Fillyau and Mr. Hall appeared through Zoom.

Ms. Steele stated there are 7 phases, and phase 4 has started.

Ms. Steele stated they need a motion to approve the final strategy.

MS. ROBINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINAL STRATEGY AND MR. HARRIS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

Mr. Baptiste made a request to amend the above motion:

MS. ROBINSON MADE A MOTION TO PAY \$75K TO MEDIUM FOUR FOR THE FINAL STRATEGY AND MR. HARRIS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

4. Next Schedule Meetings

Budget Meeting on May 27 10 a.m.

August 4th TDC Meeting 10 a.m.

5. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR FORD DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:42 A.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

CAROLYN FORD, Chair

Tourist Development Council

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk