

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 21,  
2019 AT 3:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING  
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**\*\*MINUTES AMENDED TO CORRECT PERSONS  
PRESENT AND ABSENT FROM MEETING\*\***

**Present:** Carolyn Ford, Vice-Chair of Tourist Interest  
Jeff Dubree, Tax Collector  
Linda Dixon, Tax Collector  
Cathy Johnson, Havana Council Member  
Brenda Holt, County Commissioner

**Absent:** Peter Patel  
Keith Dowdell

**Staff Present:** Olivia Smith  
David Weiss  
Marcella Blocker

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL**

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 3:45 P.M. and the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag was led by Vice-Chair Ford.

Roll call was conducted by Marcella Blocker.

**2. AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MR. DUPREE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH A SECOND BY MS. HOLT. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

None

**4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**a. Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Minutes will be presented and approved at the next meeting.

**b. Selection of Marketing Agency for Marketing Services:**

This agenda item seeks the selection of the marketing agency to provide Marketing Services to the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council.

Ms. Smith addressed the board and stated the TDC retains a marketing firm to promote Gadsden County as a tourist destination. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the current marketing firm, 78 Madison

Marketing Group's contract will end as stipulated in the three-year contract extension approved on 2016.

On August 16, 2019, Staff presented the TDC with 5 submitted proposals for selection.

No selection was made at the August 16, 2019 meeting.

No Selection was made at the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting due to lack of quorum.

Prior to the August 19, 2019 meeting, a committee made of County staff evaluated the application and made the following recommendations based on eligibility and criteria listed in the approved RFQ.

The following appointment recommendations are as follows:

1. **KERIGAN Marketing Associates – 297/300**
2. **Paradise Advertising – 295/300**
3. **Noise Inc. – 127/300**
4. **Current Agency – 113/300**
5. **Medium Four, LLC – 200/300**

#### **Fiscal Impact**

\$90,000 is budgeted for Marketing Services - \$30,000 (Agency Fee) \$60,000 (Marketing Services)

#### **Options**

TDC discretion

Vice- Chair Ford stated one of the things that she thought was important was to have them set Gadsden County up as a tourist destination. Someone who wants to get to know the county and work with the board to set it up and help the county develop.

Ms. Dixon said a lady from Jacksonville made a comment about the people in the past had not been diligent about doing what was right for the County and not going out seeking in the community and all around as to what was needed. She stated the woman said if they were not meeting the County's needs, they would go into the areas to find what was needed and bring it back.

Ms. Smith stated that woman was from Paradise and they had an office in Jacksonville and St. Pete.

Ms. Holt said she was looking for someone that can get here; they can go over it and hit the ground running. She stated the other firm was a good firm; they were just so far away.

Ms. Smith stated 78 Madison did not include travel in their agency fee and all of the firms listed included travel in their agency fee.

Ms. Holt said looking at Tallahassee, they had Downtown Get-Downs before FSU games, and Frenchtown was doing Frenchtown Rising and it was very successful. She stated you had to know the "flavor of a location" in order to promote it and we do not have a flavor. The County needed someone to help us put it together and she wants someone who was really willing to be here and know what would work and tell us what will not work. She further stated who they chose had to be willing to not just say they were going to do it. She wanted people who were going to have photos done and promote and market those photos and events as well as finding out if people like the events.

Ms. Smith said of the submissions that had demonstrated that they can put on a large-scale event, there were 3: Noise, Kerigan Marketing, and Paradise.

She stated Noise was the lady that came and talked about specific music festivals they had done. Paradise had done a couple and Kerigan had done a festival in Port St. Joe. (Seafood type festival)

She further stated two firms specifically said that videos and photos were a part of their marketing fee. When we pay them the \$1500/month or \$30,000/year we would not be paying extra for the production of the video or photos and update all of the photography. Last year was a hurdle paying \$90,000 and that was the whole budget and we still had no video production or fresh photos.

Vice Chair Ford asked which had the most experience and Ms. Smith answered Paradise. She stated the top 2 were Kerigan and Paradise because of location. The board wanted something close and Port St. Joe was closer than Jacksonville however Paradise had the ability to come to Gadsden County because they had clients in Navarre Beach. She stated when she looked at Paradise on line they were very diverse in everything. The qualities of their publications were great and she felt like they could come in and do so much more than just ads.

Mr. Dubree asked in looking on the fiscal impact, what was all included in the agency fee compared to the marketing services and how the two amounts were differentiated.

Mr. Weiss stated the way it had previously been done was there were certain items to be included in the agency fee that are automatic services and then everything above that were additional services that would have to be approved by the board. The contract would be modeled after prior contracts. The creative stuff has been under the agency fee, the actual ad buys and marketing materials were add-ons.

He further stated the numbers on the evaluations were done by a committee (Olivia Smith, Jeronda Robinson, and Sonya Burns) and they were looking at each individual proposal as submitted and evaluating it against the criteria that was in the request for proposal.

Mr. Dubree stated he thought Paradise had the most diversified experience. Kerigan looked like they had a lot of experience but no experience of taking over a whole project like we had. They put together some really good websites. He also liked Current because they were local, hungry and they spelled out what their understanding and approach of the project was. He stated previous companies hired had been focused on finding ads to purchase and pay for and not enough effort free media. He stated he would be comfortable with any one on the list but he really liked Paradise and Current.

Ms. Holt asked how much was the agency fee for Kerigan and Ms. Smith answered \$30,000. Ms. Holt asked about deliverables. She said they would do video production, photo production, creative ads, graphic design, radio ads, blogging and more. She stated that a lot of them did not submit specifically what they wanted to do in their marketing fee, except Current who submitted line by line what they would do.

Vice-Chair Ford said as a suggestion, to pick one at a time and rank them 1-10.

#5- Medium Four, LLC – All said 0

#4- Current Agency - Holt 6, Johnson 5, Dubree 8, Ford 7, Dixon 7

#3- Noise, Inc.- Holt 6, Johnson 6, Dubree 7, Ford 6, Dixon 7

#2- Paradise Advertising- Holt 8, Johnson 9, Dubree 9, Ford 10, Dixon 10

#1- Kerigan Marketing Associates- Holt 8, Johnson 8, Dubree 8, Ford 8, Dixon 8

**MS. DIXON MADE A MOTION TO RECOMMEND HIRING PARADISE ADVERTISING WITH A SECOND BY MS. HOLT. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Mr. Weiss stated as a reminder that it was a recommendation to the BOCC and the TDC board members understood.

**c. Appointments to the Tourist Development Council:**

This agenda item seeks the Council's approval to appoint one citizen to serve on the Tourist Development Council for staggered terms of four years.

Ms. Smith said on August 19, 2019, they appointed John Garcia, Owner of Allison House Inn as the bed tax collector member, there were three more applicants that were on the agenda that she had not taken off but the board could appoint or suggest whoever they want brought before the BOCC to finalize the appointment.

Mr. Weiss stated there was one vacant slot for a person who was interested in and was also in the tourism industry. They can be a bed tax collector but did not have to be.

Mr. Dubree stated his opinion on selecting members was that they are an advisory board to the BOCC and to provide advice a person should be in the field of seeing and/or selling to tourists on a daily basis. He stated that it was in the best interest to select people who were clearly from the industry if that option was available.

More discussion was had about what type of person was needed to fill this position.

Ms. Smith said she would be happy to reach out to anyone if they had someone specific in mind and was looking for direction from the board. She asked if they would like her to place an ad in the papers and they all said yes.

Ms. Holt said she really wanted someone that would come to the meetings. People want to know what was expected of them and the best way to do it.

Mr. Dubree asked about putting it on the TDC website and Facebook page and Ms. Smith said she could do both.

They asked if there was an attendance policy and Mr. Weiss said there was a policy under their existing By-laws stating members may be removed for unexcused absents from two consecutive meetings or four meetings in a fiscal year unless excused by the Chairman or valid personal reasons. He suggested they should report to the BOCC if there was an attendance issue.

Ms. Holt said the time of the meeting might be an issue for business people and also find out if the ones that had missed meetings were really interested before removing them. Weiss said if

they chose to change the day of the meeting that would need to be amended in their By-laws also.

Ms. Holt asked if they were going to have Olivia look at changing times, ask her to call the ones that were not present and ask them if changing time or day would be more convenient for them.

**MS. HOLT MADE A MOTION TO ADVERTISE FOR APPLICANTS WITH A SECOND BY MS. JOHNSON. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**d. Financial Report:**

Ms. Smith said Mr. Price was out of town and would be back next week if they had any questions.

Ms. Smith spoke about the Art Center money and asked if they would like for her to bring something back to them and the Board said yes please.

Mr. Dubree asked what kind of value would be put on the Visitors Center. Ms. Smith stated the County would just provide more materials for them along with an established place and signage. Ms. Holt said maybe a kiosk asking why people were here and other questions would be a good way of picking up information.

**e. Items of Discussion (no vote items)**

Ms. Holt said she attended a Hemp Summit in Tallahassee and spoke with a group regarding hemp as a cash crop for property owners to utilize their property to help pull up from the hurricane.

She stated the reason she was bringing it up was it is the same as medical marijuana. As a TDC, you see it either as a stigma or an asset to the County. When you are doing tourism things like that would come up anyway. She further stated industrial hemp was used to make everything from drywall to clothes. Vendors are using CBD oils, ice cream, everything you could think of and there were 2-3 shops in Tallahassee that was selling those products. She said the advantage of the crop was, it took 10-15 years to grow pines to make pulp for paper, where almost the same amount of pulp is made from industrial hemp in 8 weeks. The manufacturing part had to be within 50 miles from the location of grower production. The surrounding counties had all agreed that they are all "buying in". It was approved by State of Florida in 2014. She stated it meant a lot of jobs and added it could be an invasive plant because it could grow rogue and you had to control the growth. FAMU was doing research in Tallahassee and the University of Florida was already doing research on 267 for the State of Florida. Not only do you have to produce the product, but to be able to move the product.

Vice-Chair Ford asked what that would do to help us, and Ms. Holt said it would be positive because it was industrial hemp, not the type you use as a drug, not even close. The interest was in the fiber. She said Trulieve had already been approved. She further stated as the TDC you had to know what was going on in this county in order to get people to come and see it. She stated growing industrial hemp was pushing agricultural to go lateral (one person grows, another transports, another permits) so more people get a piece of the pie and can make a living. Ms. Holt stated this County had a major problem with people not being able to pay their taxes and this could be helpful to them. She would like to get tourists in to tour Trulieve and see how the medical marijuana had grown. She states legislators were asking her when they could come and tour. If this area was the first to grow hemp, people will come.

Gadsden County tourist Development Council  
October 21, 2019 Regular Meeting

Ms. Holt stated the next meeting would be November 13<sup>th</sup> in Jackson County at the cost of \$25. She felt it was very important this Board and others go. She was told it could take up to 200 people to do manufacturing part.

Vice-Chair Ford said whenever there were meetings about this County, Gadsden was rarely at those meetings. If we could get one of the processing plants, it would impact the tourism and then a tour could be set up to help bring in revenue.

Ms. Holt said not one local bank was there, closest one was Pensacola and they get tax credits from the local government for helping people in the disaster.

Ms. Holt gave examples of Counties that were like Gadsden and ended up being turned around with manufacturing industries.

Ms. Holt said they do the Visitors' Section in Art Center and stated that comment cards were needed to get feedback from visitors.

Vice-Chair Ford said we were on the cusp of our County exploding and if we did not get in there and start helping them make decisions, will be on the sidelines.

Ms. Holt asked if Ms. Smith had contacted Trulieve because she would like to have a tour for the board members. Ms. Smith stated she would make contact with them.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE-CHAIR FORD  
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:04 P.M.**

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CAROLYN FORD, Vice Chair

ATTEST:

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NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk