

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2023

Chair Christy Parker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other committee members present were Mike Tripka, Sam Britt, Ellen Shumaker and Timothy Wood. Absent committee member was Nate Pringle. Staff in attendance was as follows: Natalie Majorkiewicz, Assistant Director of Finance, and Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Analyst.

Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

Five committee members present, one absent, quorum met.

Adoption of Agenda:

Shumaker moved to adopt the agenda. Britt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Adoption Minutes of February 21, 2023 and February 28, 2023:

Britt moved to adopt the minutes. Shumaker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Financial Report: Natalie Majorkiewicz, Assistant Director of Finance

The total funds available for distributions are **\$2,781,156**. Revenue is down **\$238,400.05 or 43.7%** compared to same quarter in the previous year. Decreased revenue is a trend across the area. We have 5 applicants this quarter totaling \$261,763 in requests.

(DMO) Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Marketing Plan FY24

Ariana Pernice, Vice President, Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce was present to answer any questions. Chair relayed to Pernice ahead of the meeting that a presentation was not necessary as committee members received a copy of the marketing plan and had time to review it in advance. Pernice indicated that the budget is based on forecasted trends and that the DMO will work within their approved budget allocation. The proposed FY2024 budget is \$425,000.

Britt motioned that the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce remain the Town's official DMO and to approve their plan as presented. Tripka seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Society of Bluffton Artists: Promoting the Arts in the Lowcountry and Beyond – \$15,000

Marie Burgeson and John Kenney, President and Treasurer of SOBA, respectively, were present to answer questions about their application. Burgeson explained that Travel & Leisure magazine quoted a cost of \$50,000 per month to print advertisements so they will focus on running ads in local magazines. Tripka asked if they had explored lower tier or seasonal ad pricing or only online/social media ads as those may be more impactful than the print ads. Chair Parker commended their inclusion of all ads from the prior year with their final report in the application as it was a nice display of what they've done.

Britt motioned to grant \$15,000. Shumaker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra – \$48,628

Alan Jordan, President and CEO of the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra provided an overview. HHSO will be pivoting from TV and print advertisements to digital content, Google ads and social media for the upcoming concert season. Also included in this year's budget is a larger tent with enough space for the musicians as well as heaters to protect the instruments in the case of inclement weather, which was

experienced during their Fall 2022 concert. Jordan also explained that the tent and stage used by HHSO is shared with the Arts & Seafood Festival, whose organizers reimburse HHSO a portion of the rental costs for doing so.

Tripka motioned to grant \$48,628. Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Historic Bluffton Foundation – \$150,000

Robert Jones, Jr., Executive Director, presented an overview of the plan for the Heyward House. Jones has been the Executive Director for the past three months after previously serving as the original Director when Heyward House opened. They serve guests every day and are expecting approximately 20,000 this calendar year. An artisan market on the grounds is in development and a new vision for the Heyward House is being worked on as the Town moves to designate a new welcome center at the Squire Pope Carriage House once renovations are completed. Other plans underway are the reworking of policies to more accurately charge fees for events held on the grounds, installing bathroom facilities on site and the possible revival of the Tour of Homes as a fundraiser.

Wood motioned to grant \$150,000. Britt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Bluffton MLK Observance Committee: Bluffton Juneteenth Celebration – \$20,000

Jackie Brown and Selena Chisolm were present to answer questions of the committee. The Food Truck Friday event will be held at Buckwalter Commerce Park while Saturday and Sunday's events will be at Burnt Church Distillery, which is offering their space as an in-kind donation. It was clarified that the \$5,000 included in their venue rental request is actually for the rental of the stage and tent. The 2022 event drew approximately 40% in tourists. It was explained that the reimbursement for tourist transportation would be made with the event's final report when tourism statistics would be provided.

Britt motioned to grant \$20,000. Tripka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

BlacQuity SC: Oyster Roast – \$28,135

Gwen Chambers, Executive Director, provided a brief overview of the event, which has pivoted from an Oyster Roast to the Roots and River Festival. The date and location of the event remain the same. Instead of providing food to attendees, graduates of the BlacQuity program, who are food vendors, will be set up and offer their product for sale as a way to make money. The promotional plan is designed to attract tourists from a two-hour radius, including markets such as Columbia, Jacksonville and Savannah. Advertising will be on social media, radio, and in print. It was explained that costs related to the organization's branding or updates to website are not allowable under ATAX and only advertising and promotion for the festival are permitted. It was also noted that when the Bluffton Police Department provides security, they bring barricades; therefore, that expense would not be needed as part of the event's budget. The committee suggested that an amended application be submitted by the June 30 deadline with a revised budget if additional allowable expenses are identified.

Britt motioned to change the requested amount of \$28,135 to \$11,000 to allow for advertising funds and allowable rental expenses. Shumaker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Parker motioned to adjourn the meeting. Tripka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.