

MINUTES OF THE HATTIESBURG TOURISM COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERS & MANAGEMENT

Minutes of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board Members of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission of the City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was held at the Hattiesburg Train Depot on:

June 22, 2022

Be it remembered that on the 22nd day of June, the Board Members of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission met in person at the Hattiesburg Train Depot Community Room. Frank James, Chairman of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. The following Members of the Board were found to be present:

PRESENT

Frank James
Melanie Archer
Michael Marks (via phone)
Shawn Lowrey
Dr. Joe Paul

ABSENT

Bonnie Warren
Anthony Harris

ALSO PRESENT

Marlo Dorsey, Management
Kristen Brock, Staff
David Ott, Counsel

Citizens Forum

With no public guests present, citizens forum was not held.

Minutes from Previous Board Meetings

After full review and upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Shawn Lowrey, there was unanimous favorable vote of the board to approve April 2022 meeting minutes.

Counsel David Ott presented Executive Session minutes from the April 2022 meeting. After full review and upon motion by Dr. Paul, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, there was unanimous favorable vote of the board to approve the minutes as presented.

Financial Report

Marlo presented the financial report. Included was a document with updated tax receipts for the commission's 2% special hotel levy. As of May 31, the report showed year-to-date revenue at \$753,507, calculating average monthly levies at \$83,723.

Claims dockets for the months of April and May 2022 were also presented. All expenditures were provided in full detail by line item and were budgeted expenses.

Reconciled balances of all Hattiesburg Tourism Commission assets through May 31, 2022 were presented, showing a total balance of \$2,019,478.47. Included on the report were details of each account with financial institution, current interest rates, and maturity dates listed. All accounts have been reconciled by accountants at McArthur, Slay, & Dews, PLLC.

Dorsey also presented an eight-month budget overview for FY2022. The board reviewed each line item of the budget, which was created projecting a 15% reduction in income for the fiscal year. After review, hotel levy income has already exceeded the amount budgeted for the fiscal year. With higher than anticipated revenue, the board discussed allocating additional income for increased destination marketing.

After a full review and upon a motion made by Shawn Lowrey and duly seconded by Melanie Archer, there was a unanimous favorable vote to approve the financial report as presented.

Old Business

House Bill 453 passed the state legislature this session, creating \$30 million in ARPA funding for round two of the Tourism Recovery Fund. Of this, Hattiesburg expects to receive approximately \$1,825,000. Discussions continue with the MS Department of Finance to clarify funding guidelines, and funds are expected to be received in August 2022. Additional reporting and procurement guidance will be provided to qualifying organizations for these funds. These details will be shared with the board when they become available.

Dorsey discussed the annual audit for FY21, which is still in the process of being completed. A full report will be provided to the board once it is complete.

New Business

Marlo presented the board with visitor intelligence data collected from Voyager, which highlighted visitation during the USM baseball series and provided insight on the most frequently visited locations by visitors in Hattiesburg.

Conversation began on budget reserves allocation based on current revenue projections. The board discussed maintaining one year's budget in reserves and ways to invest additional reserves in FY2023, including continuing a focus on public art in the amount of \$100,000, allocating \$250,000 for destination building and gateway signage as recommended in VisitHattiesburg's strategic plan, \$300,000 for civic special attraction projects, and \$10,000 in outdoor attraction signage. After full discussion and upon motion by Dr. Paul, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, there was unanimous favorable vote to approve the reserve funds allocation.

Marlo opened discussion on banking institutions, particularly on where to place current funds vs. ARPA funding. Upon motion by Shawn Lowrey, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, there was unanimous approval to open a separate account for all federal dollars at a local financial institution to be determined.

Dorsey will formally present the FY2023 budget proposal at the August board meeting. A draft was provided

for the board's review prior to the next meeting.

Marlo provided a year-over-year overview of tax revenue, showing hotel collections up 26.1% for the year while restaurant collections are 26.55% higher than the previous year. She also provided an update on recent and upcoming group events.

Marlo presented a marketing budget update, including cooperative marketing matches with Visit Mississippi which have produced significant positive results.

Kristen presented a Programs & Promotions update, beginning with Hattiesburg Alliance for Public Art's recent and upcoming projects, including round three of the Hattiesburg Utility Box Project and the unveiling of "Koi Around the World" near downtown Hattiesburg.

A list of 2022 Mississippi Miss Hospitality contestants and special events was presented. The 2022 program is scheduled for July 10-16.

Being no other business, and upon motion by Dr. Joe Paul, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Hattiesburg Tourism Commission:

Frank James, Board Chair

Marlo Dorsey, Executive Director