

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 Hotel Indigo board room on:

December 14, 2022

Be it remembered that on the 14th day of December, the Board Members of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission met in person at the Hattiesburg Hotel Indigo board room. Anthony Harris, Vice Chairman of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. The following Members of the Board were found to be present:

PRESENT

Melanie Archer
Michael Marks
Shawn Lowrey
Anthony Harris
Dr. Joe Paul

ABSENT

Frank James
Bonnie Warren

ALSO PRESENT

Marlo Dorsey, Management
Kristen Brock, Staff
Doug King, Auditor
David Ott, Counsel

Citizens Forum

Marlo introduced Doug King of King CPA to present the annual audit report for FY2022 to the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission.

All commissioners in attendance were provided with a copy of the FY2022 financial audit and statement prepared by King CPA. Doug King presented a full audit report verifying HTC's assets, liabilities, revenue, and expenses from the fiscal year ending 2022. As the firm is awaiting the state's final pension and retirement reporting updates from PERS for the year ending June 30, 2022, the report, was presented as a draft and not final with that stipulation. After a thorough review, King stated that no exceptions were found and all internal organizational controls are in compliance, noting the firm found no procedural problems or material errors in the financial review of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission and its programs.

After full discussion, and upon motion made by Michael Marks and duly seconded by Shawn Lowrey, there was unanimous favorable vote to accept the FY2022 audit report as presented, noting the outstanding PERS report was forthcoming, and to approve Marlo Dorsey to present the final audit to the Hattiesburg City Council once complete.

King exited the meeting following the vote. With no further public guests present, citizens forum was adjourned.

Minutes from Previous Board Meetings

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

Financial Report

Marlo presented the financial report. Included was a document with updated tax receipts for the commission's 2% special hotel levy. For the first two months of FY23, the report showed revenue at \$155,335, a year over year decrease of 10.8%.

Claims dockets for the months of October and November 2022 were also presented. FY23 Tourism Grant Programs were included and all expenditures were provided in full detail by line item and were budgeted expenses.

Reconciled balances of all Hattiesburg Tourism Commission assets through November 30, 2022 were presented, showing a total balance of \$1,955,119.19. 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 noted that the current Regions accounts have been converted to treasury bonds, which is expected to yield greater returns.

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

Old Business

Dorsey informed the board that round two of the Tourism Recovery Fund (TRF) would be distributed soon, with Hattiesburg's portion of funding expected to total \$1,777,269. All required documents have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration and processed accordingly. A copy of the submitted marketing plan and financial report was reshared with the board as well as all previously approved documents required for compliance purposes.

New Business

Dorsey presented the updated version of VisitHattiesburg's Personnel Policy & Procedure Handbook, which had been reviewed by Counselor Ott. After full discussion, a motion was made by Michael Marks, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, to adopt the updated document as the official version for the commission's use.

Discussion was had regarding the upcoming RFP process for procurement of professional services using the tourism recovery grant funds. After full discussion, it was decided that Marlo and Paige Robertson would serve as staff representatives alongside Michael Marks as the commission representative for RFP review. Upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Dr. Joe Paul, the proposed slate was approved.

A year-over-year overview of tax revenue was provided, showing hotel collections up 17.43% for the year despite recent declining occupancy trends, while restaurant collections are 5.09% higher than the previous year. A list of upcoming group events using VisitHattiesburg services was also presented.

An analytics overview of recent marketing efforts was presented, showing 143,343 individuals reached from social media channels over the last 60 days and more than 20,000 unique visitors to the visthburg.org website in the same timeframe.

Brock presented a Programs & Development update. A HAPA year in review was provided, showcasing more than 30 public art projects completed in 2022 including 11 murals and 21 utility boxes. Commissioners were invited to the final mural unveiling of the year for “Nature’s Way” on Dec. 19, 2023.

Being no other business, and upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Joe Paul, the meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Hattiesburg Tourism Commission:

Anthony Harris, Board Vice Chair

Marlo Dorsey, Executive Director