

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:

May 1, 2023

Be it remembered that on the 1st day of May, the Board Members of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission met in person at the Hattiesburg Hotel Indigo board room. Frank James, Chairman of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. The following Members of the Board were found to be present:

PRESENT

Melanie Archer
Frank James
Dr. Joe Paul
Bonnie Warren
Michael Marks

ABSENT

Anthony Harris
Shawn Lowrey

ALSO PRESENT

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

Citizens Forum

With no members of the public present, Citizens Forum was not held.

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 February 2023 meeting minutes.

Financial Report

Dorsey presented the financial report. Included was a document with updated tax receipts for the commission's 2% special hotel levy. For the first seven months of FY23, the report showed total revenue at \$530,997. The board budgeted for an anticipated 15% reduction in hotel revenue for FY23, and the actual year-to-date decrease is 12.9%.

Claims dockets for the months of February and March 2023 were also presented. A listing of all expenditures was provided in full detail by line item, which were all budgeted expenses. Dorsey noted that

the payment to MS Tourism Association will be reimbursed, as it was paid twice due to the initial check being lost in the mail.

Reconciled balances of all Hattiesburg Tourism Commission assets through March 31, 2023 were presented, showing a total balance of \$3,663,437.07. Included on the report were details of each account with financial institution, current interest rates, and maturity dates listed. The overall balance includes \$1,777,268 in ARPA funds from round 2 of the Tourism Recovery Fund (TRF), as awarded to the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission by the Mississippi legislature, which is being accounted for separately at Hancock Whitney Bank. Dorsey also noted that \$600,000 was transferred from the Great Southern Bank operating account to a higher yielding account at The First, as approved by the board. All accounts have been reconciled by accountants at McArthur, Slay, & Dews, PLLC.

Dorsey also presented a 6-month review of the FY23 budget, which was in line with the approved budget and shows an overall YTD projected net income of \$26,204.60.

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

Old Business

Dorsey confirmed that round two of the Tourism Recovery Fund (TRF) was distributed, with Hattiesburg's portion of the fund totaling \$1,777,268. With the board's approval in February, the Request for Proposal process began to secure agencies to assist with marketing and public relations efforts. Following the outlined procurement policies and public bid notices, the evaluations and interviews were conducted by Dorsey, Paige Robertson, and board members Frank James and Michael Marks.

Dorsey shared a copy of the firms selected for each of the specified RFPs and marketing contracts.

New Business

Dorsey provided a year-over-year overview of tax revenue, showing hotel collections up 0.33% for the year, while restaurant collections are 1.66% higher than the previous year. A list of upcoming group events using VisitHattiesburg services was also presented.

An analytics overview of February and March 2023 marketing efforts and visitation was presented by Dorsey, showing 3.08 million digital impressions in February and 1.19 million digital impressions in March, noting that the decline from one month to the next was due to VisitHattiesburg's public relations contract ending in February. With additional marketing dollars for tourism recovery, new contracts will again be in place for this service.

Dorsey also provided YOY arrival data that tracks daily and monthly visitation to Hattiesburg. The data shows USM and the Turtle Creek mall area as the top visited attractions for those who traveled from a 60+ mile radius and who spent more than four hours but less than two weeks in Hattiesburg.

The board was presented with tradeshow and media updates, including numerous events attend by sales and communications staff members to target groups and travel writer visits to Hattiesburg.

Brock presented a Programs & Development update, including additions to HBURG's promotional and gift shop line. New items included public art and apparel merchandise. A list of recent and upcoming HAPA projects was presented, with four murals recently completed or in progress. Additionally, a brief update for the 2023 Mississippi Miss Hospitality competition was shared including a list of contestants participating. Board members were also invited to participate in National Travel and Tourism Week, scheduled for May 7-12, 2023.

At 1:03 p.m., board chair James entered discussion about entering executive session to discuss personnel matters. Upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Dr. Paul, the board agreed unanimously to enter executive session. Dorsey and Brock exited the room at this time. At 1:13 p.m., Dorsey and Brock returned to the meeting following a closed executive session.

During executive session, the annual performance appraisal and compensation of the executive director/CEO were discussed, where action was taken to increase the annual salary of Dorsey in this position.

Being no other business, and upon motion by Michael Marks, duly seconded by Bonnie Warren, the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Hattiesburg Tourism Commission:

Frank James, Board Chair

Marlo Dorsey, Executive Director