

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:

August 24, 2022

Be it remembered that on the 24th day of August, 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 12:06 p.m. The following Members of the Board were found to be present:

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Bonnie Warren

ALSO PRESENT

Marlo Dorsey, Management
Paige Robertson, Staff
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 Michael Marks, duly seconded by Dr. Paul, there was unanimous favorable vote of the board to approve June 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. As of August 31, the report showed year-to-date revenue at \$947,440, a year over year increase of 35% with projections of collections exceeding \$1,000,000 for the first time in Hattiesburg Tourism Commission history.

Claims dockets for the months of June and July 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 July 31, 2022 were presented, showing a total balance of \$2,068,225.86. 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 a ten-month budget overview for FY2022. The board reviewed each line item of the budget, with month over month and year over year comparisons. After a full review and upon a motion made by Anthony Harris and duly seconded by Michael Marks, there was a unanimous favorable vote to approve the financial report as presented.

Old Business

Dorsey discussed the annual audit for FY21, which is still in the process of being completed. The 2020 tax return has been filed, and a copy was made available to the board.

New Business

Dorsey updated the board relating to the American Rescue Plan Act funds which have been allocated as round two of the Tourism Recovery Fund. It is anticipated that the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission will receive \$1,825,000 of funding. As before, the funds will come through the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). There is a requirement that all funds must be spent complying with State and Federal law. Marlo reviewed a summary of the federal requirements with the board, which have been used to develop the federal guidelines. Dorsey advised Counsel Ott has reviewed these requirements. The proposed Policies and Procedures For Procurement Using Federal Grant Awards was developed by Watkins & Eager for the various destination marketing organizations. Following the discussion of the same and based on the recommendation of Dorsey and Ott, Shawn Lowrey moved that the commission approve and adopt the Policies and Procedures for Procurement Using Federal Grant Awards as presented to the board, understanding that these will be followed for any procurement(s) made using any federal funds which are awarded to the commission. Michael Marks seconded the motion. Thereupon, the matter was put to a vote with unanimous favorable approval. The matter having received the affirmative majority vote of the board of the commission, the matter was declared carried, adopted, and approved.

Dorsey presented a budget proposal for FY2023. The board reviewed each line item of the budget, which was created projecting a 15% reduction in income for the upcoming fiscal year. After a full review and upon a motion made by Melanie Archer and duly seconded by Anthony Harris, there was a unanimous favorable vote to approve the expenditure of funds in FY23 as presented.

A line item marketing and advertising budget for the FY2023 to FY2025 Tourism Recovery Fund was presented. Following a motion by Melanie Archer after full review, duly seconded by Shawn Lowrey, there was unanimous favorable vote to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds as presented.

The proposed distribution of designated reserves and operational funds for FY2023 was reviewed. In addition to maintaining one year's budget in reserves, the board discussed transferring \$40,000 in operational reserves, \$100,000 for continued focus on public art, \$10,000 for outdoor attraction signage, and \$250,000

in strategic planning implementation to include sports facility enhancements. Upon motion by Shawn Lowrey, duly seconded by Anthony Harris, there was unanimous favorable vote to approve the allocation of funds as presented.

A staffing update was provided to the board, including an organizational chart displaying two additional full-time staff members to support the communications and sales efforts of the organization.

Brock provided a year-over-year overview of tax revenue, showing hotel collections up 42.66% for the year while restaurant collections are 9.68% higher than the previous year. She also provided an update on recent and upcoming group events.

Marlo presented a marketing budget update, including an analytics overview of all social media and marketing campaigns.

Kristen presented a Programs & Promotions update. The Tourism Grant Program for FY23 has been announced, and Melanie and Anthony volunteered to help score this year's applicants. An overview of upcoming projects for the Hattiesburg Alliance for Public Art was also presented alongside a grant funding update, which showed a recent grant from the MS Arts Commission in the amount of \$17,200 awarded to HAPA.

A Mississippi Miss Hospitality budget update for the 2022 program was presented. After a full review of the budget by line item and a motion by Anthony Harris, duly seconded by Dr. Paul, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2022 close out budget as presented.

Being no other business, and upon motion by Michael Marks, duly seconded by Anthony Harris, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Hattiesburg Tourism Commission:

Frank James, Board Chair

Marlo Dorsey, Executive Director