

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, held at Hattiesburg's Holiday Inn and Suites on:

October 23, 2019

Be it remembered that on the 23rd day of October, the Board Members of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission met in a regular meeting in the conference room of the Holiday Inn Hattiesburg, being a place for such meetings. Frank James, Chairman of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.m. The following Members of the Board were found to be present:

PRESENT

Bonnie Warren
Frank James
Fei Xue, Ph.D.
Melanie Archer

ABSENT

Anthony Harris

ALSO PRESENT

Marlo Dorsey, Management
David Ott, Counsel
Kristen Brock, Programs and Promotions
Paige Hunt, Sales
Paige Robertson, Communications

Citizens Forum

With no guests present, citizens forum was not held.

Minutes from Previous Board Meetings

After full review and upon motion by Bonnie Warren, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, there was unanimous favorable vote of the board to approve August 2020 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 September 30, the report showed year-to-date received revenue at \$778,115, which reflects a 23% increase from the year prior.

Marlo reported that, after months of tax revenue research by VisitHattiesburg, the MS Department of Revenue requested a meeting with the City of Hattiesburg, Hattiesburg Convention Commission, and Hattiesburg Tourism Commission to report its findings. During this meeting, it was reported that approximately \$135,000 of Tourism Commission tax dollars were mistakenly sent to the Hattiesburg Convention Commission. To correct the funding error, payments will be made to the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission from future Hattiesburg Convention Commission tax revenues via the MS Department of Revenue. All parties present understood this revenue correction would be forthcoming.

Hburg Tourism Commission Minutes

The claims dockets for the months of August and September were presented. After full review and upon motion by Melanie Archer and duly seconded by Fei Xue, there was a unanimous favorable vote to approve financial reports as presented.

Reconciled balances of all Hattiesburg Tourism Commission assets through September 30, 2019 were presented with a total balance of \$1,465,743.20. Included on the report were details of each account with financial institution, current interest rates, and maturity dates listed. Marlo noted that a full fiscal review of 2019 would be discussed during New Business.

Old Business

At the recommendation of counsel David Ott and upon motion by Bonnie Warren, duly seconded by Melanie Archer, the board voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session to discuss outstanding legislative matters. No action was taken. Melanie Archer made the motion to exit Executive Session, duly seconded by Fei Xue, and unanimously approved by the board.

Returning to regular session, Marlo reported that successful work continues on the Long-Term Strategic Plan being conducted by Young Strategies. Berkeley Young will return to Hattiesburg in December with final recommendations to present to the board.

New Business

Marlo presented a year-end financial update on FY2019. With one month of tax revenue still outstanding, FY2019 income is projected to be \$1,169,854, which is \$409,354 over the budgeted income. This total accounts for increased hotel revenue collections and a one-time insurance allocation reimbursement. Fiscal year expenses were reviewed by the board. Upon motion made by Bonnie Warren, duly seconded by Fei Xue, there was a unanimous favorable vote to accept the year-end update for FY2019 as presented.

The FY2020 budget, previously approved by the board, was reviewed including designated reserves and operational funds. This approved budget has also been provided to the City of Hattiesburg. A spreadsheet detailing FY2016-19 hotel revenue was also presented, explaining funding gap findings from the MS Department of Revenue.

The board discussed delivery methods for Tourism Commission documents, which have historically been mailed to all commissioners one week prior to board meetings. Upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Fei Xue, the board voted unanimously to receive its board documents digitally beginning in December 2019 in lieu of postal mail.

Kristen Brock provided an update on the FY2020 Tourism Grant Program. The number of applicants from year prior increased and the review panel selected 19 projects for support in the first round. Of the \$25,000 allocated by the board for the grant program, \$1,250 remained for future projects in 2020. Due to the number of quality tourism grant applications coupled with increased revenue projections in 2019, and upon motion by Melanie Archer, duly seconded by Fei Xue, the board voted favorably for a one-time increase of FY2020 grant allocations by \$10,000 for a total of \$35,000 in Tourism Grant Funds for FY2020.

Paige Robertson presented a marketing update, including the viewing of a tourism video showcase titled #TravelMatters. This video series began during National Travel and Tourism Week 2019 and will be added to social channels in addition to being used in future marketing efforts.

Paige Hunt presented VisitHattiesburg's FY2019-20 sales plan, which included a list of tradeshow and sales events scheduled for FY2020. The plan includes a significant focus on recruiting groups to Hattiesburg. A recap was also

provided for Restaurant Week 2019, which was held earlier in October and included the participation of nearly fifty local restaurants.

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.

Hattiesburg Tourism Commission:

Frank James, Board Chair

Attested:

Marlo Dorsey, Executive Director