

Ocracoke Tourism Development Authority

March 15, 2021 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Facebook Live Stream (Bluejeans)

****** Due to COVID-19, all participants, including Board Members, will attend virtually via Bluejeans. There will not be anyone meeting at Ocracoke Community Center.**

In attendance: Amy Howard, Daphne Bennink, Lisa Miller, Jen Mongan, Martha Garrish
Also in attendance: Helena Stevens, Dana Long, Jeff Dippold

I. Call to Order

Chair Amy Howard called the monthly OTTDA meeting held virtually due to COVID-19 on BlueJeans to order at 9:00 am.

II. Approval of February 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Lisa motioned to approve with edits sent to Dana by Daphne of the February 15, 2021 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Daphne and approved unanimously. Motion passed.

III. Financial Discussion/Hyde County

a. Budget Update

i. FY21/22 Draft Budget

The Ocracoke Tourism Development Authority proposed FY 2021-22 Budget was discussed.

A projected \$200,000 of accumulated excess revenues will be in reserve on June 30, 2021. Roughly half of that reserve is being used in this proposed budget, leaving \$100,000 total.

At the end of FY20/21, the TDA account will have \$550,000, factoring in \$360,000 additional FY21/22 revenue, with a \$100,000 surplus. In case projections are not met, a \$50,000 surplus will be available.

The Board instructed Jeff Dippold to make the following adjustments to the draft budget:

Public Relations: Change \$14,000 to \$16,400 based on the information Amy got from the Occupancy Tax board regarding non-profit advertising requests.

Video/Photography: \$20,000

Move the allocation to 100% Tourism and Promotion, per Daphne's request.

Prior Year Carry Over: \$12,500

Allocated 100% to Tourism and Promotion per Amy.

Creative content – drilling into niche markets to get authors, subject matter experts that can contribute to our social media and web content.

Administrative Assistant is a payroll position budgeted for \$3,900 at \$15/hour, 5 hours per week.

Medical benefits are based on current quotes from Blue Cross Blue Shield and start May 1, 2021. Payroll taxes are approximately 10% of the total. The Board raised the executive director's salary by \$5,000. Bookkeeping contracted services are \$3,500 annually, based on 3 hours per week. This year has required fewer hours than the previous year. Audit and IT costs have remained the same in the last two years. IT costs include contracted services for social media, including Kathryn Waldrop's pay. is currently doing social media.

Amy and Corrinne discuss the status of the Hyde County audit process. Corrinne says that Hyde County is working on the FY2019/2020 audit now. The FY2020/2021 audit will be complete in July. Amy confirmed with Corrinne that the TDA board should expect to receive paperwork soon from the auditing company to sign.

Island Inn financing support - \$17,650

The Board is committed to continuing to support the Island Inn project. However, the TDA has not been informed of progress thus far. The Board requests regular reporting on the use of TDA funds and the project's progress in exchange for financial support.

Amy will ask the OPS board to submit reporting to the TDA board. The Board will let OPS know how often reporting is required. Daphne suggests one of the Island Inn Committee members attend a TDA board meeting at least once a year to discuss the project before budget preparation time.

Amy suggested that the TDA budget is finalized and posted to be approved before the 3% occupancy tax board makes their funding decisions.

Amy asks Donnie Shumate to send the process and timeline for posting the budget and for Dana to record the process in a OTTDA file for future reference.

Amy states that the office supplies amount was higher this year because of the postage required to mail out asset brochures.

Office Space – Projected \$1,000 monthly rent for office space, including utilities at Blue Heron Realty office. Daphne requests that the name be changed from Teach's Hole to Blue Heron.

Ocracoke Events and Off Island Advertising:

\$16,000 that 3% board had identified for non-profits requesting advertising support for island events for FY21/22 in addition to \$6,000 for OBX this Week advertising.

Amy explained that the 3% OT board asked non-profit organizations that requested funds to create an advertising expenses line item in their budget. The 3% board extracted those expenses from the submitted budgets for the OTTDA to fund. The organizations who submitted requests were unaware of this process and didn't have the opportunity to add additional funds to their budgets to accommodate this amount coming out. Amy feels the non-profit organizations are being penalized because the organization could have requested more advertising dollars if they had known.

Daphne suggests creating a budget amount to accommodate these specific requests.

Martha says that the budget committee had discussed taking the funding requests on a reimbursement basis to the non-profit organizations requesting the funds.

A grant funding request committee will be formed to create a grant request form (Amy, Martha and Helena) to be voted on at the April 23, 2021 OTTDA board meeting.

The Sub-committee will present the funding and reimbursement process to the OTTDA Board at the May 2021 meeting.

A local bench project (benches at tram stops painted by local artists) was discussed as a possibility for tourism-related expenditures. Further conversation will need to happen with individual business owners and NCDOT. This project will require a committee and possibly more funding.

Amy asked Jeff to combine the amounts for Ocracoke Events and Visitor Enhancements, totaling \$80,000. For Ocracoke Events (off-island advertising) category: \$22,000 is being raised to \$30,000, adding \$8,000 taken from the surplus.

A motion to accept the budget as Jeff proposed and edited. Daphne motioned to approve the proposed budget as edited, seconded by Lisa. Motion passed.

Amy says the budget will be emailed to press and posted at Variety Store and Post Office.

Donnie will email requirements for budget posting after the meeting.

Jeff will replace "Draft" with "Proposed" on the budget. A grant request sub-committee will be formed to create a set of criteria for submission.

- a. Miscellaneous Expense Account -
Helena asked the Board for approval to create an OTTDA miscellaneous fund for office expenses and postage. Daphne motions that the OTTDA sets up a local account with a debit card with the objective of being used as a petty cash account to be used only by the Executive Director. Martha seconds the motion. Jeff and Helena to work on this with the local bank and Hyde County Finance Office. All in favor, no opposed, motion passes.

Hyde County was asked for a timeline for when monies will be put back into the TDA account. Corrinne says it will be done by the end of the month.

IV. Advertising Update

1. 2021 Theorem Shoulder Season Campaign

- Launched March 8, 2021, targeting shoulder season visitation (March to May and Mid-September to mid-November). The cost: \$75,000 net media, excluding production and agency fees.
- OBX this week – paid advertorial on stands through May 2021.
- 27-week E-blast campaign through OBX this Week with new campaign artwork
- Island Photography - The contract with Daniel Pullen is being finalized and shoot coordinated with Theorem.
- Arrivallist Program - Helena worked with Amy on the setup of the program, putting polygons around local businesses and areas that would support volume data collection.
- Website – In development, and the site will go live on April 2.
- Social Media - continued to populate social media with existing photos, but Helena is looking for photographs from different perspectives.
- Office Space for TDA office - rent increase has gone from \$700 to \$1,000 per month, including utilities.
- Amy and Daphne's terms as board chair and vice-chair will be over in October and they will not seek another term.
- Randall Matthews thanks Amy and Daphne for their service.

V. Sign Update:

1. The Welcome to Ocracoke Sign on Hwy 12 is complete.

VI. New Business:

Sub-Committees:

- A Sub-Committee will be formed to create the grant request form.
 - Amy and Helena will create a draft grant request form and submit it to Lisa and Martha.
 - The grant request reviewing committee will be Martha and Lisa. They will also work on a framework on how the accounting of requests will work.

Bench Project

- The bench project sub-committee will be Jen Mongan and Martha Garrish.
- Kris Noble stated that when tram stops were set up by federal grant money with NCDOT, specifics were dictated federally by an environmental assessment and little was put in the right of way. Kris and Amy will discuss simplifying the process offline.
- Daphne suggested developing a bench prototype. A little bit of shelter would be nice, that could be customized with local artists.
- Helena suggests discussing the advertising committee because Daphne and Amy will be leaving the Board in October. Amy says to address this at the next meeting.
- LGRS program - Local Government Employee Retirement System. Helena has submitted the request.

- Daphne - in previous meetings, high-speed internet was discussed. Hyde County is already dealing with it. Daphne asked Randall to give a status report:
- Randall - there is grant money from federal and state levels that Hyde County has been vying for. Legislation just got ratified related to broadband. This is a top issue with all county commissioners. He is uncertain where TDA fits in right now but open to ideas of how the TDA board can provide public internet throughout the village through different sources.
- With remote work and education, people will come and spend time in the off-season. Daphne says it is the infrastructure that we need.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Lisa, second by Martha, no discussion, all in favor, no one opposed, motion passed.

/hrs