



**Ocracoke Township Tourism Development Authority**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, January 21, 9:00 am

*Meeting held virtual via Facebook Live Stream*

**Present (Voting):** Kenny Ballance (Chair), Martha Garrish (Vice-Chair), Lisa Landrum, Jennifer Esham

**OTTDA Staff:** Helena Stevens, Jeffrey Dippold, Sharon Brodisch

**Hyde County Staff:** Donny Shumate, Randal Matthews

**Presenters:** Theorem Advertising: Scott Scaggs, Eleanor Talley, Tom Hickey, Mary Webster  
Michael McOwen – Outer Banks this Week  
Tekniam – Tim Stranahan  
OPS - Ken DeBarth

**Call of the OTTDA Meeting to Order**

Chair Kenny Ballance called the virtual monthly OTTDA meeting to order at 9:04 am

**Approval of November 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Martha motioned to approve the minutes; Jennifer seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Financial Discussion/Hyde County**

**Current Revenue Collections and Projection**

Jeff Dippold presented a summary of the Hyde County 2% Occupancy Tax collections for the first half of FY 2021/2022. Record YTD amounts of 2% tax collections continue with November tax collections remitted in December.

- 2% collections totaled \$350,713 for July through December 2021 (occupancy months of June - November 2021), increasing \$52,588 (17.6%) over the prior fiscal year.
- 3% collections totaled \$488,105 for July through December 2021 (occupancy months of June - November 2021), increasing by \$73,120 (17.6%) over the prior fiscal year.

**Projection of the full-year FY 2021/2022 2% Occupancy Tax Collections**

At this time, approximately \$438K of 2% Occupancy Tax collections are projected for the full fiscal year.

- The basis for the projection is actual collections for July - December 2021 (occupancy months of June - November 2021) and 95% of actual FY20/2021 collections for the remaining comparable months.
- Even with this conservative projection method, the total projected is \$77K greater than the revenue collection amount initially included in the approved FY 2021/2022 Budget.
- Additionally, because the 2% tax collections have remained so strong in comparison to prior years
  - When using the actual YTD collections and 100% of the FY 2020/2021 collections for the remaining months, total FY 2021/2022 collections are projected to be \$443K which is \$82K greater than the original FY 2021/2022 Budgeted amount.



- When using the actual YTD collections and 110% of the FY 2020/2021 collections for the remaining months, total FY 2021/2022 collections are projected to be \$452K, which is \$91K greater than the original FY 2021/2022 Budgeted amount.

Jeff forecasts collections will be nearly \$450,000, \$90,000 more than projected in the FY21/22 budget. He projects at least \$200,000 of available funds at the end of FY21/22, allowing the board to keep \$100,000 in reserve, with at least \$100,000 from the excess remaining that can be rolled into this year's budget.

### **Theorem Advertising Spring Campaign Update**

Theorem Advertising presented their advertising, public relations, and marketing update and introduced Cierra Otis, who will replace Stephani Perri as the account manager for Ocracoke. Theorem will merge with another ad agency in the coming months, and the same team will continue to work with OTTDA.

*Public Relations (Eleanor Talley) recapped efforts from the Fall and plans for Spring 2022.* Efforts now are towards reestablishing connections with media, pitching Ocracoke, and recruiting writers to visit the island this spring, resulting in placement next Fall.

### *Paid Media (Tom Hickey)*

#### Spring Paid Media Campaign

The 2020/021 campaign generated about 18,000,000 impressions and 60,000 clicks to the [visitocracokenc.com](http://visitocracokenc.com) website.

For Spring 2022, we will rely on a similar channel media mix from spring 2021, including paid search, paid social, online display, and custom e-blasts. Plans are to incorporate pre-roll video and static imagery utilizing YouTube for video distribution, carrying through to social channels. Video content and adding potential new partners to the plan: Weather sites, travel endemic websites (TripAdvisor), and lifestyle sites (Outdoor.com).

Mary Webster presented creative concepts for the Ocracoke Spring 2022 Campaign

1. Extending your stay – time-oriented
  - Converting day-trippers to overnight stays
  - Booking long weekend
  - Weekly rental
2. Nothing Usual Here – targeting special interests
  - Foodies
  - Adventure Seekers
  - Couples

### *Tom Hickey – Arrivalist*

#### *Visitation to Ocracoke Summary*

2021 – 16% increase in overnight stays over 2019, 31% in overnight stays vs. 2020

Top Origin Markets: – Norfolk, Raleigh/Durham, Greenville NC, Washington DC.

North Carolina travelers represent 38% of all trips to Ocracoke Island but 55% of overnight trips.

2021 – Day trips were 65% of all trips to Ocracoke Island. The average miles traveled to Ocracoke is 340 miles.



**New Business**

**Joint 22/23 Occupancy Tax grant request Correspondence**

The OTTDA board voted to combine the 2% and 3% occupancy tax request forms to save time and avoid duplicating efforts for non-profit organizations submitting occupancy tax requests. Both the 2% and 3% boards would have to coordinate cut-off dates for application, and further discussion by each board individually and together is needed. Kenny made a motion to combine the 2% and 3% Occupancy Tax Funding request forms, Lisa seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Holiday Pole Lights Purchase**

Discussion took place about the purchase of Ocracoke Village holiday poll lights. OCBA has \$4,000 budgeted for FY21/22 to purchase the lights.

**OCBA Funding Request – Event Advertising/ 2022/23 Walking Map**

OCBA requested \$8,500 to print 90,000 copies of the 2022 Ocracoke Walking Map, partnering with Outer Banks this Week to produce the map. Michael McOwen presented plans for the 2022 Walking Map to include printing (same as last year) and will start once OCBA finalizes approval. Helena confirmed that OBX this Week will include all businesses on the map. Martha made a motion to approve the expenditure, and Jennifer seconded the motion, motion passed.

(At this point, the meeting converted from virtual to an in-person meeting).

**Tekniam Presentation – Tim Stranahan**

Tekniam presented a pilot project to utilize RUCS (Remote Universal Communication System) to bring additional wi-fi capabilities to Ocracoke. A 25% deposit is needed to start the project, and the permanent installation will take a six-weeks. Tekniam originally asked for \$75,000 as the initial investment for the pilot program but reduced the amount to \$25,000. The board will vote via email on the next steps for this project.

**Board Member Vacancy**

Kenny reported that he had someone interested and will be attending the next two meetings to help decide. Randall Matthews is also speaking with another potential board member.

**Budget Committee Update – Jeff Dippold**

Jeff presented an overview of the draft FY22/23 OTTDA budget.

**Trash Receptacles as Enhancement – Martha Garrish**

Martha reported that different individual vendors are willing to pick up the trash. The next step is to form a board committee that needs to develop contract parameters, amount of pay, pickup frequency, and define details of the arrangement.

**Old Business**

**Island Inn Update - Ken DeBarth**

OPS applied for a grant from the Cannon Foundation for \$60,000 and was awarded \$30,000. They will be starting work on a new roof soon. Ken would like to send in a report vs. being present for future meetings.

**Bench Project Update**

Martha presented the Tram Stop Bench and Canopy estimate from Flow Designs for \$21,922.00. Martha will check on the installation cost to ensure it is included in the estimate provided. There will be a bench at every tram stop, except for the National Park Service, which NPS will



provide.

**Executive Director Report**

See the January 2022 Executive Director Report.

**Public Input/Questions/Comments**

None

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on February 18,2022, at 9:00 am.

**Adjourn**

Kenny Balance adjourned the meeting adjourned at 11:36 am

FY21/22 remaining Board Meeting Dates:

February 18, 2022

March 18, 2022

April 22, 2022

May 20, 2022

June 17, 2022