



## **Ocracoke Township Tourism Development Authority**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, February 18, 2022 9:00 am

*Meeting held virtual via Facebook Live Stream*

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

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

**Hyde County Staff:** Kris Noble, Corrinne Gibbs, Donny Shumate

### **Call of the OTTDA Meeting to Order**

Chairman Kenny Ballance called the virtual monthly OTTDA meeting to order at 9:03 am

### **Approval of October 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

Martha asked to adjust the minutes to reflect that Tekniam originally asked for \$75,000 but reduced the amount to \$25,000. Jennifer moved to approve minutes as corrected, Martha seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Financial Discussion/Hyde County**

#### **Current Revenue Collections and Projection**

For the collection period fiscal year through January 2022 (Occ months June– Dec.2021) 2% collections totaled \$356,339, an increase of approximately \$54,000. A conservative projection for the fiscal year based on this is \$450,000. This year's revenues have been approximately 18% higher than last year's numbers.

#### **Proposed revision to the FY 2021/2022 OTTDA Budget**

Jeff reports a proposal to amend the current fiscal year budget within categories, with no change to total expenditures or original revenues. Three budget categories have not been utilized, so these funds will be moved to the Ocracoke Events and Visitor Enhancement pool, a total of \$22,000 to be moved into this category, bringing it to a total of \$102,000. Prior year Photography and content carryover would be reduced by \$12,500; Creative Content will be reduced from \$10,000 to \$7,500, and \$2,000 from the conference expense from \$5,000 to \$3,000. Martha motioned to accept the revised budget; Kenny seconded the motion. Motion passed

#### **Draft FY 2022/2023 OTTDA Budget Review**

The new budget is based on the current income projection of \$450,000 and the revised budget for this FY that was just approved. Using \$100,000 of the accumulated excess reserves, which will be at least \$200,000 by the end of this FY. Broader categories – Advertising campaign funding: \$200,000, \$25,000 higher than current FY. This is broken down into agency fees, media purchases, public relations expenses. New item search engine optimization for \$4,200 will ensure that content in our website is ranked in Google, so it shows up higher in search results. They also provide backend security to help us monitor the website. This line item was previously listed under computer programs but is now a separate category. Website development dropped from \$5,000 to \$3,000. Photography & Video production will remain at \$20,000. \$3,000 for the column wrap at the New Bern airport. Creative content will be at \$10,000.



Personnel costs for next FY, one staff position \$55,0000, plus medical benefits/payroll taxes.  
Contracted services - administrative assistant, Bookkeeping charges, legal fees and audit charges, social media management.

Funding to OPS continues at \$17,500

Computer programs and internet/phone services \$7,000

Arrivalist software \$11,0000

Office supplies, insurance Office rent \$12,000

Conferences – Visit NC 365 and DC Travel & Adventure Show

Ocracoke Events and Visitor Enhancements -\$135,000 for funding events and grants

Asset Brochure – \$20,000 to update and print additional copies of the current brochure

The budget committee worked on this proposed budget. Jennifer moved to approve the budget, Martha second. Motion approved.

### **Old Business**

#### **Island Inn Update**

Helena read the report from Ken DeBarth on behalf of OPS. 1<sup>st</sup> round of landscaping is completed. OPS/Landmark construction is working on getting the roof restoration completed, hoping to start by the end of February. They have submitted a grant to the Outer Banks foundation for \$50,000 towards this project. OPS is working with OCBA for the restroom project and on grant requests to both OTDDA and 3% board for next year's funding.

The budget will be posted, and a public hearing scheduled as required.

#### **Tekniam Update**

OTDDA board members have been communicating via email about this proposal. The board agreed to fund \$25,0000, motion passed.

#### **Joint 2022/2023 Occupancy Tax Grant Funding request**

2% and 3% boards met and combined the 2022/2023 occupancy grant request form. The form has been emailed to nonprofits posted at the post office. The due date for requests is 03/10/22.

#### **Bench Project Update**

Martha got an email from Michael Kalna; the goal is to break ground the first week of March.

#### **Trash Receptacles as Enhancement**

Nothing to report at this time will update after the next committee meeting

#### **Holiday Pole Lights Update**

Helena spoke with Rob Orr, OCBA President, the lights have been purchased. There is a request for another \$4,000 to be requested for next year's budget for additional lights

#### **OCBA Funding Request 2022/2023 Walking Map**

OTDDA has agreed to fund the 2022 walking map. OCBA is partnering with Outer Banks this Week to produce the map. Additional requests need to be requested via the Occupancy Tax form to be reviewed. Martha asked if all business would be included on the map, as was stated at the last meeting. Helena confirmed that all businesses would be included in some capacity. There will be 90,000 copies made.

#### **Board member vacancy**

No firm updates currently.



### **Administrative Assistant**

Helena has an interested candidate, which may involve increasing the hourly rate. She asked the board if they would consider increasing the hourly rate to \$20.00. Lisa motioned to increase the hourly rate to \$20.00/hour; Kenny seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Executive Director Report**

Helena is working with Theorem Advertising on the Spring campaign, incorporating video into spots that they will post on all channels. She reported about an article on Ocracoke on Thrillist, an online publication. A writer for National Geographic/CNN Travel/NBC News will be coming to Ocracoke in May 2022. There will be an orientation with the Visit NC call center in March.

Theorem is making adjustments on the site to add video content. Helena has reached out to local photographers and has purchased some of their images to refresh the content for photography.

Helena has received the quotes for the Asset Brochure from Coastal Impressions. Theorem will update the brochure, which consists of just updating photos. There was previous discussion on whether both Walking Map and Asset Brochure were needed. The difference is the Walking Map is for our travelers that are here on the island, the Asset Brochure gets sent to Visitor Centers and other places off island. So, both are needed. We will print 35,000 copies, the same as last year.

She has been working on completing the regular invoicing, help with the budget preparations, and administrative work. Helena will be attending the Visit NC conference in March, representing Ocracoke.

### **Resubmission of request for funds for repairs to Howard Street**

Allison Serafin and Susie Rockel attended on behalf of the group requesting funds. Helena read the letter to the OTTDA board, which is as follows:

#### **Re-submission to Ocracoke TDA for funds to repair Howard Street.**

Dear TDA Members:

Kindly accept this request for assistance to repair the iconic and historic Howard Street.

Howard Street is one of the most historic landmarks on the island and, as such, many of the Island's organizations (*Ocracoke Preservation Society; Visit Ocracoke NC; Ocracoke Island Realty; OCBA*) advertise Historic Howard Street encouraging tourism. It is heavily traveled by folks on foot, bike, golf cart, and car. There are no other private streets or paths that are specifically marketed by any of these organizations *for tourism* like Howard Street is on the island. Howard Street is unique, it is historic, it is iconic Ocracoke.

In the past, local homeowners have privately funded and privately maintained Howard Street. Van O'Neal did an outstanding job keeping up the road for years; William Howard worked with Van for many years maintaining the street; Philip Howard did so as well for quite some time. Dorian destroyed the equipment they each previously used to keep the street in shape. Since Dorian, the street has undergone heavy construction traffic (repairing / lifting homes). Additionally, there has been a substantial increase in tourist traffic. As a result, Howard Street has fallen into disrepair, and we no longer have the equipment we have had in the past to repair it.

Prior to Dorian, Lawton Lane was in a similar state of disrepair as Howard Street is now. Monroe Gaskill repaired Lawton Lane prior to Dorian and those repairs have withstood Dorian, the heavy machinery used to repair/lift homes, and the influx of traffic as well. The repairs needed for Howard Street are precisely the same that Monroe made to Lawton Lane. Monroe provided an estimate to repair Howard Street from the Highway 12 entrance to Lawton Lane (in the same fashion as Lawton Lane).

1. 13 loads of sand at \$650 per load (labor included) for **\$8,450**; and
2. 6 loads of crushed stone at \$1,600 per load with additional labor at \$1,500 for total of **\$11,100**.



3. Total estimated price **\$19,550.**

4. (He advised to allow for one total or one partial additional load of sand and one additional crushed stone with labor at a total of \$3450).

Total materials, time and labor to make these repairs is: \$23,000.

Monroe would do the repair to Howard Street in four segments: 1) School Rd. To Amy and David's house; 2) Amy and David's house to the Rinaldi's house; 3) The Rinaldi's house to Bob and Kathy Phillips' houses; 4) The Phillips' houses to Hwy 12 entrance. The work would be done *over a period of 3-6 days. He is available to begin the work spring 2022.*

I have attached three videos of each of these segments broken out in sequence for repair. In these videos you will also see how badly Howard Street has deteriorated.

Based on the repairs that Monroe made to Lawton Lane prior to Dorian, and the current condition of Lawton Lane, there is no reason to believe that his repairs to Howard Street would need to be repeated for continued upkeep.

We respectfully request the TDA board to award \$23,000 to Monroe Gaskill to make the much needed repairs to Howard Street on the basis that Howard Street is extensively marketed by multiple organizations as a significant historic tourist attraction which in turn provides substantial and repeated economic benefit to the island.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Best,

Allison Serafin

Board concerns:

If funds are spent for these repairs, this will set a precedent, and other requests will be made from homeowner/property owners including rental cottage owners from other private roads for repairs to those roads as well

Could the homeowner/property owners on Howard Street agree to each chip in for the repairs?  
(Allison will check)

Was OIRRT contacted if funds would be available from them for this project? (no)

Were there any other estimates? (No, but Allison will get one)

Will Howard Street be setting up an HOA? (no)

Have they looked at any grants (they did not find any that would apply)?

Allison will come back with another estimate. She will also reach out to the other property owners to see if any/all are willing to contribute towards the total cost. She will then come back to the board.

Meeting set up for Trash Receptacles – February 21. Martha, Kenny and Jennifer are committee members.

### **Public Input/Questions/Comments**

Online comments:

**Leslie Lanier:** We all use Howard Street as a marketing tool; it is one of the prettiest spots on the island. I certainly support using some of these funds to help with repairs.

**Karen Sawyer:** Any talk of trash receptacles available to the public, especially for day-trippers and pet waste disposal?



### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on March 18, 2022 at 9am at the Community Center.

### **Adjourn**

Kenny moved to adjourn, Martha second. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 am

### **FY21/22 remaining Board Meeting Dates**

April 22, 2022

May 20, 2022

June 17, 2022