

Ocracoke Tourism Development Authority

April 23, 2021 9:00 a.m. Ocracoke Community Center Meeting Minutes

Board members in attendance: Amy Howard, Daphne Bennink, Lisa Landrum, Jen Mongan, Martha Garrish both attending remotely.

Also in attendance: Helena Stevens, Jeff Dippold, Sharon Brodisch, Scott Scaggs; Tom Hickey, Kris Noble, Corrinne Gibbs attended remotely.

Call to Order

Chair Amy Howard called the monthly OTTDA meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Approval of March 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Daphne moved to approve minutes with suggested edit, Lisa second. Motion passed unanimously.

Public input on the budget for the fiscal year 2021-2022 (Attachments A, B, C, D, E)

Amy Howard received five emails concerning the proposed next fiscal year budget. All emails were posted publicly on the meeting screen and read aloud by Amy Howard. The OTTDA board addressed all concerns. No action is needed.

Discussion on FY2021/22 OTTDA Proposed budget (Attachment F)

The Board made these adjustments to the proposed budget:

Ocracoke Events/Visitor Enhancements

The \$40,000 for "Promote Travel & Tourism" was moved to the "Tourism Related" category. With this change, the budget for "Tourism Related" Ocracoke Events/Visitor Enhancements is \$80,000, making more funds available for a broader range of expenses, including possible grant monies to nonprofits.

Office Space

Changed "Teach's Hole 2nd floor apt" to "Blue Heron 2nd floor apt."

VisitNC 365 Conference

Removed "free virtual event," as the 2022 event is expected to be in person and will have a fee.

Creative Content

Moved \$5,000 from "Promote Travel & Tourism" to the "Tourism Related" column for a total of \$10,000 for that line item.

An unbudgeted surplus of \$100,000 will be available at the end of FY21/22 in case of emergency, disaster, or other unforeseen events(s).

Updated budget totals with the edits are:

Promote Travel & Tourism	\$328,040
Tourism Related	138,300
Total	\$466,340

The 2/3 ratio for "Promote Travel & Tourism has been satisfied with this proposed budget.

Vote on Budget – Lisa moved to accept the budget with the above changes. Daphne seconds. Motion passed unanimously. The budget will be posted in the Post Office and Variety Store for at least the required ten days. A final vote will be made at the next OTTDA meeting Friday, May 14, 2021, at 9:00 a.m., to be held virtually.

Island Inn Update (Attachment 1, 2)

Ken DeBarth presented an updated, work-in-progress Vision Statement and project timeline for the Island Inn. Copies provided to board members. The project's current phase is lifting the Odd Fellow's building, with a new expected lift date starting Monday, April 26, 2021, using Ace as the company doing this. Tom Pahl/Landmark Construction is now the general contractor for the project. He is available now due to the end of his tenure as county commissioner. There were additional unexpected costs as the foundation beams need to be replaced. Sanderson, LLC will repair the foundation before the lift. Porta johns are now on the property using funds provided by OCBA through the 3% tax board. More permanent restroom facilities will be revisited at an undetermined later date.

Corrinne Gibbs reported she is up to date on the petty/cash debit card account and will approve those funds. Daphne inquired as to the status of the TDA audit. Corrinne has sent it out, is waiting on a response, and will report back once she has that. She will pay out the grant request monies as directed by the Board.

Executive Director Report (Attachment G)

Advertising Campaign & Media Recap

Scott Scaggs from Theorem Advertising attended the meeting in person, and the rest of his team joined remotely. Per Scott, Theorem was hired to create a campaign that will authentically and accurately represent Ocracoke as a destination and best match it with people who are most likely to enjoy their time here; to create a long-term visitor relationship.

Media Recap (Attachment 3)

Tom Hickey from Theorem Advertising presented an overview of the FY21/22 campaign, including channel selection, timeline, budget, and creative.

- Paid Social – Text ads on Google.
- Paid Social – Image ads on Facebook and Instagram.
- Online Display- Banner ads on websites.
- Email – emails sent to a rented list of opt-in subscribers.

Website Update

The VisitOcracokeNC.com website refresh is complete, and the site went live on April 2, 2021. Helena continues to update the site. All island businesses are invited to be a part of the website directory. If they are not already participating, the business owner can email info@visitocracokenc.com to be included. A lot of the current imagery being used on the site is pre-Dorian, so updates will continue to be made.

Island Photography/Videography

Chris Hannant and Daniel Pullen have been hired for a photography/video shoot happening April 18, 19, and 23-25, 2021. Costs: Chris Hannant - \$4,850 for videography and Daniel Pullen - \$6,000 for still photos.

Arrivalist – (Attachment 4)

Tom Hickey explained how the real-time information gathered from the Arrivalist program including, which collects data for visitors departing from 50 or more miles from Ocracoke and includes when they arrived, where they stop, how long they stay there, where they are from. This information is collected from GPS and cell phone data to POI (points of interest) on the island. Tom went over the statistics gathered so far (Jan – March 2021). Theorem will continue to monitor Arrivalist and provide OTTDA board with results.

Financial Discussion/Hyde County

Current Revenue Collections and projections – (Attachment H)

Jeff had previously forwarded the 2% Occupancy Tax collections to the Board. YTD through May - Feb (first nine months of the fiscal year) \$311,593 has been collected, which is \$61,312 greater than the prior period. Conservative forecast would be approximately \$365,000 total fiscal year collections of the 2% tax.

TDA Miscellaneous Expense Account.

Jeff is working with First National Bank to set up a debit card-only account for petty cash expenses to avoid sending invoices to the county for reimbursement. The account will be set up with \$1,000, which is about the yearly amount needed. Both Amy and Helena will have access to debit cards.

Discussion of TDA Event Grand Funding Process – (Attachment I)

OTTDA is offering local nonprofits grants of up to \$10,000. Martha Garrish and Jennifer Mongan are the committee members that will receive and review the applications and then present them to the entire Board. The funds will be drawn from \$80,000 Ocracoke Events / Visitor Enhancements, which is part of the Tourism Related (1/3) portion of the budget. The funds will be distributed to approved applicants as an invoice reimbursement of actual expenses.

After discussion, the Board made these updates to the application:

Organizations applying must provide a Profit/Loss statement from the prior year; this requirement is waived for a new organization.

To be eligible for the grant, applicants must be a 501c status organization or operating on behalf of said 501c.

Lisa made a motion to approve the application with amendments, seconded by Jen, and approved unanimously. Helena will email to nonprofits and post at the post office and Variety Store. The application deadline is May 7, 2021.

Executive Director Report – this was already covered with the Theorem presentation.

New Business

Island Inn Update – Ken DeBarth – previously covered.

Bench Project update – Martha Garrish

There are currently seven tram stops; additional stop(s) may be added. Need encroachment permit to be completed by Kris Noble. Drawings with specs will need to be completed. Martha will pursue getting multiple potential designs. Donnie confirmed that this project is well under the amount (\$100,000) and will not need to be a bid process.

Administrative Assistant Position Opening – (Attachment J)

Due to the open position for Administrative Assistant, Helena has posted the advertisement for the job. She has contacted the local newspapers, posted the notice at the Post Office and Variety Store, and it has been added to the Hyde Happenings page of the Hyde County website.

Advertising Committee

When Daphne cycles off the OTTDA board, Martha will step in to take her place on the advertising committee.

Board Member Recruitment

Lisa has approached a few potential replacements for Amy and Daphne, whose terms expire at the end of this fiscal year. In the future, the Board will need to stagger the terms for the President and Vice President so that those officers are not cycling off in the same year. Those offices should be handed off to already sitting board members as opposed to new board members. Potential board member names will be presented at the next regular board meeting, May 14, 2021.

Kris Noble had to drop off the call due to other obligations. Donnie read her report:

- * New TDA sign - congratulations, it looks great. I am working with Officer Warner to move the Emergency Response Vehicle (the duce and 1/2) from behind and basic landscaping to make it much easier to mow and look nicer through the season.

- * Bench project - happy to work as a liaison between TDA and NC DOT. Initial discussions with DOT indicate the project is permissible. I will complete the DOT encroachment permit just as I did with the new TDA sign and work with DOT on any modifications. (the same process we completed with the welcome sign). I have asked the Bench Committee to send me a proposal on dimensions with a drawing, if possible, to convey to DOT to work towards permitting.) The tram stops will stay the same. There is a potential we will add a lighthouse loop, but that will be contingent on Public Input sessions that will be completed in May.

- *Affordable Housing - I have secured funding for an Affordable Housing Study for Ocracoke. I will be writing an RFP, hiring a consultant that will complete the study. I have 3 residents that are very active in regard to this effort, and I plan to ask them to help me, which I am sure they are on board with. There will be tons of opportunity for Public Comment in that study. That will begin after our budget passes. Also, as a Steering Committee member looking at a second passenger ferry from another location, I am advocating for a workforce run that would run very early and late to a mainland location specifically for workforce.

2021 Meeting Dates:

May 14, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – To be held virtually for the final vote on the FY2021/22 budget.

May 21, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

June 18, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Adjourn – Daphne moved to adjourn, Jen second, no discussion. Meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Note: This full meeting was live recorded and available for viewing on the Hyde County Public Information page on Facebook. facebook.com/HydeCountyNC

The posted agenda was adjusted to allow Ken DeBarth of OPS, Theorem Advertising, and Corrinne Gibbs to present earlier than initially scheduled due to time restraints.

Attachments:

TDA or Hyde County information:

A, B, C, D, E – emails received in response to TDA's request for public input on the next fiscal year budget.

F – Draft budget as presented by TDA board for discussion and vote at April board meeting.

G – Executive Director's monthly report

H – current fiscal year-to-date tax collections, projections for the remainder of the fiscal year, and the proposed budget amount for next year.

I – proposed TDA grant funding information and application.

Outside vendor or nonprofit attachments:

1 – Island Inn timeline of progress and expenses for Odd Fellows Lodge project

2 – OPS Vision statement for Odd Fellows Lodge project

3 – Media and website recap by Theorem Advertising

4 – Arrivalist program information and current results