



**Highlands County Tourist Development Council
Highlands County Government Center Boardroom
Regular Meeting
January 27, 2022 @ 8:15 a.m.**

Draft Regular Meeting

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:14 a.m. by Christine Hatfield.

Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Mark Stewart
Christine Hatfield
Vicki Pontius
Bill Brantley
Diane Rydecki

Commissioner Chris Campbell
Brittany McGuire

Council Members Absent:

John Story
Cynthia Garren

Also, Present:

Leah Sauls, Development Services Director
Casey Hartt, Lead Marketing Consultant
Karen Disalvo, TDC Administrative Secretary
Chantel Brutus, Legal Services
Alan Verlander and Kenedy Grayson, Airstream Ventures, LLC
Daniel Andrews, Heartland Triathlon, Inc.
Scott Turner, Minor League Golf, LLC
Allison Braunstein and Terry Moony, EVOK
Daniel Andrews, Heartland Triathlon, Inc.

Christine Hatfield and Karen Disalvo established that a quorum was present, and the meeting was properly noticed.

Christine Hatfield introduced Councilwoman Brittany McGuire to the council.

2. Acceptance of TDC Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2021.

Ms. Hatfield inquired if there were any comments or changes to the minutes of October 28, 2021. Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brantley to approve the meeting minutes. Upon roll call the Council voted aye. The motion passed.

3. Financial and Office Reports

Ms. Hartt presented the Monthly Expenditure and Revenue Reports year to date ending September 30, 2021, which makes a total up to date of \$880,899.

Ms. Disalvo advised Leads and information requests continue to rise.

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brantley, to approve the financial reports as presented. Upon roll call the Council voted aye. The motion passed.

4. Tourism Award Presentation

Ms. Hartt advised that Ms. Fletcher was unable to attend. Presentation of the award is postponed.

5. Marketing & Event Updates

A. Marketing Update

Ms. Hartt presented her quarterly marketing presentation to go over several past, present and future events. Ms. Hartt has received Grant income from the FL Sports Foundation to total \$47,598. Ms. Hartt noted that collections for October 2020 to September 2021 was \$1,174,532. Ms. Hartt recommended adding \$100,000.00 to the 21-22 TDC budget. A motion to amend the budget was made by Ms. Pontius, seconded by Commissioner Campbell. Upon roll call the Council voted aye. The motion passed.

B. Sports Events Update

Mr. Verlander from Airstream Ventures provided an update on Sports Tourism Events for the remainder of 2022 and into 2023. He spoke about Spartan/Tough Mudder event in December and how noticeably impactful the event was to everyone in Highlands County. He went over new events that will impact 2022 and 2023.

C. Webiste & Search Update, EVOK Advertising

Ms. Braunstein and Mr. Moony provided a marketing presentation on the VisitSebring website. They demonstrated the improvements they have made to make the website more user friendly and generate more foot traffic.

6. Items for Voting

A. Heartland Triathlon (June 4-5, 2022). Sports Event Grant requesting \$10,000

Mr. Turner from the Heartland Triathlon Inc. requested up to \$10,000. for promotional items, MOT fees and out-of-county marketing for the Heartland Triathlon. The 2022 event will be June 3-5, 2022.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve the grant for up to \$10,000 for promotional items and out-of-county marketing. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

B. Visit Sebring Classic (April 12-14, 2022). Years #2 (2022) & #3 (2023) New Event Grant requesting \$13,000 /year.

Mr. Andrews from Minor League Golf, LLC, requested \$13,000 for year #2 (2022), and \$13,000 for year #3 (2023) for venue fees, event officials, and digital marketing outside Highlands County for the Visit Sebring Classic Golf Tournament. TDC's staff recommendation was \$9,750 per year.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve the grant for \$9,750 for venue, event officials and out-of-county marketing. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

C. Citrus Golf Trail Open (Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2022). Years #2 (2022) & #3 (2023). New Event Grant requesting \$16,000/year.

Mr. Turner from Minor League Golf, LLC, requested funding of \$16,000/year, as a 3-year, New Event Grant with funding up to \$16,000/year for year #2 (2022) and year #3 (2023) based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for venue rental, officials, digital marketing, equipment rentals and Pro-Am reception for the Citrus Golf Trail Open.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve funding up to \$16,000/year for year #2 (2022) and year #3 (2023) based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for venue rental, officials, digital marketing, equipment rentals and Pro-Am reception for the Citrus Golf Trail Open. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

D. ACL Cornhole Championship (May 13-15, 2022). New Event Grant requesting \$24,500 year #1 (2022) and \$20,000/year for years #2 (2023) and #3 (2024).

Mr. Verlander from Airstream Ventures requested for the ACL Cornhole Championship grant application request for funding as a 3-year, New Event Grant with funding up to \$24,500 for year #1 (2022) based on \$20,000 base + \$20/verified room night, and \$20,000/year for 2023 and 2024 based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for venue rental, officials, paid social media marketing, equipment rentals and Facebook livestream event coverage.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve funding up to \$24,500 for year #1 (2022) based on \$20,000 base + \$20/verified room night, and \$20,000/year for 2023 and 2024 based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night, to be used for venue rental, officials, paid social media marketing, equipment rentals and Facebook livestream event coverage for ACL Cornhole Championship. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

E. High School Lacrosse Tournament (May 14-15, 2022). New Event Grant requesting \$30,000 year #1 (2022) and \$20,000/year for years #2 (2023) and #3 (2024).

Mr. Verlander from Airstream Ventures requested for the High School Lacrosse Tournament (May 14-15) grant application for funding as a 3-year, New Event Grant with funding up to \$30,000 for year #1 (2022) based on \$20,000 base + \$20/verified room night, and \$20,000/year for 2023 and 2024 based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for venue rental, officials, paid social media marketing, equipment rentals and Facebook livestream event coverage.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve funding up to \$30,000 for year #1 (2022) based on \$20,000 base + \$20/verified room night, and \$20,000/year for 2023 and 2024 based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night, to be used for venue rental, officials, paid social media marketing, equipment rentals and Facebook livestream event coverage for the High School Lacrosse Tournament. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

F. Bono Bilt Youth Wrestling Showdown (June 17-19, 2022). Year #2 & #3 (2023) New Event Grant requesting \$20,000/year

Mr. Verlander from Airstream Ventures for the Bono Bilt Youth Wrestling Tournament grant application request for funding as a 3-year, New Event Grant with funding up to \$20,000/year for year #2 (2022) and year #3 (2023) based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for venue rental, officials, digital marketing platform, marketing, and web broadcast.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve funding up to \$30,000 for year #1 (2022) based on \$20,000 base + \$20/verified room night, and \$20,000/year for 2023 and 2024 based on \$10,000 base + \$20/verified room night, to be used for venue rental, officials, paid social media marketing, equipment rentals and Facebook livestream event coverage for the Bono Bilt Youth Wrestling Tournament. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

G. GFNY Marathon date change request to Oct. 22, 2022

Ms. Fluhme was unable to attend the meeting, so Ms. Hartt advised the date change will have both GFNY marathon/cycling events on the same weekend. The change would be for this year only.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rydecki, to approve the date change of the GFNY Marathon to October 22, 2022. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

H. AJGA grant contract amount change request to \$16,000/year for 2022 and 2023

Mr. Rogers from American Junior Golf Association requested grant contract amount change from \$13,000 to \$16,000/year for 2022 and 2023 for the American Junior Golf Association.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve the grant increase from \$13,000 to \$16,000 for 2022 and 2023. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed.

I. New Description for Tourist Development Coordinator/Admin Position

Ms. Sauls requested the position of Administrative Secretary of the Tourist Development position be changed to Tourist Development Coordinator. The pay grade would go from 105 to 108.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart to approve the Tourist Development position be changed to Tourist Development Coordinator. Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye. The motion passed

7. **Old Business/Discussion**

A. Tourist Development Tax Letter

Ms. Sauls reported that tax letters were mailed on January 3, 2022.

- B. 2022 TDC Meetings April 28, August 11, October 27.
- C. Volunteer Opportunities

8. Public Input

9. Board Member Roundtable

Mr. Brantley advised the Board Members of his resignation.

10. Upcoming Meeting

- A. Citrus Golf Trail Meeting on January 27, 2022 @ 10:45 AM at Sun 'N Lake Golf Club
- B. Art & Culture Stakeholder Meeting on February 24 @ 10:00 AM at SFSC/Avon Park
- C. TDC Board Meeting April 28, 2022 @ 8:15 AM, Government Center, Boardroom
- D. Agritourism Forum: August or September 2022

11. Adjournment

Ms. Hatfield adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

For all backup documents, please contact Highlands County Public Information Office 863-402-6500.