



**Highlands County Tourist Development Council
Highlands County Government Center, Boardroom
600 S. Commerce Ave, Sebring, Florida
January 23, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.**

Draft Regular Meeting

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by Commissioner Brooks.

Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Commissioner Brooks
Vicki Pontius
Diane Rydecki
Mark Stewart
Maria Sutherland

Bill Brantley
Cindy Garren
Tenille Drury-Smith
Christine Hatfield

Council Members Absent:

Also, Present:

Benjamin Dunn, Development Services Director
Casey Hartt, Lead Marketing Consultant
Chantel Brutus, Tourist Development Administrative Assistant
Dan Andrews, Heartland Triathlon
Eileen May, Lake Placid Chamber
Gaylin Thomas, Avon Park Rotary Club
George Karos, Avon Park Chamber
James Reed, Friends of Istokpoga
Robert Galloway, Friends of Istokpoga
Liz Barber, Sebring Chamber
Craig Sheriff, SheriffPosseAR.org
Sydney Armstrong, HCBOCC Legislative Grant Coordinator
Kristy Vazquez, Sebring CRA

Commissioner Brooks established that a quorum was present, and the meeting was properly noticed.

2. Acceptance of TDC Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2019

Commissioner Brooks inquired if there were any comments or changes to the minutes of October 31, 2019. Mrs. Pontius made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garren to approve the meeting minutes. Upon roll call the Council voted aye. The motion passed.

3. Financial and Office Reports

Commissioner Brooks presented the Monthly Expenditure and Revenue Reports for the month ending September 30, 2019, which made a final total of fiscal year 18/19 of 1,015,480.00.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sutherland to approve the financial reports as presented.

4. Marketing Update

Mrs. Hartt presented the Marketing report, current FY budget update and review of 2018-2019 collections.

Mrs. Hartt notified the Council and public that the TDC is working on product development and new events. The proposed new events would include a Sebring Area Geotour: Florida's Hidden Gem, Festival of the Arts, GFNY, Citrus Golf Trail Tournament, and an Expedition Florida Adventure race. She also discussed and listed miscellaneous events, meetings and luncheons that are upcoming.

5. Items for Voting

A. Fishing Tournament Facility Enhancements

Casey Hartt recommended TDC approval for use of \$254,276.04 out of 5306/Lakes cost center for enhancements to both Windy Point and Lake Istokpoga tournament facilities. All facility updates were brought to the legal department prior to TDC voting for review and approved by legal as approved uses for TDT. The use of the \$254,246.04 would deplete the Lakes account and thereafter we would close that account. Any remaining costs (approximately \$33,227) could be absorbed by the County pending approval from the BOCC. TDC staff is also attending a FWC grant workshop to acquire information on funding from FWC for a portion on the total amount.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pontius to recommend approval of Fishing Tournament Facility Enhancements in the amount of \$254,276.04. Ms. Garren also made a motion seconded by Ms. Pontius to close the Lakes account-5306 upon depletion of all funds towards the facility enhancements. Upon roll call, remaining Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

B. New Event: Expedition Adventure Race

Sheriff Posse Adventure Race (SPAR) is requesting up to \$8,000 in grant funding for a new event - Expedition Florida Adventure Race - to cover the costs associated with digital advertising, participant race jerseys, participant race bibs and other related race materials that are fundable by the TDC. These costs would be funded by the TDC on a reimbursable basis. The event would take place Dec. 29, 2020-Jan. 2, 2021 and expects to attract 100 participants.

Mrs. Pontius made a motion, seconded by, Mrs. Sutherland to recommend approval of Event assistance in the amount of \$8,000. Upon roll call, all remaining Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

C. New Event: GFNY-Florida

For 2020, GFNY is requesting up to \$65,000 in grant funding for a new event - GFNY Florida - to cover the costs associated with digital advertising, marketing and promotions, promotional photography and videography, race jerseys, rider race materials, and a post-race reception. For the 2021 & 2022 races, GFNY is requesting up to \$55,000 to fund GFNY Florida to cover the costs

associated with digital advertising, marketing and promotions, promotional photography and videography, rider race jerseys, rider race materials and a post-race reception. These costs would be funded by the TDC on a reimbursable basis. The 2020 event would take place Oct. 22-25 and expects to attract 1,000 cyclists the first year.

Ms. Pontius made a motion, seconded by, Ms. Sutherland to recommend approval upon legal review of Event assistance in the amount of \$65,000 for 2020 plus up to \$55,000 each year for 2021 and 2022 race. This would be included within a 3-year contract with GFNY. Upon roll call, all remaining Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

D. Event Grant Categories & Overview

Casey Hartt presented new Event Grant Categories & Overview that the Grant Sub-Committee proposed to bring to the TDC board for approval.

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rydecki to recommend approval of Event Grant Categories and Overview with an exception that the grant sub-committee look at a policy that would allow above max funding on High impact events if a very large-scale event came to ask for TDC funds. Upon roll call, remaining Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

E. Contingency Fund Recommendation

Casey Hartt proposed a new cost center be created for a contingency fund allocation of one month's collection (about \$85,000). This purpose would be to set aside some funds in a separate account in the event of a significant emergency that would impact our collections (for example, a hurricane, or loss of the 12 Hours). In order to utilize any portion of the funds, collection data must show at least a 10% drop in the average TDT collections and a detailed written request must be approved by the TDC board.

Mrs. Pontius made a motion, seconded by, Ms. Garren to recommend approval of a contingency fund cost center account in the amount of one month's collection (about \$85,000). Upon roll call, all remaining Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

6. Old Business/Discussion

Old business and discussion was presented in Ms. Hartt's Marketing update due to time restriction.

7. Public Input

8. Board Member Roundtable

9. Upcoming Meeting

A. TDC Board: April 30, 2020 @ 8:15 a.m., Government Center, Boardroom.

10. Adjournment

Commissioner Brooks adjourned the meeting at 9:48 A.M.

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