

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 20, 2020**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Doug Little, Cindy Sullivan, Bryn Rawlins-Adams, Susan Elliott, Pete Arney, Dave Wilson, Sara Patel  
**Staff:** Georgia Carter Turner, Executive Director; Kristine Spence, Marketing Manager; David Swanberg, Marketing Coordinator

**Also Present:** Laura Coleman, Volusia County Assistant County Attorney; Brian Rothwell, Volusia County Activity Project Manager; Greg Otte and Brenda Sidoti, Benedict Advertising; Matt Matousek, Stetson Sports; Carl Brigandi, Spectrum.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**Call for Public Participation:** None

**April Minutes:** Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

**April Financials:** Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

Mr. Little stated WVTAA received \$88,141 in February, and were up 16.09% year over year. He mentioned that Southeast Volusia topped West Volusia with a 23% increase.

**Update from Benedict Advertising:**

Mr. Otte stated that April was quiet since advertising was paused all month. WVTAA is slowing rolling out organically in May without spending any marketing dollars. Mr. Otte gave an update on the organic reach for the Facebook post for the \$99 for 99 Days promotion. Reach was 4,430, with 594 engagements, 409 clicks and 185 reactions. All positive feedback was given. Two video clips were viewed that were created and posted to Facebook. One was at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge that reached 1.2K and the other covered De Leon Springs State Park with a 1.6K reach.

Existing media messaging (AAA Living) and partnerships (Stetson University, Orlando Disc Golf event in DeBary) are being utilized to promote \$99 for 99 Days. A bonus sponsorship with NPR includes 10 radio announcements in The Villages on WMFV and Orlando on WMFE. Various media outlets picked up or reported on the "Stimulus Packages" i.e. WNDB, Hometown News, Daytona Beach News-Journal, Superior Small Lodging's blog and Southeast Tourism Society's social media. Next up: timing of re-launch for paid advertising, *How to do Florida* TV ads in conjunction with Highland Park Fish Camp, May newsletter e-blast and 2020-2021 budgeting.

**Executive Director's Report:**

Since the last Board Meeting, WVTAA staff has participated in several virtual meetings with Southeast Tourism Society, MainStreet DeLand, City of DeLand, Destinations Florida, St. Johns River to Sea Virtual Summit, Volusia Hispanic Chamber, Office Octane with DeLand Chamber, West Volusia Chamber, State Emergency Operations Center updates, Volusia County Council meetings and COVID briefings, Daytona Beach Chamber, Society of American Travel Writers, Florida Black Bear meeting, River of Lakes monthly meeting as well as a focus group for their economic study, TripAdvisor, Coast to Coast Trail Leadership Meeting, Pineapple PR media panel a WVTAA Zoom Tourism Talk with around 30 partners in attendance.

Ms. Turner said she had a call with Helga Van Eckert, the new Director of Economic Development for Volusia County, to discuss tourism as economic development. Ms. Turner has also been helping Ms. Van Eckert distribute information to the tourism industry about the County's \$3,000 grants.

WVTAA has also been involved in getting the word out to small lodging in the state about an economic development study the University of Central Florida (UCR) conducted with the Superior Small Lodging Association. There is a webinar to present results at 3 p.m. today.

Events attended: Athens Theatre's "Virtually Yours" performance; Virtual Wine Women & Chocolate; Facebook Live with DeLand Chamber and District Hot Yoga for the Wellness Initiative.

Ms. Turner reported that on May 5 the County Council approved internal audits of the Volusia County's Votran transportation system, cybersecurity systems and the county's three tourism advertising authorities. While no problems are suspected, the Volusia County Council and the county auditor agreed that those areas are priorities for auditing to ensure that the county's internal controls are sound. Ms. Turner has been in touch with Internal Auditor Jonathan Edwards who said there is nothing to prepare at this time but he will reach out soon.

As for the 2020-21 budget, Jake Teems at the County Budget office told Ms. Turner that the official letter outlining the revenue estimate for the current year and the projection for the upcoming budget year which is usually sent in May will be delayed. This year's plan is to send the estimates in early June so as to capture the actual revenue collection through April. By waiting a few extra weeks, there will be another month of actuals to help guide the estimate. In the meantime, WVTAA staff has started compiling numbers and will present the budget at the July Board meeting.

Staff members have been working in the office for the last three weeks but have not opened the Visitor Center yet. On Friday, May 22, staff will work from home again because landlord Barb Shepherd is having the building tented for termites.

Congratulations to Marketing Coordinator David Swanberg for completing the Hospitality & Tourism Management course offered by Florida Atlantic University's College of Business. It was very helpful to him, being new in the tourism business.

**New Business:** None

**General Discussion:**

Ms. Sullivan mentioned the SJR2C Loop kiosk was out of brochures, and requested that it be replenished. Mr. Swanberg will do this today.

Mr. Little talked about the connections of the trails and when complete how they will benefit our area and increase occupancy in our hotels.

**Adjourn:** With no further business; Ms. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Wilson. The motion passed unanimously at 9:35 a.m.