

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Doug Little, Cindy Sullivan, Bryn Rawlins-Adams, Susan Elliott, Pete Arney, Dave Wilson

**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; Michael Benedict, Greg Otte and Brenda Sidoti, Benedict Advertising; Matt Matousek, Stetson Sports

**Absent:** Sara Patel

**Call to Order:** Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Call for Public Participation:** None

**May Minutes:** Mr. Arney made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Elliott and approved unanimously.

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

Ms. Turner stated WVTAA received \$62,570 in March of 2020, compared to \$92,374 received in March of 2019, down 32.26%. Ms. Turner also shared April collections received were \$25,053, down 58.46% year over year, which was not good but the year to date collections are not down as much as we thought they would be at 7.29%.

**Update from Benedict Advertising:**

Mr. Otte provided an update from the past 28 days pulling data from the website for top page results that included trails, latest travel information, Blue Spring, farmer's market and \$99 for 99 days promotion. He said 87.8% were new visitors and 12.2% were returning visitors with 6,538 sessions and 9,645-page views. A driver of these figures came from a Google search campaign for "Trails" with a back up ad for \$99 for 99 days promotion using surplus money. The campaign generated 122,323 impressions, \$31.28 CPM, 3,674 sessions, 3,611 clicks, \$1.06 CPC, 2.95% CTR.

Mr. Otte stated no money has been spent on Facebook advertising and went over the organic Facebook activity that had a post reach of 9,867 with 2,123 engagements, and 1,222 video view with 185 reactions.

The consumer Enewsletter went out in late May as attractions were opening back up after the quarantine from COVID-19. There were 3,226 total opens, an open rate 13.3%. Top clicks were \$99 for 99 days, Bartram Gardens, Wings of the West Trail and MainStreet DeLand. Mr. Otte stated it received a 1 to 2% higher open rate than usual.

Public relations activity was picked up from Florida Traveler Blog; WNDG-AM: Traveling Mom Blog, Garth Brooks Virtual Concert at Epic West Volusia; Barberville Pioneer Settlement with David Martin for Good Day Orlando on FOX 35; and articles in Creative Loafing out of Tampa and Orlando Date Night Guide.

## **Executive Director's Report:**

WVTAA staff continues to participate in a lot of virtual meetings including: W.I.N. Network with DeLand Chamber; Weekly State Emergency Operations Center calls with VISIT FLORIDA; Superior Small Lodging; Main Street Board and Reopening Crew meetings; Travel Media Group; Southeast Tourism Society CEO Conversation; St. John River to Sea Loop Virtual Summit; Volusia Vibe with DeLand Chamber; County Council meetings, press conferences and Public Information Network calls; River of Lakes monthly meeting; Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association webinars; VISIT Florida co-op webinar. Ms. Turner also attended an in-person Daytona Beach International Airport update.

Ms. Turner said events haven't picked up quite yet. She did attend a Daytona Tortugas Movie night at Jackie Robinson Stadium. She said that the Tortugas are not sure when and if their 2020 season will happen.

Ms. Turner reported she and Ms. Spence are working on audit preparation and the 2020-21 budget.

The Volusia County Internal Auditor Jonathan Edwards was here last week and will return to do some more work this week. He will audit the other two Ad Authorities then make the decision if he will do one big audit or divide into three. Either way, he'll have the audit(s) prepared by the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Turner stated as for the 2020-21 budget, staff received an analysis from the County Budget Office. A few highlights include:

- Estimated 2019-20 disbursement is \$659,279
- Anticipated 2020-21 disbursement is \$698,505 which was based on 2019 collections
- Currently projecting a salary adjustment of 3 percent in FY 2020-21 budget
- Power point and budget details due July 24, 2020
- County Council presentation will be August 25.

Ms. Turner will be in touch with each of the board members individually as she has done in the past the week before the July 15 board meeting to go over the budget and marketing plan.

Mr. Swanberg has been out and about. His focus this summer is on developing the Cool Craft Trail concept. He has also been working with the DeLand Chamber on the Wellness Initiative. Mr. Swanberg and Ms. Spence produced two Facebook videos with the Chamber for Global Wellness Day on June 12. Mr. Swanberg also delivered our new Visitor Guides to the two rack service, visited the Tattoo display at the Enterprise Museum and went to Barberville Pioneer Settlement for David Martin's Good Day Orlando broadcast.

The Visitor Center is not open yet. Since closing there have only been six people come in. Staff will continue to monitor and make a decision about opening later this summer.

Ms. Turner mentioned the Republican National Convention is coming to Jacksonville in August. She has been working with the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association and the Jacksonville CVB to see if any West Volusia rooms can be included in their block.

WVTAA is still waiting to hear about school starting and sports schedule from Stetson.

Ms. Turner shared she has been appointed to the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors, starting July 1; and will also serve as the Secretary for the Superior Small Lodging Board, effective immediately.

**New Business:**

It was discussed to lift the suspension on advertising expenses and to amend the budget to spend \$5,000 per month for digital promotion (Google ad search, Facebook). Ms. Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

**General Discussion:**

Ms. Turner mentioned the trails in West Volusia are projected to be complete by the end of the calendar year. She encouraged board members to write letters to Tim Baylie, director of parks and recreation for Volusia County and/or Volusia County Council to press for a timeline of completion due to the economic impact it can have on tourism in the area.

Mr. Little requested Laura Coleman to provide Mr. Swanberg with a briefing of the Sunshine Laws, as he is new to the WVTAA staff.

Protocols of cleaning and safety due to COVID-19 were discussed and how to promote what hotels, restaurants, and attractions are doing to welcome visitors back by using examples of Holiday Inn Express Orange City and Hampton Inn DeLand.

**Adjourn:** With no further business; Ms. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Elliott. The motion passed unanimously at 10:05 a.m.