

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 19, 2020**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Doug Little, Cindy Sullivan, Sara Patel, Susan Elliott, Pete Arney, Dave Wilson, Bryn Adams

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 and Brenda Sidoti, Benedict Advertising; Brenna Dacks, VISIT FLORIDA; Matt Matousek, Stetson Sports; Carl Brigandi, Spectrum.

Call to Order: Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Call for Public Participation: None

July Minutes: Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Patel and approved unanimously.

July Financials: Ms. Patel gave the financial report. Ms. Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved unanimously.

Update from Benedict Advertising:

Ms. Sidoti reported on the top visited pages on the website for July which included the pages on trails; latest travel information; Blue Spring State Park; home page and \$99 for 99 days promotion.

Ms. Sidoti stated the Google search trail campaign for July generated 148,777 impressions, 3,572 clicks resulting in a CTR of 2.40%.

Benedict Advertising created a video showing the cleaning measures area attractions and partners are doing to safely welcome back visitors. Ms. Sidoti reported the results from boosting it on Facebook: total reach was 25,805 with 1,780 engagements and 2,671 watching the entire video.

Ms. Sidoti provided an update on the August Newsletter which focused on activities available on the St. Johns River. There were 2,381 total opens, open rate was 17.3% with 286 secondary actions. Top clicks in order were the Tiny Houseboat Adventures; \$99 for 99 days promotion; Holly Bluff Marina and Houseboats; River Eco Tours; and Airboat & Gator Charters.

Public relations activity was picked up from West Volusia Beacon, Daytona Beach News-Journal on Ms. Turner's appointment to the VISIT FLORIDA board of directors. The West Volusia Beacon also reported on the re-opening of the WVTAA visitor center and WVTAA's participation in the PPE distribution from Volusia County coordinated by the Volusia County Chamber Alliance.

Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Turner stated the majority of this month has been spent finalizing the budget and concluding the County's internal audit. Jonathan Edwards, the County's Internal Auditor, will present his final report to the County Council the day we present our budget, Aug. 25. The good news is there were no findings. Recommendations he did have include:

1.A. ITEMIZED, DETAILED RECEIPTS AND INVOICES

RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure all invoices and itemized receipts are obtained and retained to support the purchase.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, and have already retrained staff and implemented.

1.B. SALES TAX ON PURCHASES

RECOMMENDATION:

Retrain staff on state sales tax exemption and ensure sales tax is not charged on future purchases.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, and have already retrained staff and implemented.

1.C. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT SPREADSHEET

RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure formulas are double-checked in spreadsheets to prevent rounding formulas.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, and will review all formulas used in spreadsheets in the future.

1.D. ADVERTISING AGENCY AGREEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider future advertising agreements contain specific task assignments with a negotiated fee per hour.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Will consider future agreements to include a negotiated fee per hour. This was the WVTAA's first agreement with hiring an agency and at the time, a flat fee was the better option.

2.A. 3-PART RECEIPT BOOK NEEDED

RECOMMENDATION:

Utilize a 3-part receipt book then reconcile the receipts to the financial records on a regular basis. Issue receipts in numerical order and maintain a copy in the receipt book.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, already purchased a 3-part receipt book and implemented.

2.B. TIMELY DEPOSITS

RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure deposits are made at least once a week, or once it is over a certain dollar amount.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, already implemented.

3.POLICY & PROCEDURES UPDATES

RECOMMENDATION:

Update the policy and procedures handbook to include policies:

- a) Restricting goods from being shipped to the employee's home address.
- b) Requiring cardholders to sign agreements which acknowledges adherence to the credit card policies.
- c) Develop a password policy, including time-out for inactivity and work with the technology vendor to implement.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree and will be updating the handbook in the next few months to include these items. Will arrange a technology assessment review with our current technology vendor.

4. BOARD MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure audio recordings are provided as required and consider posting Board agenda and minutes to the website for public viewing.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree, will post prior and future agendas and meetings on the WVTAA's website.

5. BENCHMARKING AND BEST PRACTICES

RECOMMENDATION:

Utilize industry standard benchmarks, chart of accounts, and performance reporting guidelines to continue to strengthen the commitment to transparency, consistency, and accountability of public funds.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE:

Agree and will review Destinations International benchmarks and practices.

Ms. Turner said it seems like it's getting a little busier for meetings and events. Staff is still doing Zoom calls, but also have been going to some "live" happenings.

Events included: Assisting with MainStreet DeLand's Tropical Days, July 17-August 2; attending the "Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) Revised" at the Athens Theatre.

Meetings Attended: Tourist Development Council meeting held at the Ocean Center; Volusia Vibe, DeLand Chamber's Virtual After Hours and ribbon cutting at DeLand Wellness; MainStreet DeLand's Reopen DeLand and Board meetings; West Volusia Chamber's AM Connection; Volusia County press conferences re: Hurricanes and COVID and PIN calls; SATW webinar on RV travel; Southeast Tourism Society CEO roundtable; Superior Small Lodging Board meeting and business planning; Florida Black Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway; River of Lakes Heritage Corridor; US Travel updates, including one with Nancy Pelosi; and in person meeting with Helga Van Eckert, the new Economic Development Director for Volusia County.

Ms. Turner met about the marketing plan and budget with County Manager George Recktenwald and county staff. Ms. Turner also met with Barb Girtman, the only County Council member who wanted a meeting so far. Ms. Turner will present the budget to the Volusia County Council next Tuesday, August 25.

Other Activities: Attended an Alumni Class for the Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College and received a certificate for Crisis Management, Communications and Recovery Strategy for Destinations; hosted travel writer Verna Gates from Birmingham, Alabama; received the new Daytona Beach Visitor Guide with WVTAA co-op; working with Randy Newton to bring the Kayak Anglers of Florida here in September.

Ms. Turner mentioned the \$99 for 99 days promotion which ended Aug. 14 was somewhat of a success. Several of the hotels got room nights as a result and Highland Park Fish Camp rented a lot of pontoon boats.

Staffers David Swanberg and Kristine Spence have been working on a new fall campaign – West Volusia LOVES Camping, promoting the area's RV and camping offerings for August and September. Mr. Swanberg has been meeting with tourism partners and taking better photos to update the web site. He is also finalizing all of the participants who will be on the Cool Craft Beverage Trail Map.

Lastly Ms. Turner reported Stetson University started their Fall Semester with over 1,600 students. As a part of the Safer Stetson initiative, they placed one student per dorm room. Therefore, they placed 200 students in 200 rooms at local hotels. The good news is, the hotels will get the business from now until Thanksgiving. The bad news is, the rooms are tax exempt. She will monitor what that will mean to our tax collections.

General Discussion: None

Adjourn: With no further business; Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Elliott. The motion passed unanimously at 9:39 a.m.