

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 16, 2020**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Sara Patel, Pete Arney, Bryn Adams, Dave Wilson

Remote: Doug Little, Cindy Sullivan, Susan Elliott

Staff: Georgia Carter Turner, Executive Director; Kristine Spence, Marketing Manager; David Swanberg, Marketing Coordinator

Also Present: Laura Coleman, Volusia County Assistant County Attorney; Zach Chalifour, James Moore CPA & Consultants; Greg Otte and Brenda Sidoti, Benedict Advertising; Brenna Dacks, VISIT FLORIDA.

Call to Order: Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Mr. Arney made a motion to approve that Mr. Little has a concern and the Board agrees that it is an exceptional circumstance and he be allowed to participate by remote today, seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved unanimously.

Mr. Arney made a motion to approve that Ms. Sullivan has a concern and that Board agrees that it is an exceptional circumstance and she be allowed to participate by remote today, seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved unanimously.

Mr. Arney made a motion to approve that Ms. Elliott has a concern and the Board agrees that it is an exceptional circumstance and she be allowed to participate by remote today, seconded by Ms. Patel and approved unanimously.

Call for Public Participation: none

October Minutes: Ms. Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

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

November Financials: Ms. Patel gave the financial report. Mr. Arney had a question about the miscellaneous income line item under the budget for October and November; Ms. Turner will look at it and report back to the board via email after the meeting. Ms. Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved unanimously.

2019-20 Audit Report by James Moore CPA & Consultants:

Zach Chalifour, CPA presented an overview of the fiscal year 2019-20 audit report. There were no substantial findings.

Financial highlights included: \$632, 922 in tax revenues with a 13.9% decrease from the prior year and \$65K below budget. Fund balance = \$357,987 for the year. WVTAA policy is \$50k minimum.

One deficiency reported in cash disbursement approvals from a motion made in April by the board for Ms. Turner to be able to sign checks for regular expenses within budget for 90 days due to restrictions of COVID-19. There was not a motion after the 90 days expired to extend this approval and checks were signed by Ms. Turner beyond this timeframe. However, there were no findings of checks signed to be payments out of the ordinary or not within budget.

Motion made by Mr. Arney to extend the approval period beyond 90 days through November 30, 2020 to authorize payment of checks signed by Ms. Turner for regular expenses up to \$5,000 within budget, seconded by Ms. Elliott and approved unanimously.

Florida Sunshine Law: Laura Coleman, County of Volusia presented an overview on the Florida Sunshine Law.

Update from Benedict Advertising:

Mr. Otte reported on the top visited pages on the website for November which included the pages on recreation/trails; food-lodging/campgrounds; Farmer's market; home page; Blue Spring State Park; Travel Information.

Mr. Otte stated the Google search Trail campaign for November generated 133,096 impressions, 5,082 clicks resulting in a CTR of 3.82%. The Cool Craft Trail campaign in November generated 146,339 impressions, 630 clicks resulting in a CTR of .43%. A display ad for Cool Craft Trail generated 65,610 impressions, 263 clicks resulting in a CTR of .40%.

Mr. Otte presented a list of website visitors based on top 20 cities. Top 5 included: Orlando, Miami, Tampa, Jacksonville and DeLand. Also discussed Facebook results for November. Total reach was 162,172 with 1,764 post engagements and 189,467 impressions.

Mr. Otte provided an update on the Enewsletter focusing on November events. There were 2,983 total opens, open rate was 16.9% with 149 secondary actions. Top clicks in order were DeLand Music Festival; Playing on the Porches at Barberville Pioneer Settlement; Christmas in Bloom (WVHS event); Central Florida Legends Marathon; and Volusia Speedway event. The second Enewsletter specifically for the CoolCraft Trail generated 2,071 total opens with an open rate of 15.6% and 52 secondary actions.

Public relations included articles on Jungle Den project in Astor; Stetson Mansion and Stetson University; and multiple articles on the CoolCraft Trail.

Mr. Otte mentioned the Benedict team will meet with WVTAA staff about 2021 events and opportunities and will follow up at the next board meeting about strategies leading into 2021.

Mr. Swanberg reported on the CoolCraft Trail launch which included a brochure with map, table tent, koozie contest, new website, launch video and social media activity.

Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Turner said staff spent a lot of the past two months working with James Moore on the "virtual" audit and preparing to launch the CoolCraft Beverage Trail.

Ms. Turner said staff attended the following meetings, events and expo shows:

Met with future Volusia County Councilman Danny Robins; VISIT FLORIDA Marketing Committee and first Board Meeting; Tourist Development Council; Shari Simmans and Carmen Rosamonda re: DeBary future projects; Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway monthly meeting; All Star Nutrition ribbon cutting; Dr. Kat chiropractic clinic ribbon cutting; Volusia Hispanic Chamber West Side and East Side offices' ribbon cuttings; River of Lakes monthly meeting; West Volusia Chamber Willow luncheon; Backpack Buddies Trunk or Treat; Villages Senior Lifestyle Expo; MainStreet DeLand promotions committee meeting and board meeting; American Hotel & Lodging Association webinar on what's next after election; West Volusia Chamber Networking at Night; St. Johns River to Sea Loop Alliance presentation during FDOT Mobility Week; Drive Thru Senior Expo in Melbourne; Fresh as Fruit Gallery exhibit at Tom's Auto shop; judged and attended ILatina Awards; Wellness Tourism Association webinar; Southeast Tourism Society coffee & conversation; took the new West Volusia Historic Tour; WV Historical Society Cemetery Walk and Christmas in Bloom; Central Florida

Legends 5K, Half Marathon and Marathon; Marc Bernier and Volusia Today radio shows; Crappie USA Kids Fishing rodeo and tournament that brought 31 teams; Wild Art Show at Highland Park Fish Camp; assisted MainStreet DeLand with their downtown holiday promotion, including hanging Wreaths on Woodland; attended the ribbon cutting for new owners of Victoria Hills and met about golf and wedding packages; Destinations Florida update; ribbon cutting at Holiday Stained Glass Studio; met with new State Representative Webster Barnaby; Florida Christmas Remembered at Barberville; met with DIS President Chip Wile and Cheryl Coxwell re: Speed Week promotions – two races in February: Daytona 500 on 14th and a road race on the 21st which should benefit West Volusia.

Other mentions:

Last month Ms. Turner stated that Superior Small Lodging decided to dissolve organization. Luckily, SSL members will merge with the Florida Restaurant Lodging Association's Florida Inns chapter.

Ms. Turner said travel writers are coming back. Pam Keene brought her Atlanta boat club here. Kathleen Walls was here researching a story on the Bartram Trail later last month. Several Florida writers have expressed an interest in coming to follow the CoolCraft Trail including Chelle Walton who was here with her husband this week from Sarasota. Ms. Turner also had an interview with Evolve, the Daytona Chamber's magazine, about MainStreet.

Later this week Ms. Turner will attend the ribbon cutting and greet the first new American Airlines flights from Philadelphia and Dallas. She is working with the Airport to host two writers from both markets on Friday.

Lastly, Ms. Turner read a letter from Volusia County Revenue Director Craig Baumgardner. At its December 15 meeting, the Volusia County Council voted to dissolve its Revenue Division and a new division was created under the Office of the CFO to be titled the Treasury and Billing Division. Mr. Baumgardner will be the director of the division and the administration of the Tourist and Convention Development Tax will remain with the County and assigned to this division. These changes will become effective on January 5, 2021.

General Discussion:

Ms. Sullivan stated that the economic development study for River of Lakes Heritage Corridor done by the Florida Department of Transportation was complete. Ms. Turner will send out the total report to all board members.

Adjourn: With no further business; Mr. Arney made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Elliott. The motion passed unanimously at 10:19 a.m.