

PINELLAS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

June 26, 2020

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, met in budget work session in the Magnolia Room, Pinellas County Extension facility, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida, on this date at 9:04 A.M. with the following members present:

Pat Gerard, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair, Chair
Russ Kimball, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Vice-Chair
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises
Frank Hibbard, City of Clearwater Mayor (late arrival)
Joanne “Cookie” Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach Mayor
Rick Kriseman, City of St. Petersburg Mayor
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry
Anthony Satterfield, Alden Suites

Not Present

Charles Prather, The Birchwood Inn
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, Chief Operating Officer
Tony Armer, Film Commissioner
Katie Bridges, Senior Advertising Manager
Leroy Bridges, Vice-President, Digital & Communications
Craig Campbell, Community and Brand Engagement Director; Sports and Events Interim Director
Andrea Gabel, Senior Sales Manager, Latin America
Suzanne Hackman, Vice-President, Business Development
Liz McCann, Executive Administrative Assistant
Rosemarie Payne, Director of Leisure Travel
Teri Tuxhorn, Administrative Director
James Abernathy, Budget and Financial Management Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Other Interested Individuals
Jenny Masinovsky, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

Agenda

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Pat Gerard
- II. CHAIR COMMENTS – WELCOME NEW TDC MEMBERS – Chair Pat Gerard
- III. APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES – February 19, 2020 TDC Meeting
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- V. FINANCIAL REPORT – Steve Hayes
- VI. FY 2021 BUDGET OVERVIEW
 - A. Capital Project Funding Program Update – Jim Abernathy
 - B. FY21 Revenue Projections – Jim Abernathy
 - C. Department Budget Overview
 - i. VSPC Summary – Steve Hayes
 - ii. Film Commission – Tony Armer
 - iii. Advertising and Promotions – Katie Bridges
 - iv. Digital and Communications – Leroy Bridges
 - v. Meetings and Conventions – Suzanne Hackman
 - vi. Community and Brand Engagement – Craig Campbell
 - vii. Sports and Events – Craig Campbell
 - viii. Latin America – Andrea Gabel
 - ix. Leisure Travel – Rosemarie Payne
 - x. International Marketing – Steve Hayes
 - xi. Decision Package – Steve Hayes
- VII. ELITE EVENTS – FY21 Process and Committees – Tim Ramsberger
- VIII. VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT – Steve Hayes
 - A. VSPC Updates
 - i. Marketing
 - 1. Advertising – Katie Bridges
 - 2. Digital – Leroy Bridges
 - ii. Tourism Economics Snapshot – April 2020
 - iii. Pinellas County Bed Tax – April 2020
- IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
- X. ADJOURNMENT

All documents and presentations provided to the Clerk’s Office have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gerard called the meeting to order at 9:04 A.M.

CHAIR COMMENTS – NONE

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 19, 2020 MEETING – APPROVED

Upon motion by Mr. Satterfield, seconded by Mayor Kennedy and carried unanimously, the minutes of the February 19 meeting were approved.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Hayes referred to a document titled *Visit St. Pete Clearwater FY 2020 Budget, May 2020* and provided a summary of revenue and expenses from October 2019 through May 2020 and the remaining budget, noting that there are less expenses than planned since a variety of activities did not take place due to COVID-19.

Ms. Moore moved, seconded by Mayor Kriseman and carried unanimously, that the financial report be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

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Mayor Hibbard entered the meeting at 9:10 A.M.

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FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Capital Project Funding Program Update

Mr. Abernathy referred to a document titled *Tourist Development Tax Fund – Capital Funding Program* and provided an update regarding the projected Fiscal Year 2020 revenue, payments for the existing and potential obligations and commitments for various capital projects, and ending

fund balance. He indicated that Fiscal Year 2020 revenue is considerably lower than in previous years; that it will be combined with accumulated reserves to fund the projects; and that a slight dip in the reserves estimated for the ending fund balance of Fiscal Year 2020 and the beginning balance of Fiscal Year 2021 should be rectified next year, assuming revenues are collected and no other dips occur.

Responding to queries by Chair Gerard, Mr. Abernathy referred to financial reports and further discussed the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Fund Fiscal Year 2020 revenue and monthly projections, indicating that an estimated steep drop from \$61.4 million to \$37.5 million in tax collection for the year is expected due to the COVID-19 shutdown in March and the related impacts, noting that the projections are conservative. The members and Messrs. Abernathy and Hayes discussed the drop in hotel room occupancy and average daily rates, fluidity of the present situation, various factors influencing visitation, and the value of the drive market for the current business.

Fiscal Year 2021 Revenue Projections

Mr. Abernathy referred to pages 4 through 11 of a document titled *Tourist Development Council – Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Workshop* and presented the proposed budget, explaining how the projections were developed based on the negative impact of COVID-19 on Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021 revenues. He indicated that significant budget cuts have been made; and that any savings in Fiscal Year 2020 resulting from event cancellations, staff vacancies, and reduced contracts will be put into the beginning fund balance for Fiscal Year 2021; whereupon, he suggested that the Capital Project Funding Program be temporarily suspended in Fiscal Year 2021, excluding prior commitments, to support the marketing expenses, and responded to queries by the members.

Later in the meeting, the members expressed consensus regarding temporarily suspending the next cycle of the Capital Project Funding Program, and responding to query by Mayor Kriseman, Chair Gerard indicated that while the funds would go into the marketing fund, they will not be spent unless needed.

Department Budgets

VSPC Summary

Mr. Hayes referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Tourist Development Council FY21 Budget Workshop* and discussed the occupancy and average daily rates from March 1 through June 20 and TDT collections from Fiscal Year 2018 to present, indicating that the data reflects a drop resulting

from travel restrictions and reduced visitation due to COVID-19 in the middle of March and a slow climb from April into June; whereupon, he discussed the department goals for Fiscal Year 2021.

Film Commission

Referring to the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides regarding the Film Commission, Mr. Armer presented background information regarding the department, noting the success achieved over the last five years, as reflected in the local spend generated from various projects. He underscored the value of feature films for the destination and introduced a pilot program strategy intended to increase the film incentive amount for certain projects.

Mr. Armer noted that information pertaining to the Fiscal Year 2020 Sales Plan Recap and Fiscal Year 2021 Sales Plan and budget is included in the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document; whereupon, he addressed the members' queries pertaining to the Creative Pinellas arts agency, event participation, film-making opportunities, local film festivals, positive press regarding the Commission, and new television technology, and Mr. Hayes provided input.

Advertising and Promotions

Ms. Bridges referred to pages 28 through 37 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document, the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides pertaining to the department, and a document titled *2020-21 Marketing Brief*, and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Responding to queries by the members, Ms. Bridges, with input by Messrs. Bridges and Hayes, discussed the current marketing promotions and tactics, as well as plans for a future drive market campaign, noting the challenges of marketing in the COVID-19 environment, and the members provided comments and recommendations.

Digital and Communications

Mr. Bridges referred to pages 38 through 47 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides pertaining to the department and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
 - Economic impact of the VSPC digital presence (website) to the destination
 - Marketing efforts, including third-party display, Facebook, Google, video social series, and media public relations
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Bridges provided information regarding the Research Contracts budget item and the goals of developing the new VisitStPeteClearwater.com website and the organization-wide stakeholder communications plan; whereupon, he indicated that “stakeholders” refers to the local tourism industry representatives.

Meetings and Conventions

Ms. Hackman referred to pages 48 through 62 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Responding to queries by Mr. Kimball, Ms. Hackman provided information relating to continuing client outreach efforts and the importance of increasing awareness of the area by hosting meeting planner groups.

Community and Brand Engagement

Mr. Campbell referred to pages 63 through 74 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides pertaining to the department and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Sports and Events

Mr. Campbell referred to pages 75 through 86 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides pertaining to the department and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Mayor Kriseman related that VSPC has no presence at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg and East-West Shrine Bowl, which are nationally televised events hosted in the City of St. Petersburg, and expressed hope that the relationship that had existed between the organizations through the Elite Event Funding program can be rebuilt, and Mr. Campbell agreed.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Campbell, with input by Messrs. Ramsberger and Hayes, provided information concerning the impact of COVID-19 on college sports, plans for next year's National Football League Super Bowl in Tampa Bay, and electronic sports opportunities; whereupon, Mayor Hibbard emphasized the economic importance of keeping Tampa Bay next in the Super Bowl rotation, should the event not occur in 2021.

Latin America

Ms. Gable referred to pages 87 through 97 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and presented information regarding the following:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

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The meeting was recessed at 12:08 P.M. and reconvened at 12:41 P.M.
Mayor Bujalski left the meeting at 12:08 P.M.

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Leisure Travel

Ms. Payne referred to pages 98 through 115 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and the *Budget Workshop* PowerPoint slides pertaining to the department and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

Responding to queries by Mr. Satterfield, Ms. Payne and Mr. Hayes discussed the advantages of marketing opportunities with the American Automobile Association Auto Club Group, noting the Association's capabilities in terms of content creation, branch presence, and booking, and Mr. Satterfield emphasized the importance of ensuring measurable results with regard to the potential partnership programs.

International Marketing

Mr. Hayes referred to pages 119 through 142 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and presented information regarding the following topics:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Sales Plan Recap
- Fiscal Year 2021: Budget Summary, Budget Request, and Sales Plan
- COVID-19 impacts on tourism, revenues, budget, and marketing strategies and goals

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Hayes further discussed VSPC's European presence and limited marketing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and staff provided information relating to airline operations and coordinated efforts with Tampa International Airport.

Decision Package

Mr. Hayes referred to a chart titled *FY 2021 Decision Package* on page 143 of the *FY 2021 Budget Workshop* document and indicated that a sponsorship proposal was received from the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee in the amount of \$1.5 million; and that staff is reviewing it and will bring it back to the Council for consideration at a later date, noting that the County Commission will vote on the finalized package. Responding to query by Mr. Satterfield, he remarked on the benefits of participation by VSPC if the event is limited in scope due to COVID-

19, noting that the sponsorship amount may be different; and that at this point the Super Bowl is scheduled to be played full-scale.

In response to query by Mr. Satterfield, Ms. Tuxhorn briefly discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget for Creative Pinellas.

Mr. Hayes related that the proposed TDC budget was presented to the County Commission in June and requested the Council's action on the matter; whereupon, Mayor Hibbard moved, seconded by Mayor Kriseman and carried unanimously, that the budget be approved.

ELITE EVENTS – FISCAL YEAR 2021 PROCESS AND COMMITTEES

Mr. Ramsberger provided information regarding the Elite Event Funding program, including the application review and approval process, proposed funding amount, the pool of applicants, and timeline. He stated that the next step in the process would be convening a seven-member review committee, and discussion ensued.

Mayor Kriseman reiterated the need to revisit the application process for the future, indicating that the two aforementioned event representatives have expressed frustration with it, and Mr. Henderson agreed; whereupon, Mr. Ramsberger noted that the changes would need to be addressed in the Elite Event Funding Guidelines.

After discussion, the following members stated that they will serve on the Elite Event Committee:

- Pat Gerard
- Phil Henderson
- Frank Hibbard
- Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy
- Russ Kimball
- Trisha Rodriguez
- Anthony Satterfield

VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

Mr. Hayes expressed appreciation to staff for the hard work and collaboration in preparing the budget and the associated materials.

VSPC UPDATES

Marketing: Advertising and Digital

Mr. Bridges referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Covid-19 Marketing Update* and reviewed the recent months' trends, data sources, and indicators used to gauge consumer interest in visitation and inform marketing decisions. He related that very few people are booking trips, and the bookings appear to be made either last minute or far in advance; and that it is difficult to market in this environment.

Ms. Bridges continued the presentation, played a video, and discussed various aspects of the *Brighter Days Ahead* campaign, intended to capture optimism and rejuvenation of the destination during uncertain times while promoting safe and responsible travel, and Mr. Bridges provided input regarding creating messages for responsible visitation and similar matters.

Ms. Bridges discussed the methodology and results of the *Consumer Sentiment Study* regarding current visitation, including the likelihood of visiting, transportation and lodging choices, activities of interest in the destination, expected safety protocols, and similar topics. Mr. Bridges remarked that the consumer sentiment is continuously shifting and reviewed the three-phased planning approach of Rebound, Recovery, and New Normal, involving monitoring the COVID-19 trends, measuring consumer interest in visitation, and new campaigns promoting travel post COVID-19. He discussed the current uptick in COVID-19 cases and the associated media coverage, safety of the current visitors and the local community, and the readiness by staff to launch the Recovery campaign as soon as the time is right.

Tourism Economics Snapshot and Pinellas County Bed Tax – April 2020

The item was not addressed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Satterfield invited the members to visit the Creative Pinellas campus located nearby in the Florida Botanical Gardens.

Mr. Kimball commended Mr. Hayes and his staff for their efforts during a challenging time.

June 26, 2020

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 P.M.