

## **MINUTES**

### **NASH COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**June 2, 2020**

The Nash County Tourism Development Authority met on June 2, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. at the Nash County Claude Mayo Administrative Building. Present were Robbie Davis, Chairman and members Dan Daly, Faye Beddingfield, Wayne Murphy, Bill Lehnes, Judy Winstead, Mark Cone, Retho Williams, Lisa Ferguson and Percell Kelley.

Also present were Donna Wood, Nash County Finance Officer and guests Russell Proctor, Keith Ballentine, Paul Niswonger and Barbara Greene with, Nash Travel and Tourism Council; Allen Barbee Jr. and Karen White – Spring Hope Chamber for the Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival; Shelley Gray- Nash Arts, Sheila Martin – The Dunn Center (and Travel and Tourism); and Jean Bailey and Brenda Crocker with the Tar River Choral and Orchestral Society, Inc. (TROC) Chairman Davis welcomed all members and guests and introduced the two new Board Members, Lisa Ferguson and Percell Kelley. He gave a brief update that three Board members Faye Beddingfield, Zack Dorovic and Bill Lehnes terms have expired but will continue serving on the Board until the positions are filled. Chairman Davis asked the Board members to let him know if they had any recommendations for potential board members.

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order then asked for approval of the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting. On a Motion by Wayne Murphy, seconded by Dan Daly the minutes were approved.

Chairman Davis then called upon Finance Officer Donna Wood to present the financial information. Ms. Wood indicated that comparing FY2020 July through April to the prior year same time period, occupancy tax collections are down approximately 8% overall. This is due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the travel restrictions. Reviewing FY2020 February, March and April months individually compared to FY2019 for the same months showed significant decreases of 7%, 30 % and 65% respectively. With these decreases and the possibility of

restrictions continuing, fund balance increase projection, if any, for 2019-2020 is difficult to predict. Ms. Wood indicated that the decrease in occupancy tax collections would have an impact on revenue projections for budgeting for FY2020-2021

Old Business:

Business Recruitment Update by Nash County Retail Economic Developer, Susan Phelps. Ms. Phelps indicated that the hotel study for Town of Nashville has had activity but there is nothing currently in place. Ms. Phelps also indicated that Downtown Nashville is working on action items with a three year strategic plan with MSD Funds and strengthening the Board. In addition she talked about new retail development across the County and FY2021 marketing efforts for the County through the Economic Development office that will benefit tourism.

City of Rocky Mount 2 cent Occupancy Tax Update by Chairman Davis.

Chairman Davis and Ms. Wood met with City of Rocky Mount Mayor, Sandy Roberson and Assistant to the County Manager for Budget & Evaluation, Kenneth Hunter, to discuss the use of the occupancy tax funds in relation to the Sports Complex debt service being paid-off. The suggestion to the Mayor was to consider using 1 cent of occupancy tax collections (as was approved for the Sports Complex debt service) to support a Mill Project for a minor league baseball stadium as recommended by the TDA Board at the January 14, 2020 meeting. The Mayor was receptive to the idea and indicated he would get back with the Chairman at a later date. It was decided at the meeting, with consideration of the Sports Complex debt service being paid off and another project has not been submitted to or approved by the TDA Board, that until another project was approved for use, only ½ of collections (1 cent) will be released to City of Rocky Mount to support the remaining debt service on the Imperial Center. The remaining ½ of the collections will be held in a liability account for the City of Rocky Mount until the TDA Board provides direction to Nash County for disbursement of the funds to the City of Rocky Mount.

New Business:

Chairman Davis called upon Finance Officer Donna Wood to present the 2020 Audit Contract from Thompson, Price Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. for consideration of approval. Ms. Wood stated that the contract was for \$3,750 for the audit services and \$500 for preparation of the annual financial statements for a total cost of \$4,250. Ms. Wood noted that this was the fourth year for this firm and the contract price remained the same as for FY2019. A motion to approve the contract was made by Lisa Ferguson and seconded by Dan Daly and duly passed that the audit contract for FY2020 be approved.

Recommended Budget:

Chairman Davis discussed the revenue projections for the FY2020-2021 recommended budget are less than the FY2019-2020 Budget due to the effects of the unprecedented Coronavirus and the decreases that we have seen in the occupancy tax collections over the last few months and that this would have an impact on the funding available.

Chairman Davis announced that due to the cancellation of several events that were funded in FY2019-2020 from TDA funds, there were several organizations that would not be presenting. As TDA has done in the past, if an organization had to cancel an event that was funded with TDA allocation, has requested the organizations to rollover the funds received to be used for the event the following year instead of returning the funds to the TDA Board. The organizations/events this effected were the Nashville Blooming Festival, Tackle the Tar and Rocky Mount Mills concert series.

Public Hearing:

Chairman Davis called for a Public Hearing for the Nash County Tourism Development Authority 2020-2021 Budget Presentation and consideration of adoption of the proposed 2020-2021 Budget noting that this Public Hearing and meeting had been advertised as required on May 19, 2020 in the Rocky Mount Telegram. On a motion by Faye Beddingfield seconded by Mark Cone and duly passed that the Board go into a public hearing.

Chairman Davis asked for presenters to make their comments for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget.

Chairman Davis called Mrs. Brenda Crocker and Ms. Jean Bailey to present the funding request of \$25,000 for Tar River Orchestra . Ms. Bailey indicated this would be the 35<sup>th</sup> year of Tar River Orchestra and reported the benefits to the community of the funding. She indicated that the FY2020 event was not cancelled but has been rescheduled to September 19, 2020. The presenters indicated that FY2021 would be used to bring in a nationally known entertainer.

Karen White, President of the Spring Hope Chamber of Commerce, was introduced to present a funding request of \$20,000 for the Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival. Ms. White indicated that this would be the 49<sup>th</sup> year of the Festival held on the first weekend in October with various events occurring throughout the week and weekend including the pageant, a band on Friday evening and the parade on Saturday.

Shelly Gray was introduced to present a funding request of \$10,000 for the Nash Arts Council. Ms. Gray requested funding to support the 7<sup>th</sup> season of the Nashville Showcase series but specifically to cover artistic contracts, sound and production for funding of larger known artists to perform.

Sheila Martin, representative from The Dunn Center was introduced to present the request for \$25,000 for The Dunn Center. Ms. Martin indicated that this will be the 24<sup>th</sup> year of the Dunn Center. She discussed that the funding request is to support the National Dance Competition held at the Dunn Center and the Performing Arts Series.

Barbara Greene Travel and Tourism Director and Paul Niswonger presented the request for Travel and Tourism Council's budget request of \$600,000 funding for FY 2020-2021. Ms. Greene presented a line-by-line explanation of the budget items requested and noted that several events had been canceled during FY2019-2020 that they had not funded.

Chairman Davis indicated that recommended funding for revenue was less than prior year and that Travel and Tourism should try to budget at only two-thirds of the revenue as

projected. Paul Niswonger stated that there were some areas in the proposed budget that they could cut which would be approximately \$60,000 if necessary.

Chairman Davis requested additional comments regarding budget items for FY2020-2021 or questions for the presenters. No additional comments were noted.

Chairman Davis then called for a motion to close the public hearing. A motion was made by Mark Cone seconded by Retho Williams and duly passed that the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Davis thanked the guests for attending.

Budget Work Session:

Chairman Davis began the budget work session by noting that the items in the Recommended Column on the FY 2020-2021 TDA Budget form were to be considered only as a starting point for discussion of all of the requested items.

Ms. Wood noted that the recommended occupancy tax revenue for fiscal year FY2020-2021 was \$700,000. Considering the unknown of the travel effects from the Coronavirus pandemic a conservative revenue projection was calculated based on annualization of the most recent four months of collections. The agreed to move forward with the conservative recommendation based on the most recent collection trend.

Chairman Davis suggested for the expenditures for the outside appropriation requests, to go through them individually.

1. Tar River Orchestra requested \$25,000 - proposed at \$20,000, approved as proposed
2. Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival requested \$20,000 – proposed at \$15,000, approved as proposed
3. Nash Arts Council requested \$10,000 – proposed as requested approved as requested
4. The Dunn Center requested - \$25,000 – proposed as \$10,000, approved as proposed.
5. Nash Travel and Tourism requested \$600,000 – proposed as \$540,000 approved as proposed.
6. NC Wesleyan Indoor Tennis facility – recommended as \$65,000 based on a five year request (FY20-21 would be the second year of funding) – approved as recommended

The outside agency requests were discussed and approved or denied by a show of hands as noted above.

In addition, the following items were considered for the FY2020-2021 Budget based on the amount as presented on the recommendations:

7. Professional fees \$6,000
8. Director Fees/Supplies/Advertising \$1,250
9. Business Development Coordinator \$43,945
10. Contributions by Chairman \$1,000
11. Contributions by Email Vote \$10,000
12. Economic Development \$75,000
13. Winstead Avenue Lighting Exchange \$6,500
14. Other Utilities – Lighting interchanges \$30,000
15. Town of Nashville 58/64 Lighting interchange \$7,200

In consideration of the adoption of the FY2020-2021TDA Budget, Chairman Davis reported the proposed 2020-2021 TDA Recommended budget as discussed is \$925,895 which includes estimated investment earnings of \$1,500 and a fund balance appropriation to balance the budget of \$139,395. A motion was made by Mark Cone, seconded by Bill Lehnes. The motion passed unanimously for the Adoption of the FY 2020-2021 TDA Budget.

Other Discussion:

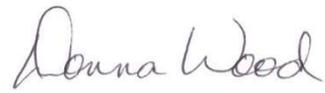
The Board made a commitment to review the occupancy tax collections in January 2021 and if funding is stronger than projected, the Board will revisit the funding allocation for Travel and Tourism and consider an additional allocation of funds.

Bill Lehnes noted that he opposed future multi-year funding requests as with the Indoor Tennis facility so the Board would have more opportunity for annual funding consideration with projects.

Chairman Report:

Chairman Davis stated that the next TDA meeting will be held in January 12, 2021 with the location to be announced closer to the meeting date.

There being no further business the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Faye Beddingfield made a motion, second by Lisa Fergeson meeting. The meeting was adjourned by approval of the board.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Wood".

Donna Wood  
Finance Director