



Board Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2022

245 Person Street

**Voting Board Members Present:** Seth Benalt, Jimmy Keefe, Sheba McNeil, Manish Mehta, Amy Cannon, Doug Hewett, Tony Kotsopolous Lily Schmidt

**Non-Voting Board Members Present:** Renee Lane, Bianca Shoneman,

**Board Members Not Present:** Charles Evans, Adam Collier, Byron McNeill

**CVB Present:** Jennifer Betshlimon, Randy Fiveash, Kelly Brill, David Nash, Sally Slater, Angie Brady

**CVB Not Present:** Amy Karpinski, Isaiah Griffin, Jennifer Radonich, Teletha Rodriguez, Cardell Hunt, Haley Provencio,

**Other Present:** Leah Sanders (Mythic), James Steven (Mythic)

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**Mr. Benalt called the board meeting to order at 12:05 pm.** Mr. Benalt stated there will be some decisions that need to be made and voting to be taken place.

**Mr. Benalt stated there needs to be a motion to approve himself as the Chairman of the Board. Ms. McNeil motioned to approve Mr. Benalt as the Chairman, and Mr. Keefe seconded; all voting members approved. Mr. Benalt was appointed Board Chairman.**

**Mr. Benalt moved to the open Vice Chairman seat. Ms. McNeil volunteered for the Vice Chairman seat, Mr. Keefe motioned to approve Ms. McNeil as the Vice Chairman, and Mr. Mehta seconded, and all approved. Ms. McNeil appointed the Vice Chairman.**

Mr. Benalt moved to the open seat of secretary. No volunteers for the open secretary seat. Mr. Benalt stated the open seat will be tabled to the next board meeting in October, and a note to the other board members will be sent for a volunteer for the open position of secretary.

**Mr. Benalt moved to approve board meeting minutes from the April board meeting. Mr. Keefe motioned to approve the April board minutes, Ms. McNeil seconded and all approved.**

Mr. Benalt moved to Mr. Mehta for the Treasury report. Mr. Mehta reviewed the Treasury report. Mr. Benalt asked for any questions. Mr. Keefe stated there will be 3 matured accounts in 90 days and asked if those accounts will roll over. Ms. Brill stated that the CVB checks other banks, and the accounts don't roll over.

**Mr. Benalt asked for a motion to approve the Treasury report. Mr. Kotsopolous motioned to approve the Treasury report, and Ms. McNeil seconded and all approved.**

Mr. Benalt turned it over to Mr. Fiveash.

Mr. Fiveash reviewed the TDA meeting, what the CVB provided the TDA board with, and the TDA board's concerns. Mr. Keefe stated the information the CVB has received from the Dogwood Festival regarding data points to calculate pre and post-economic impact information did not match what the Scout Report shows. The filled-out forms showed more out-of-town visitors than what phone pings reflected. The pre- and post-economic impact numbers based on input by the Dogwood Festival do not appear to be accurate. Mr. Keefe asked what the Scout Report is showing for the Dogwood festival. Mr. Nash explained the details of the Scout report's findings. Ms. Shoneman asked how accurate the Scout report is. Mr. Nash explained there are no errors, and the Scout report shows actual cell phone pings. This is very accurate. Ms. Shoneman asked about the accuracy of the cell phone pings regarding pre-paid phones (Cricket, etc.). Mr. Nash stated he would get that information and send it to Ms. Shoneman. Ms. Shoneman asked how the numbers are affected by pre-paid phones. Mr. Nash stated that the TDA board would determine the guidelines on what makes a successful event.

Mr. Fiveash stated that the revised budget was discussed at the TDA meeting. Mr. Fiveash stated that the FACVB Board will need to approve the current revised budget. Mr. Fiveash stated that the budget passed in January was the budget that has been revised. Mr. Fiveash stated the TDA recently passed a 3.2-million-dollar budget as FACVB funding, the FACVB had 700k more in occupancy tax, and some expenditures were not spent, which resulted in the FACVB having a 900k rollover balance on top of the 3.2-million-dollar budget the TDA had approved. Mr. Fiveash explained that the money was put in an unprojected line in marketing and that the remaining rollover funds will be put into marketing. Mr. Fiveash stated that the TDA Board wanted the FACVB to have a set amount put aside that will pay for events, rental costs, and bringing the events in. Mr. Fiveash stated that the FACVB board needs to make that decision on the set amount. Mr. Fiveash stated that no money could be budgeted for event incentives in next year's FY '24 budget, as there will be less marketing money come next year (w/o the rollover funds we have this FY).

Mr. Benalt stated that rather than earmarking the rollover fund amount, the FACVB Team should present the marketing and future expenditures to the FACVB Board as opportunities until the FACVB Board and TDA Board have a clear-cut understanding of where the money will be spent.

Mr. Fiveash asked that the FACVB Board is to give the FACVB team members guidelines to be put in place for a better understanding of where the money is to be spent.

Mr. Keefe stated that there is 2 million more in occupancy tax and stated there are good programs that can assist with subsidizing the events. Mr. Keefe stated he is not comfortable putting the entire amount into the budget because it is unknown if this is something to be considered each year. Mr. Keefe asked why the occupancy went up by 2 million.

Mr. Fiveash stated the additional 700k was money the FACVB didn't budget for last year, and the 900k came from under budgeting, not purposely. After Covid, occupancy taxes came back higher, which resulted in some of the additional revenue. Mr. Fiveash stated the money will be put where the FACVB

Board directs the FACVB to. Mr. Fiveash stated the other issue is any rollover funds at the end of this FY, will need to be given back to the TDA because the new TDA contract states any additional funds are to be returned. Mr. Fiveash stated the TDA Board was asked to make the contract into a 3-year contract, as it has been before, but the new TDA contract currently reflects one year.

Mr. Keefe stated a 3-year contract makes more sense. Mr. Keefe stated he is unsure where the money will be distributed to, and that marketing can be reflected as many different things. Mr. Keefe stated there is 750k in CDs currently and Mr. Keefe asked if that money would need to be returned as well.

Ms. Cannon stated that according to the new TDA contract, those funds would need to be returned as well.

Mr. Fiveash stated the agencies, and their contracts are budgeted for 18 months. Mr. Fiveash stated that starting in late November or early December, those contracts will negotiate again. Mr. Fiveash stated that, therefore, the long-term TDA contract is necessary.

Mr. Kotsopolous asked if the TDA Board was made aware of that when the new contract was put into place.

Mr. Fiveash stated that yes, the TDA Board was made aware of this, and prior to finalizing the one-year contract, Mr. Fiveash asked them to reconsider a three year.

Mr. Keefe asked if, therefore, the rollover funds are to be put into the budget so that it is not returned to the TDA Board at the end of the year.

Mr. Fiveash stated yes. Mr. Fiveash stated the FACVB and the FACVB Board have a year to properly budget the funds. In further discussion Ms. Cannon stated that returning all remaining funds was not the TDA Board's intent. Mr. Metha agreed. Mr. Fiveash stated that he would continue to work with the TDA Board regarding the contract.

Mr. Fiveash asked Mr. Benalt and the Board to approve the revised budget.

Mr. Benalt asked if the TDA Board is waiting for any additional information to be provided from the FACVB.

Mr. Mehta stated that the TDA Board is waiting for a detailed explanation of the 500k line item in marketing.

Mr. Benalt asked for the timeline of when that will be provided to the TDA Board.

Mr. Fiveash stated it will be provided to the TDA Board soon, with no exact dates.

Mr. Benalt asked if there are any other issues that hinder or impact the operations of the FACVB if the budget is not approved today.

Mr. Fiveash stated there aren't any other issues that will impact the operations of the FACVB.

Mr. Benalt suggested the FACVB Board hold off on approving the budget until the FACVB Board is provided a break-down of how the rollover funds will be allocated. The FACVB Team will provide the TDA Board with the requested information.

Mr. Fiveash asked if the FACVB Board would approve the proposed budget with the caveat that the FACVB Team would provide the FACVB Board with a description of where the money will be spent.

Mr. Keefe made a motion to approve the budget with a contingency to include that the rollover funds are not considered as overage funds, and a longer-term contract is to be looked into with the TDA Board. Mr. Keefe stated to withdraw from the TDA agreement, the CD amounts are to be given back to the TDA Board.

Mr. Mehta stated the TDA Board does not want to touch the current CDs.

Mr. Hewett asked what acceptable uses for the 600k funds are.

Mr. Mehta stated that they are not to be only used for heads in beds, but also events.

Mr. Hewett stated that trying to project where the funds will be allocated will take time. Mr. Hewett asked if there are any reservations to adopt the current budget with the understanding that the 600k rollover funds are not to be touched.

Ms. Cannon stated that it is not 600k, but 900k in rollover funds.

Mr. Hewett asked what part of those funds will be reserved.

Ms. Cannon stated that the money was going to be put into marketing; however, the Board will need details on the allocation of the funds.

Mr. Keefe stated the board should approve where the money will be allocated.

Mr. Hewett stated that the budget should then be approved with the understanding the additional funds are not to be touched, until determination of how the funds would be spent.

**Mr. Keefe made a motion to retain 900k in the budget to be used for marketing and to be approved by the FACVB Board and otherwise accept the budget as is. Ms. McNeill stated she seconded that motion with the exclusion of that budget edit, and all approved.**

Mr. Fiveash stated that since Mr. Surgeon resigned, there is an open seat on the FACVB Board. Mr. Fiveash suggested that instead of Mr. Surgeon, there could be an option that one of Mr. Surgeon's key leaders to represent the Board category (attractions) on the FACVB Board.

Ms. Brady stated additional options are the new CEO at Cape Fear, a new General Manager at the Woodpeckers, or a new General Manager at Zip Quest.

Mr. Keefe stated the FACVB Board has members in attractions in which are ex-officios.

Mr. Benalt stated he has met with Steve Pelle from the Woodpeckers and would like to propose that Steve Pelle be considered for the open seat.

**Mr. Benalt motioned to approve Steve Pelle for the open FACVB Board seat. Mr. Keefe seconded, all in favor to extend to Steve Pelle to join the FACVB Board, and all approved. (Mr. Pelle will be contacted and asked about his interest in serving.)**

Mr. Benalt moved to the FACVB branding initiatives.

Mr. Fiveash stated the FACVB Board will need to make decisions today regarding the new branding. Mr. Fiveash stated Mythic, and Eckel & Vaughn will lead the discussions regarding the new branding.

Mr. Fiveash passed it over to Mythic and E&V with a time check for 2:00 pm.

Ms. Sanders (Mythic) and Mr. Stevens (Mythic) Mythic presented the new colors and name for the new brand.

Mr. Benalt stated that a decision regarding the color pallets for the new branding is to be made today.

Ms. Shoneman stated that no other DMO is using “distinctly” and “explore” and that there is a value in both.

Ms. Lane stated that the green is heavily related to the military, and the purple brings diversity beyond just Fort Bragg.

Mr. Hewett stated that the color palette presented is distinctly different from the color palette of the “Can DO” campaign.

Mr. Keefe stated the color palette shown are colors pulled directly from the “Can Do” campaign color palette.

Mr. Benalt stated that when the new campaign is presented, it will show how it ties in with the “Can Do” campaign. Mr. Benalt stated the “Can Do” campaign will not be overlooked. Mr. Benalt stated a decision regarding the new name of either “Distinctly” or “Explore” needs to be made today. Mr. Benalt stated he is not opposed to either.

**Mr. Keefe motioned to approve “Distinctly” as a part of the new FACVB marketing brand name, Mr. Hewett seconded, and all approved.**

Ms. Sanders (Mythic) and Mr. Stevens (Mythic) presented the new FACVB Brand campaign, “Have You Done it ‘Yette.”

Ms. Sanders stated that there are three things to vote on: the color palette, logo, and campaign.

Mr. Hewett stated to look more in-depth at the color palette. Mr. Fiveash responded that this would be done.

Mr. Fiveash stated that the FACVB wants to begin a new tradition of an annual meeting, to announce the new brand at the first annual meeting and if determined to be viable, for the FACVB Board’s support.

Mr. Benalt suggested that instead of an annual meeting, to think about a rebranding kickoff event instead.

Ms. Shoneman stated that May is National Tourism Week, and that may be a good time to have the kickoff event.

Mr. Keefe stated that some of the rollover money can be used for video monitors in the hotels.

Mr. Fiveash stated that more definitive information regarding logo colors/color pallets, would be sent to the Board for final decisions.

Mr. Hewett left the meeting at 2:02 pm.

Mr. Benalt asked the Executive Committee to stay for a closed session.

Mr. Benalt stated the next FACVB Board meeting is on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2022.

**Ms. Cannon motioned for a closed session, Mr. Keefe seconded, and all approved.**

**Ms. Cannon called Ms. Betshlimon in after the closed session. Ms. Cannon motioned for a budget revision; 100k of the 900k rollover funds were to be placed in a consultant line item. Mr. Benalt seconded, and all approved.**

**Mr. Benalt motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Cannon seconded, and all approved. Meeting adjourned at 2:49 pm.**