
SPORTS AUTHORITY

INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2021, at 1:30 PM

The meeting of the Sports Authority ("the Authority") Internship Committee was called to order by Ms. Rosalyn Tillman, Chair, at 1:38 PM on October 12, 2021, in the Stokely Boardroom of the Visit Knoxville Visitor Center located at 301 South Gay Street.

In attendance were Rosalyn Tillman, Chair of the Sports Authority Internship Committee, Alvin Nance, Chair of the Sports Authority Board of Directors, Olamide Oso, Attorney at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, & Berkowitz, PC., Darris Upton, Knox County Diversity Development Manager, Kelly Drummond, City of Knoxville Human Resources Director, Kim Bumpas, President of Visit Knoxville, Richard Bass, Sports Authority Board member, and Jeff Hagood, Sports Authority Board member. Stephanie Welch, Chief Economic and Community Development Officer and Deputy to the Mayor of the City of Knoxville attended by phone. Sports Authority Internship Committee meetings are publicly noticed.

Review of the September 14, 2021, Internship Committee Meeting

Mrs. Tillman reviewed the minutes from the September 14, 2021, Internship Committee meeting. She highlighted the mission of the internship program, the various avenues of opportunity where internships might be available, the timeline and possible roll-out of the program, the need for detail and intentionality within the verbiage of the agreements, the responsibilities of the Sports Authority and host organizations, as well as the discussion regarding paid and unpaid internship offerings discussed during the previous meeting.

Internship Programs Offered by Other Sports Authorities

Mrs. Bumpas explained to the committee that Visit Knoxville researched six destinations that have stadiums, sports commissions, and sports authorities behind their stadiums. The sports authorities that exist in Houston, Texas, San Jose, California, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota are like the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission in that they manage marketing and promotion. Atlanta, Georgia, Tampa, Florida, and Minnesota, have sports authorities that are like the Knoxville/Knox County Sports Authority. Tampa and Minnesota, in particular, have the type of internship programs that are set up the way the Authority would like to set up its program. They partner with vendors to place interns in various levels of responsibility and a variety of industries. They offer paid and unpaid opportunities and classifications based on industry and skill level. The funding components were not publicly communicated; however, Visit Knoxville will assist the Authority to obtain that information. Mrs. Bumpas recommended that phone interviews be set up where the committee could ask any questions that it may have.

Ms. Drummond asked how many interns the authorities have. Mrs. Bumpas stated that Tampa offers four internships to college students and recent graduates. Minnesota's program appears to be larger but does not give a specific number.

Mrs. Bumpas stated that a phone meeting could help answer questions about the size of the programs, the funding sources, specifics regarding paid and unpaid opportunities, and available grants.

Mr. Hagood stated that the organizations that are being paid by or gaining a financial benefit from the Authority should offer paid positions to interns supplied by the Authority. The organizations that are not gaining a financial benefit from the Authority could offer unpaid internships. Mrs. Tillman stated that discussions with the vendors need to include established criteria regarding paid and unpaid internship opportunities. Mr. Bass expressed that the Maryland Stadium Authority offered both paid and unpaid internship opportunities in the mid-1980s some of which were contributed by the vendors and that their structure was the same as the Authority. Today it has 120 employees and twenty-two financings; however, it began similarly to the Authority.

Ms. Welch asked whether the internships that Mrs. Bumpas talked about were directly associated with the sports authorities. Mrs. Bumpas replied that the internships were offered by vendors associated with the authorities but not the authorities themselves.

Mr. Oso asked if the law firm would also be a part of the internship program. Mrs. Tillman answered that the Authority plans to speak to each of the organizations to find out if opportunities were available. Students studying specific fields could contribute to the work being done. Mr. Nance asked if Baker Donelson has a structured program with the law school. Mr. Oso replied that the firm does not have a program specifically with the law school but does accept law students as interns for 6-8 weeks during the summer. Mrs. Tillman explained that the program with the Authority would not require organizations that have a program in place to offer more than normal but rather to dedicate a portion of the opportunities already offered to interns from the Authority's program.

Mrs. Bumpas will follow up with the next steps and do more factfinding.

Internship Opportunities Available Through Contractual Relationships

Ms. Welch explained that she has been researching whether any internship opportunities can be made available through the contractual relationships that the Authority will have with the developer. The financial advisors are not currently set up to offer internships specifically related to this project. There are opportunities available through stadium operations. The Smokies has an internship program in place that provides 10-12 college students the opportunity to gain leadership exposure with the potential to expand. The opportunities are in areas such as event planning, community relations, graphic design, and food and beverage operations. Mr. Kirchhofer is excited and looking to recruit diverse local candidates into its program. He feels that having the Authority be a part of the recruitment and screen effort would be helpful. Ms. Welch also explained that she will be speaking with Denark about the program as well.

Mrs. Tillman requested clarification that Boyd Sports would continue its internship program as it is currently set up. Ms. Welch stated that Boyd Sports is very interested in partnering with the Authority to recruit local diverse candidates to be a part of their program.

Mr. Hagood asked if the internships offered by Boyd Sports were paid or unpaid. Ms. Welch explained that the internships are paid. Mr. Hagood reiterated that he feels that if the organization is for-profit and gaining a financial benefit from this project, that the interns should be paid.

Mr. Upton asked what qualifications the Smokies require for its internships. Ms. Welch stated that internships are offered to college students. Mr. Upton suggested that it may be easier for the Authority to mimic the program that the Smokies have in place. Mrs. Bumpas agreed that mimicking the practices of the Smokies internship program would be good but that the information gained from other authorities may also be helpful at a level that will feed down into more specific processes. Mr. Nance added that the information from the authorities would apply more to the administration, funding, and implementation of the program. Mrs. Bumpas added that during the previous meeting the committee discussed the responsibilities of the Authority and the host organizations. The host organizations can have established processes and the Authority will need to have a process that is linked but occurs beforehand. Mr. Upton suggested involving the host organizations earlier in the process to gain buy-in. Mr. Nance expressed that it is incumbent upon the Authority to have as much structure in place as possible before asking hosts to

take on paid internships, particularly for organizations that may not have programs already in place. Mrs. Bumpas expressed that there would need to be a conversation to see where each host organization stood and what they would be able to manage.

Mr. Bass added that an intern with the Authority and some of the smaller organizations associated with the project might not be practical, but candidates interested in those fields of study could be identified and allowed to sit in on meetings to gain exposure in that way. Ms. Welch agreed that a job-shadowing scenario might be an option in which some participants would be very interested. The challenge for the Authority is that at this point it has no staff that could make an internship meaningful. Mrs. Tillman expressed an understanding and agreement with Ms. Welch and expressed a desire to keep the option of a direct internship opportunity open for the future so that the Authority could provide young people with an avenue for growth. Mr. Upton stated that asking organizations in the various sectors associated with this project if it has the capacity to host an intern or to allow a student to job shadow and what that capacity looks like might be helpful. Other cities, Nashville for example, have a workforce development component built into the RFP so that the issue is addressed during the application process and the issue is placed at the front of the applicants' minds from the beginning.

Ms. Drummond asked if the job shadowing would be the initial step of the internship process. Mrs. Tillman explained that it was being discussed as an option for organizations that did not have the capacity to host an intern. Mrs. Bumpas stated that the committee originally leaned against job shadowing in favor of offering a more in-depth experience through internships. A one-week job shadowing program could help participants decide if they would like to apply for an internship. These options all speak to the original vision of having the Authority create a premier internship program while helping the community.

Mr. Nance stated that the committee should determine how many participants are desired, what the program will look like, how to get a structure in place so that the offerings can be clearly communicated, the expected outcomes, and funding methods.

Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the committee focuses on placing two participants into positions within the five organizations that have already been identified. Communicating those offerings would be simplified and it would be a great starting point from which to evaluate success and reorganize where necessary. Mr. Upton added that the committee should discuss the program and criteria with vendors, as well as communicate the qualifications for participants such as GPA and area of study. The committee would provide the vendor with a pool of participants from which it will choose.

Mrs. Bumpas explained that an interesting aspect of Tampa's program is that they are funded annually via capital grants from Hillsborough County and the city of Tampa, and the unspent appropriations are refunded. A fund could be created into which everyone could donate to cover the cost of any organization that was unable to fund its placements.

Ms. Drummond expressed a concern with the timing to acquire spring interns. Mrs. Bumpas clarified that the timeline is summer. The shell could be developed between now and January. Mr. Nance suggested the committee better define the timeline. The committee defined summer as beginning on June 1 and lasting six to eight weeks. Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the program be announced on February 1. Ms. Drummond stated that most students line up their summer internships before spring break and have selections made by May 1. Mrs. Bumpas explained that the timeline could be as follows:

- February 1: Announcement
- February 15: Begin accepting applications
- March: Interviews
- April – May: Final selections
- June 1 – Internships begin

Ms. Welch will verify whether these dates work for some of the vendors with whom she is communicating. Boyd Sports will be in Sevierville for the next two years and students placed with them will need to travel. Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the vendors can let the committee know how many

participants would be needed based on the Authority timeline for the first year. The schedules could be more in sync in 2023. Mr. Nance stated that the organizations that have established internship programs would only need to hold openings available into which the Sports Authority interns can be placed regardless of the timeline. Participants traveling to Sevierville for the opportunity to work with Boyd Sports is not likely to be an issue. Mrs. Bumpas explained that it is also possible that Boyd Sports could have these interns working in Knoxville.

Mrs. Bumpas believes that the timeline is manageable as outlined. She will collect the committee's questions and set up a time to speak with Tampa. Ideally, Tampa will be willing to share the setup of their program so that the committee can use it as a draft from which to start. The committee could then meet and iron out the particulars. Mrs. Tillman suggested meeting on November 1.

Ms. Drummond suggested that the area schools be approached regarding this program and start creating those relationships to begin to open that pipeline. Mrs. Tillman stated that schools sometimes define their summer intern programs during the fall semester and that needs to be determined. Mrs. Bumpas stated that a baseline shell would need to be outlined in order to have a robust conversation but at this point, those conversations can get started so that they can assist with communicating the upcoming program availability. Mrs. Tillman expressed that those conversations could be used to gain knowledge about what their timelines are and what information they might need.

Ms. Drummond asked the committee whether applications would be open to a large group from which ten would be selected or would the application process be more targeted. Mrs. Tillman suggested that the program start as a targeted program and then expand. Mrs. Bumpas expressed that Tampa advertises that they have ten spots available and will accept the first twenty-five applications. Mr. Upton suggested using application dates to limit the number of applicants as well.

Ms. Drummond asked how the people who applied but are not chosen will be managed. Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the applicants who do not get accepted would need to reapply as normal the next time the openings are available rather than being given privileged consideration. Mr. Upton stated that it will help to get the applicants into the mindset of competing for positions that they desire. Mrs. Tillman stated that it will also encourage timeliness.

Mr. Nance expressed that the intent to promote diversity should be communicated in the application process so that applicants are neither misled nor unfairly excluded. Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the offering be communicated to geographic areas containing the desired demographics. Visit Knoxville assisted with the needed areas of the census and has that data available. Mr. Oso commented that the specifications of the desired candidates need to be communicated broadly enough not to be exclusionary while also ensuring distribution to the target audience. Mrs. Bumpas suggested that the zip codes surrounding the stadium build site within a 10 to 20-mile radius be the focus and then the communication expand outward from there in a staged approach until the desired number of applications has been received. The committee would then look the applications over and select which applications move forward in the process.

Mrs. Tillman also expressed that the committee should be careful not to limit the applicants to the least economically able.

Next Steps

Mrs. Bumpas will collect the questions from the committee and get a meeting set up with the Tampa Sports Authority and invite all interested parties to join via Zoom or phone. She will also request any paperwork that they would share with us in advance of the meeting. The timeline will be typed out.

The committee will meet again on November 4th at 1:30 PM in the Stokely Boardroom of the Visit Knoxville Visitor Center.

Adjournment

Mrs. Tillman adjourned the meeting at 2:57 PM.