

MOTIONS PASSED AT THE COMBINED BOARD MEETING, Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Approved August, September & November 2021 minutes
Mr. Griffiths/Mr. Walsingham

Approved Consent Agenda
Mr. Walsingham/Mr. Patronis

COMBINED BOARD MEETING
Bay County Tourist Development Council
Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.
Panama City Beach

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Council Room, PCB City Hall

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Pease called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Steve Bailey (V-Chair)
Paul Casto
Griff Griffiths Jr
Yonnie Patronis (S/T)
Andy Phillips
Gary Walsingham
Clair Pease (Chairman)

Members NOT Present:

Phil Chester
Buddy Wilkes

- A. Invocation
Mr. Casto gave the Invocation.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
Ms. Pease led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Approve August, September & November 2021 minutes

Mr. Griffiths moved; seconded by Mr. Walsingham to approve the August, September, and November 2021 Minutes. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

III. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minutes)

None

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Rowe read the Consent Agenda into the record.

- A. Acknowledge the September & October 2021 Tourist Development Tax Collections
- B. Approve recommendation to the BOCC to award the agreement for the Beach Trash and Grooming to Coastal Parasail

Mr. Walsingham moved; seconded by Mr. Patronis to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) Update, Mr. Les McFatter

Mr. McFatter gave a summary of activity and operations as well as growth at ECP. He discussed new projects being pursued and built as well as the future terminal design. There are plans in place to expand the airport in conjunction with the increase in passenger and commercial activity. Mr. Parker McClennan answered Board Member questions regarding the growth. He stated that they are in the design phase and should begin smaller portions of the projects in 2023.

Mr. Rowe discussed the CVB/TDC Boards involvement in the creation of ECP. He said that as a result of them approving to increase the TDT in 2009, a Marketing Agreement was developed with Southwest Airlines that was a critical component to get that airline into our market. It was the first time Southwest opened a new airport. He also stated the 90% of the 5th cent tax for co op marketing agreement with them. Southwest met and exceeded revenue from the start of business at ECP. Their success brought other carriers to ECP. This success is a direct result of the CVB/TDC Boards actions taken in 2009. Mr. Rowe also discussed the Marketing efforts and visitation to all the destination flights to share our story.

Mr. McFatter answered questions regarding customer issues with parking and taxi fares.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Sports Park Update, Mr. Jason Clements and Mr. Bob Stout, Sports Facilities Companies

Mr. Clements discussed the incident of theft by the former Finance Manager at the PCB Sports Park. He stated that the CVB and SFM discovered irregularities and investigated. Vulnerabilities were discovered that were taken advantage of by the former FM. He said the missing funds, approx. \$37,000, have been replaced by SFM to the CVB. The investigation has been turned over to the Sheriff and they are cooperating fully with law enforcement. Mr. Clements stated that SFM is working on the processes and systems fixed and right. They are committed to getting this right and look forward to 2022 which looks to be the best year since the parks opening. He stated that SFM is going to do whatever it takes to make this right and ensure it doesn't happen again. Ms. Pease and Mr. Patronis thanked SFM for taking quick action on this matter. Mr. Phillips asked where they are in the GM position search. Mr. Clements said they are finalizing their choice and will bring that choice to the board soon. Ms. Pease asked for a report on financials once a month going forward. Mr. Rowe stated that he would keep the board updated on the search progress. He also said that even with the difficulties of operating the Sport Park during a pandemic, The Florida Sports Foundation recognized our sport park as the Venue of the Year for mid-markets across the State of Florida. He said they recognize the excellence going into that operation. He stated that this is a huge honor for the park. Also, that we know the commitment of SFM and that we will continue to push forward and the park will achieve all the goals we have set for them. Ms. Pease stated that she is pleased with the response to the theft as did Mr. Griffiths.

B. Workforce Development Update, Mr. Dan Rowe

Mr. Rowe stated that workforce development was discussed last spring by the Board. Since then we have been working with local organizations to determine how as a community we can attract and develop quality workforce as we go forward. One organization is conducting a survey of major employers of Bay County to determine what is their need, gap in workforce talent in order to grow. Also, he said they are taking a look at the young people in the community. He said that in the past, discussions were had regarding the use of Triumph Gulf Coast funding. He said that two industries were majorly impacted by the Deep-Water Horizon oil spill; Commercial Fishing and Tourism. He said that he wanted to make sure the focus on tourism was a priority as that was an industry directly impacted by the oil spill. As a result of those discussions, Mr. Rowe has been looking at diversifying our economy, and also elevate what a tourism job means. He stated that it is very important to look at the youth coming out of high school to inspire them to get into our industry to ensure our industries local success.

He stated that GCSC has a great scholarship program that gives up to 60% tuition to all local kids coming out of high school to go to GCSC full time. That is a great pipeline to get our local kids into local colleges. GCSC also said that 70% of kids who start in a local college will finish there. In order to be part of that conversation, one of the things we are looking at is a scholarship program with GCSC specifically related to those careers that will fuel the Tourism Industry. Also, we are looking at programs to help students who are mid-career that will continue to fuel our industry. In order for this to be done, Mr. Rowe stated that the board needs to create a record because this is not specifically outlined in the statute 125.01.04 for TDT. The statute talks about a service whose primary purpose is promotion of tourism is an acceptable use. We would be providing a service to local students with a scholarship for students to enter into the tourism industry, which in turn increases the level of service we are able to provide our guests. This scholarship service would be included in marketing to visitors to showcase a much higher level of guest services.

Ms. Pease stated that trade certifications are also important and asked to look into a possible program for them. Mr. Rowe said he would include them as long as they fell within the statute. Board members discussed trade schools as well as GCSC. Mr. Rowe said this scholarship is being done in conjunction with fund matching from other entities. All degrees and trades will be considered for tourism workforce scholarship funding.

Mr. Phillips expressed concern that scholarship recipients will leave the area after graduation. Mr. Sale stated that the purpose of the use of funds is to promote visitation to the area for a better trained workforce. Mr. Rowe said that the information discussed by the board will be taken into consideration as the process is moved forward, then this will be brought back to the board to vote on support. Then the program of work would be amended and taken to the County Commission for approval. If they approve, then the scholarship program will be created. Mr. Sale confirmed that the discussion at this meeting is to create the record of discussion and for Mr. Rowe to go forward and continue the process. Mr. Griffiths asked Mr. Sale to take a close look at the legality of use of TDT. Mr. Sale reviewed the wording of the statute and how this would follow the statute.

Mr. Rowe discussed current legislation that could pose a problem for future use of the TDT. He stated that all efforts are being made to ensure legality.

He said if the board agrees for him to go forward, he will gather more information and get the process together, and come back to them for a formal vote to support.

Mr. Sale that it is his recommendation and advise that this program be brought back to the board to consider and discuss, with a presentation to outline how it will be promoted to tourist.

VII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Rowe acknowledged TDT collections for last year up 71.2% over prior year and up 41% over pre-pandemic collections. He said this is a testament to the strength of our destination. He also said that Beach Home for the Holidays was a major success with over 6,000 people at the Friday Josh Turner concert. He stated that he and his team are now focused on the future. We are title sponsor of The Ironman Triathlon which enhances PCB nationally and internationally.

Mr. Phillips asked about the New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop. Dan said it will be at Pier Park as usual and that we fund fireworks and hats. Simon is responsible for the rest. We have intervened between Simon and the City of PCB to ensure that event goes smoothly.

Mr. Walsingham asked if parades will be happening in the future. Dan said the Mardi Gras parade will happen as was before pandemic.

VIII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

NONE

X. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Cook, Recording Secretary