

ATTACHMENT A

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

July 21, 2020

Williamsburg Tourism Council

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING

Williamsburg, Virginia

July 21, 2020

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Williamsburg Tourism Council (WTC) was convened at 1:00 p.m. on July 21, 2020, by conference call. A quorum was present.

Tourism Council Members Present:

CHAIR Jeffrey D. Wassmer, York County Board of Supervisors
VICE CHAIR Neal Chalkley, President, Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association(WHMA)
TREASURER Ruth Larson, James City County Board of Supervisors

Mickey Chohany, Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association (WARA)
Christy Coleman, Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
Cliff Fleet, President and CEO, Colonial Williamsburg
Cheri Green, Chair, Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance (GWCTA)
Denise Kellogg, Director, Development, Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation
Kevin Lembke, President, Busch Gardens/Water Country USA
Rita McClenny, President and CEO, Virginia Tourism Corporation
Doug Pons, Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg

Staff Members Present:

Victoria Cimino, CEO

Vivian Bunting, Destination Specialist
Mikey Jasiczek, Marketing Manager
Jodie Lumley, Executive Assistant/Operations Manager
Julie O'Neil, Marketing Director
Jill Pongonis, Familiarization Tour Coordinator
Dave Potter, Industry Relations Manager
Julia Smyth-Young, Sales Director
David Turner, Finance Director

I. Call to Order

- Neal Chalkley called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
- Chalkley noted the meeting serves as the Tourism Council's annual organizational meeting for the purpose of electing officers
- James Horn was represented by Denise Kellogg

II. Public Comment

- Ron Kirkland from the Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association introduced himself and was recognized to speak
 - Kirkland thanked Victoria Cimino and the Visit Williamsburg staff for the work being done during this time and expressed optimism about being able to bounce back in 2021

III. PB Mares: 2019 Audit Report – Bo Garner, Partner & Stephen Smark, Manager

- Business and Tourism Council liquid position is at a ratio of 21:1; compared to 31:1 in 2018
- As funding increased in 2019, expenses increased to match
- Continued positive cash flows from operating activities
- Tourism Council has \$9,326,058 (95%) of spending going toward program spending that supports the mission of the tourism council
 - Considered a very strong ratio and well above what would be seen across most organizations
- No significant or unusual transactions were identified; no audit adjustments that were not corrected; no disagreements with management; no significant difficulties when performing the audit
- Operational recommendations:
 - Timely review of journal entries and bank reconciliations
 - Tourism Council credit card use policy
 - Allocation of functional expenses
- No significant accounting developments for 2020
- Larson noted the journal entry, bank reconciliation, and credit card use policy are currently being addressed

IV. Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Briefing – Rita McClenny, President and CEO

- VTC is utilizing the 4th iteration of their advertising plan for 2020
 - Summer campaign is running on Pinterest and Google In-stream
 - Currently targeting Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and D.C.
- The VTC Fall campaign has been shortened to four weeks
 - Moved a portion of the Fall budget toward Spring
- Consumer sentiment shows 35% of people will only visit a destination were the use of masks are required; 26% of people are more likely to visit if masks are required
- The Governor will announce a small business grant program
- VTC will offer \$10,000 grants with no cash match as a part of their Wonder Love campaign
- Larson noted that there is a frustration with an unequal treatment between the Historic Triangle and the Virginia Beach area
 - McClenny responded that decisions have been built around what people are engaging in, like outdoor activities, and recommended doubling down on that

V. Minutes

- Chalkley requested a motion to approve the May 19, 2020 meeting minutes
- Ruth Larson motioned
- Kevin Lembke provided a second

- Minutes were approved

VI. Vice Chair Report

- Election of Officers
 - Chalkley thanked fellow members of the selection committee, Cheri Green and Kevin Lembke
 - Election of Officers - Chair
 - Chalkley requested a motion to approve Jeff Wassmer as Williamsburg Tourism Council Chair
 - Ruth Larson motioned
 - Doug Pons provided a second
 - All in favor, none opposed
 - Jeff Wassmer's appointment as Williamsburg Tourism Council Chair was approved
 - Election of Officers – Vice Chair
 - Chalkley requested a motion to approve Cliff Fleet as Williamsburg Tourism Council Vice Chair
 - Mickey Chohany motioned
 - Ruth Larson provided a second
 - All in favor, none opposed
 - Cliff Fleet's appointment as Williamsburg Tourism Council Vice Chair was approved
 - Election of Officers – Treasurer
 - Chalkley requested a motion to approve Ruth Larson as Williamsburg Tourism Treasurer
 - Doug Pons motioned
 - Cliff Fleet provided a second
 - All in favor, none opposed
 - Ruth Larson's appointment as Williamsburg Tourism Council Treasurer was approved
- Chalkley shared Smith Travel Research Data from May and June
 - Occupancy in May 13.2%; June 21.3%
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR) in May \$61.89; June \$73
 - Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) in May \$8.14; June \$15.54
 - May room sales were down 54% compared to 2019; June room sales were down 58% compared to 2019
 - Occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR currently the lowest in the commonwealth
- Kevin Lembke noted that Busch Gardens has been working on smaller programs to get guests back into the park
- Denise Kellogg shared that Jamestown Rediscovery's ticket sales are about 38% of the total from last year through the first three weeks
 - Kellogg also noted a concern of a lack of new donors for non-profits going forward
- Cliff Fleet shared that Colonial Williamsburg has seen similar numbers to Jamestown and that they are performing better than other historic sites in the same part of the country

VII. Treasurer's Report

- Larson shared year-to-date financials (through May 31, 2020)
- The Tourism Council is currently undergoing an audit that will render an opinion as to the legal entity structure for accounting operations, audit financial statements for the GWCTA, WTC, and Business Council in light of the recommendations and management actions associated with legal entity structure, evaluate current accounting policies and procedures, and provide recommendations for improvement
- Monthly finance meeting takes place on the Thursday preceding the Tourism Council

meeting (typically the second Thursday of the month); all are invited to attend

- Revenue/expenses
 - May total revenue \$813K; under budget by \$164K; over forecast by \$604K
 - YTD total revenue \$4.9M; \$16K under budget; over forecast by \$163K
 - May sales tax receipts totaled \$744K; \$162K under budget; over forecast by \$540K
 - YTD sales tax receipts \$14K under budget; \$574K over forecast
 - Transient tax receipts totaled \$56K; \$14K under budget; \$10K over forecast
 - YTD transient tax 59\$K under budget; due to fluctuation of collections and impact of COVID-19
 - Expenses are \$1.3M under budget; \$621K under forecast
 - Destination marketing expense are \$1.2M under budget due to program changes, media planning, and timing of invoices
 - Sales activities are \$60K under budget due to conference cancellations and program evaluations
 - Administration staff costs were \$45K under budget due to delays of staff hires and program evaluations; other expenses were \$16K under budget
- Cash on Hand
 - Totals \$12M
 - \$10M for operations; \$6.2M over budget
 - \$2M for product development; on budget
- Transient tax revenue
 - Information shows the month the activity took place; not when it was received
 - March 2020 totaled \$56,359
 - A 51% percent decrease from March 2019
 - Three-month moving average shows a 25.3% decrease over the same timeframe in 2019

- Sales tax revenue
 - March 2020 totaled \$740,147
 - A 16.2% decrease from March 2020
 - Three-month moving average shows a 3.3% decrease over the same timeframe in 2019
- Cimino presented Smith Travel Research (STR) slide
 - Occupancy in April was 10.5%, May was 14.6%, June was 22.7%; a slight increase month-to-month

VIII. Executive Director Report

- Procurement
 - Legal services and public relations are complete
 - Public relations services procurement committee: Cimino and Julie O’Neil (WTC), Kristi Olsen (York County Tourism), and Jeff Phillips (Alewerks)
 - Percepture was awarded the contract
 - Legal services procurement committee: Cimino and David Turner (WTC), Adam Kinsman (James City County Attorney), Christina Shelton (City of Williamsburg Attorney), and James Barnett (York County Attorney)
 - Sands Anderson was awarded the contract; lead will be former Virginia Deputy Attorney General, Cynthia Hudson
 - Next to undergo the procurement process will be IT services
- Marketing/communication activities
 - Industry/Client Communication
 - Public speaking engagements continued
 - Significant push to update client records via direct outreach
 - Industry emails are less focused on COVID and more geared toward recovery
 - Created enhanced industry portal for local businesses to update business listings with new safety procedures
 - Cooperative marketing program
 - Launched June
 - Portion of media budget dedicated to cooperative marketing program (capped at \$500,000)
 - Regional suppliers have begun taking advantage
 - Two media partners, TripAdvisor and Adara
 - Public Relations
 - From May through June there were 96 media placements
 - Hosted first travel writer post-COVID
 - Shop and dine local campaign
 - Summer 2020 Campaign
 - Launched in June
 - Aimed at families (Gen-X/millennials), couples (Gen-X/millennials), and active mature
 - Media focus was on proven markets and drivable markets
 - Television will not run in New York due to market volatility and funds will roll into programs in 2020 and 2021
 - Media channel included influencers, linear TV, digital, social, pay-per-click, and consumer emails
 - Campaign creative was developed around consumer sentiment

- 73 unique banner ads
- 12 native content units
- 11 Facebook and Instagram
- 9 videos
- Since the campaign launched site sessions are up 125% and page views are up 122%
- Still down year-over-year by 34%
- According to Statista, tourism sites are seeing a 48% decrease in site traffic
- Content creation partnerships with Golf Magazine and National Geographic are currently in development

IX. Sales Director Report

- WTC Sales Director, Julia Smyth-Young, shared tactical sales plan
 - Corporate market
 - Education, technology, digital health, digital content, remote call centers, commercial cleaning, delivery, and home improvement
 - Association market
 - Smaller annual meetings, diversity & inclusion, professional, regulatory, sporting, military, and government associations
 - Group Tour
 - Youth sports, boomers, cultural, and niche groups
 - Sports
 - Youth and amateur tournaments
 - Multiple RFP responses are in draft form for several baseball tournaments, softball tournaments, and collegiate lacrosse
 - Meeting
 - Group Family Travel meetings for faith and boomers, Small Market Meeting Summit, and African American Travel Conference

X. Old Business

- None

XI. New Business

- None

XII. Adjournment

- The next meeting will take place on September 15, 2020