



**April 15, 2020**

11:30 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

THE WOODLANDS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Board of Directors for The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau (TWCVB) of Montgomery County, Texas held their Board Meeting on April 15, 2020, via video conference within the boundaries of The Woodlands Township in The Woodlands, Texas at 11:30 a.m. The roll was called and those in attendance were:

Present: Bruce Rieser, Chairman  
John Anthony Brown, Vice Chairman  
Fred Domenick, Secretary/Treasurer  
Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, Director  
J.J. Hollie, Director  
Kevin Viteri, Director  
Ted Harris, Director  
Jenny Taylor, Director  
Cameron Klepac, Director

Staff Present: Nick Wolda, TWCVB President; Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Assistant Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; Sonia Guerrero, TWCVB Administrative Analyst; Laura Haces, TWCVB Tourism Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Convention Development Specialist; Monique Sharp, The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance & Administration; William Pham, The Woodlands Township Information Technology Director

1. Pledge of Allegiance;

Chairman Bruce Rieser led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge to the Texas flag.

2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to approve the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser called the meeting to order at 11:42 p.m. and called for the Adoption of the Agenda for this meeting that was developed and duly posted as required by law.

3. Public Comment;

None.

4. Receive, consider and approve Minutes from February 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown to approve the Minutes from February 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser explained that the Minutes from the February 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

5. Receive, consider and approve Minutes from March 18, 2020 Special Board Meeting;

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve the Minutes from March 18, 2020 Special Board Meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser explained that the Minutes from the March 18, 2020 Special Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

6. Receive, consider and approve the Financial Report through February 2020;

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve the Financial Report through February 2020. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser called The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance Administration, Monique Sharp, to the podium to present. In terms of revenue, the total year to date budget was \$471,951 that compares to the actual revenue of \$486,788, resulting in a favorable variance of \$14,837. The Supplemental Hotel Tax shows an unfavorable balance of \$20,805. In terms of expenditures, the year to date budget was \$482,230 with an actual of \$487,987, resulting in a \$5,757 unfavorable expenditure variance. The primary component was because of advertising purchased in advanced, resulting in a timing difference. The CVB had an ending fund balance in February 2020 of \$1,514,152.

7. Receive, consider and act upon 2020 budget matters based on COVID-19 impact and effects on the tourism industry of The Woodlands;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to allow staff to work with The Woodlands Township "Budget Task Force" to create a modified 2020 Visit The Woodlands budget due to the impact of COVID 19. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Nick Wolda explained the financial actions taken due to COVID-19. The department stopped all production & projects with the agency of record, cancelled or postponed advertising, stopped projects with all vendors, made reductions in all departments and ceased all staff travel. Monique Sharp explained the 2020 Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue loss scenarios, budget adjustment options, and impact on reserve balances. Discussion followed.

8. Receive, consider and act upon the 2021 Budget Planning Process;

Nick Wolda explained that staff is reviewing its 2020 budget to develop a plan for the 2021 budget process and requested input from Directors.

9. Receive, consider and act upon Staff Initiatives since the March 18, 2020 meeting;

Motion by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown to accept Staff Initiative reports as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins updated the Board on current efforts. Visit The Woodlands launched a dedicated page for COVID-19 updates and resources for residents on “dining out without dining in, different ways to shop local and give back in The Woodlands, current open hotels in The Woodlands, a Spotify playlist featuring shows scheduled to play at the Pavilion, a shopping and dining passport and economic assistance resources. Social media has been a key component during the stay at home order. Staff has been able to communicate with residents and visitors by offering brand awareness such as coloring pages, hotel offers and shopping or dining ideas. Looking ahead the Sales department is looking to schedule FAM’s, partner events, to continue expanding the “Show Your Badge” program and have a strategic tradeshow schedule to continue to bring business to The Woodlands. The Marketing department continues to work towards a website launch, potential photo shoots or video shoots and future Marketing Committee meetings. The Tourism department helped postpone the Waterway Arts Festival, will continue to work on the Visitor Services partnership with Market Street and is preparing for a virtual “Travel and Tourism Week.” Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs thanked staff and the community for supporting the “Help our Heroes” campaign and commended staff for the outstanding job done by informing and updating hotels, residents and visitors. She also thanked the Board for the unremunerated service they provide to the Visit The Woodlands Board, to keep The Woodlands community thriving during this pandemic.

10. Receive, consider and act upon matters regarding future initiatives;

Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick provided an update regarding The Woodlands Waterway Marriott renovation. The projected reopening day for the property is May 1, 2020, but it could be postponed to June 1, 2020. Director Kevin Viteri mentioned that the projected reopening day for the Embassy Suites The Woodlands is July 1, 2020, but will advise the Board as updates are provided to him. Director J. J. Hollie is positive about a gradual reopening of Texas businesses beginning on May 1, 2020. He invited everyone to a webinar hosted in conjunction with The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership with guest Senator John Cornyn and Tim Jeffcoat, Houston SBA Director, on April 16, 2020 at 2 p.m. The Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce events for April 2020 have been postponed, and at the moment, the May events are still scheduled to take place. Director Ted Harris indicated that The Woodlands Mall projected reopening day is May 1, 2020. The property is looking to change retail hours. Various businesses in the property are modifying retail models to curbside. Director Jenny Taylor indicated that 25% of Market Street’s retail shops and restaurants are currently open. The reopening date is projected for the end of May. The property will modify services as needed.



Director Klepac provided an update regarding The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. As a nonprofit, the venue continues to bring art to the community through their website. She explained that the safety of attendees is the organization's priority and reopening the venue may take time. Chairman Rieser and Vice Chairman John A. Brown are part of The Woodlands Township "Budget Task Force" that will review and prioritize options to address current issues. Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs is The Woodlands Township Public Health Liaison and reminded the Board to take care of their health. The "Help our Heroes" campaign is collecting medical equipment for local hospitals and first responders. Donations are being accepted at The Woodlands Township Central Fire Station on Monday's and Thursday's from 10 am to 2 p.m.

11. President's Report;

None.

12. Board Announcements;

Chairman Rieser acknowledged former Visit The Woodlands Director Brian Boniface as he was deployed with the Army Reserve to begin a 6-month COVID 19 related humanitarian mission. Chairman Rieser commended and thanked him for his service, as well to all the incredible first responders, medical community and essential personnel working to fight the effects and spread of the COVID19 virus.

13. Agenda items for next meeting;

The next Visit The Woodlands Special Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2020 at 11:30 am.

14. Adjournment.

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor to adjourn. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 9 - 0 Passed

Adjournment at 12:56 p.m.



Fred Domenick, Secretary/Treasurer  
The Woodlands CVB Board of Directors



Date