



**August 19, 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 August 19, 2020, via video conference 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

Absent: 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

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 Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Director J.J. Hollie (ABSENT)

Chairman Bruce Rieser called the meeting to order at 11:30 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 June 17, 2020 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve the Minutes from June 17, 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Director J.J. Hollie (ABSENT)

Chairman Bruce Rieser explained that the Minutes from the June 17, 2020 Regular Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

5. Receive, consider and approve Financial Report through June 2020;

Motion by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve the Financial Report through June 2020. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Director J.J. Hollie (ABSENT)

Chairman Bruce Rieser called on The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance Administration, Monique Sharp. In terms of revenue, the total year to date budget was \$1,758,181 comparing to the actual revenue of \$1,108,696, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$649,485 due to COVID-19 impact on hotel collections. In terms of expenditures, the year to date budget was \$1,788,520 with an actual of \$1,093,860, resulting in a \$694,660 favorable expenditure variance due to the staff's proactive approach on minimizing expenditures during Covid-19. The CVB had an ending fund balance in June 2020 of \$1,530,187. The Hotel Occupancy Tax report showed a year to date decrease of 50 percent. Discussion followed.

6. Receive and consider matters regarding a Request for Proposal (RFP) to study potential advantages of expanding The Woodlands Township's Convention Center;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to engage with Revpar International to study potential advantages of expanding The Woodlands Convention Center. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 8 - 0 Passed

Nick Wolda summarized that at the May meeting the Board directed staff to look at the top proposals and to request for them to rebid their price. Visit The Woodlands received four (4) revised proposals. Following careful review, staff recommends Revpar International. Mr. Wolda presented the work plan and provided similar studies conducted by Revpar Intl. in the United States. Revpar International is a full service advisory and asset management firm exclusively dedicated to the hospitality industry. The firm was established in 1992, giving it 30 years of successful service to the needs of the hospitality industry at large and its various stakeholders.

Since inception, the consultants have undertaken over 4,500 projects throughout the United States, Caribbean, Europe, Middle East, and Asia. Revpar International's study will have a cost of \$38,400, which is the lowest cost proposed. Chairman Rieser advocated in favor of the study and believes the organization needs to plan for the future economic development of The Woodlands. In recent years the Convention Center has lost various meeting groups due to lack of meeting space. Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick spoke on behalf of the Convention Center and supports this study. Discussion followed.

*Director J. J. Hollie arrived during this item at 11:52 p.m.*

7. Receive, consider and act upon updates to the 2020 Marketing and Sales Committees;

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to accept the report and allow staff to update members of the Marketing Committee and the Sales Advisory Committee as needed passed unanimously. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 8 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins explained that these two committees play an integral part in any large initiatives being produced by offering insight and advice to the Sales and Marketing Departments. The partnership with the Marketing and Sales Advisory Committees has been beneficial during COVID-19. Both Committees have been hosted multiple times during this pandemic. The Sales Advisory Committee, led by Josie Lewis, was able to obtain special insight about new hotel and meeting planner procedures in "real time," as well as being able to assist and host virtual tours for future business. The Marketing Committee, led by Ashley White, has been able to implement new plans for current and future marketing campaigns such as partner campaigns, giveaways, ads and much more. The list of the suggested appointments can be found in the Agenda packet.

8. Staff Initiative Reports;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick to accept Staff Initiative Reports. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 8 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins updated the Board on current projects. The Sales Department attended TSAE "Lunch and Learn" virtual event, continued to work towards hosting the Copa Rayados 2020 tournament in The Woodlands, developed blogs focused on meeting sales and added content to The Woodlands CVENT Safety Hub portal. The Department also hosted a virtual Advisory Committee Meetings. The Sales Department will continue to host virtual hotel site tours and will hold a virtual FAM event for meeting professionals. The Marketing Department implemented the "Getaway Giveaway" summer campaign for 6 weeks and received over 1,100 submissions. This campaign promoted The Woodlands through social media and email. Q3 projects include: advertising placements, new destination video, Marketing Committee meeting via zoom, update meeting planner guide, fall & holiday planning and continue to update all social & website content. The Tourism Department was part of a virtual training for over 150 travel agents from Mexico, attended several virtual "Around Houston" meetings and developed new partnerships with local vendors focused on "occasion" events and wedding markets. Visit The Woodlands received the following awards from Texas Association of Visitor Bureaus "Idea Fair." 1st Place for Website (Launched June 2020), 2nd Place for Cooperative Marketing (United Hemispheres Ad), 2nd Place for Tourism Branding & Advertising (Quarterly Pop-ups), 3rd Place for Local Awareness (Holiday Campaign), 3rd Place for Video (Destination Video). Chairman Rieser and Board members congratulated staff for the excellent job performed during this pandemic and for the awards received.

9. Recess to Executive Session to discuss matters relating to real property pursuant to §551.072, Texas Government Code; deliberation of economic development negotiations pursuant to §551.087, Texas Government Code; discuss personnel matters pursuant to §551.074, Texas Government Code; and to consult with the Corporation's attorney pursuant to §551.071, Texas Government Code;

Recessed to Executive Session at 12:15 p.m.

10. Reconvene in Public Session;

Reconvened in Public Session at 12:53 p.m.

11. Receive, consider and act upon a Host Venue Agreement between Visit The Woodlands and The Woodlands Township;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Ted Harris to authorize the President, Chairman and legal counsel to finalize negotiations on the Host Venue Agreement with The Woodlands Township. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote: 8 - 0 Passed**

Chairman Rieser announced that Visit The Woodlands will be working with The Woodlands Township on a Host Venue Agreement regarding events in The Woodlands.

12. Receive, consider and act upon a Service Agreement between The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, and The Woodlands Township;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to authorize the President, Chairman and legal counsel to finalize negotiations on a Service Agreement with The Woodlands Township. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote: 8 - 0 Passed**

Nick Wolda announced that Visit The Woodlands will be working with The Woodlands Township on a Service Agreement with The Woodlands Township.

13. President's Report;

Nick Wolda congratulated Director Cameron Klepac for the new addition to her family. A plan of return to the physical office building has been set up for after Labor Day. This plan includes staggered hours and accommodations with staff's safety in mind.

14. Board Announcements;

Secretary Treasurer Fred Dominick updated the Board regarding The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center. There has been a growth in occupancy since re-opening day on July 1, 2020 with mostly leisure travel and small numbered meetings. Director Ted Harris mentioned that after "Tax Free Weekend," The Woodlands Mall has seen a longer lead time and consistent flow of weekend shopping. This may vary depending on school re-opening. The new courtyard area is 95% finished and are anticipating the opening of Shake Shack and 4 Star Amazon store. Director Jenny Taylor has seen similar buying trends in Market Street The Woodlands as The Woodlands Mall. Market Street was able to safely re-open the Visit The Woodlands' Concierge Desk and it has seen a steady increase in traffic. Hyatt Centric at Market Street will re-open in September and Cinemark at Market Street will re-open August 25, 2020.

15. Agenda items for next meeting;

The next Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors Meeting is expected to be held virtually and it is tentatively scheduled for September 16, 2020 at 11:30 am.

16. Adjournment.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Fred Domenick to adjourn. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Vote:** 8 - 0 Passed

Adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

*Fred Domenick*

12/9/2020

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

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Date