



September 18, 2019

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 September 18, 2019 at The Woodlands Township located at 2801 Technology Forest Boulevard, The Woodlands, Montgomery County, Texas, 77381 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
Brian Boniface, Director
Kevin Viteri, Director
J. J. Hollie, Director
Don Norrell, 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 Sr. Administrative Assistant; Mariana Almanza-Cook, TWCVB Convention Development Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Laura Haces, TWCVB Tourism Specialist; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Administrative Assistant; Monique Sharp, The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance & Administration
- Attendees:** Christina Psillas, Adcetera Business Dev. Director; Mike Sims, Adcetera Executive Creative Director; Courtney Cornelius, Adcetera Account Director; Michael Burnett, Adcetera VP Content Services

1. Pledge of Allegiance;

Vice Chairman John A. Brown 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 Don Norrell, seconded by Director Brian Boniface to approve the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)

Vice Chairman John A. Brown called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.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 July 17, 2019 Special Board Meeting;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick to approve the Minutes from July 17, 2019 carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)

Vice Chairman John A. Brown explained that the minutes from the July 17, 2019 Special Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

5. Receive, consider and approve the Financial Report through July 2019;

Motion by Director Brian Boniface, seconded by Director Don Norrell to approve the Financial Report through July 2019. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)

Vice Chairman John A. Brown called The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance and Administration, Monique Sharp, to the podium to present. In terms of revenue, the total year to date budget was \$1,836,568 that compares to the actual revenue of \$1,797,373, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$39,195. The Supplemental Hotel Tax shows an unfavorable variance of \$62,146, with an operating transfer from the Township of \$17,849. The August Hotel Tax report showed a positive increase of 2% compared to 2018. In terms of expenditures, the year to date budget was \$1,836,568 with an actual of \$1,798,542, resulting in a favorable variance of \$38,026, which represent a timing difference in the budget. The CVB had an ending fund balance in July 2019 of \$1,515,351.

6. Receive, consider and act upon Cvent Supplier Partnership renewal to include two year agreement;

Motion by Director Brian Boniface, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick to approve the Cvent Supplier Partnership renewal to include a two-year agreement. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)

Josie Lewis mentioned that Visit The Woodlands entered into a supplier partnership with Cvent in October of 2016 and has seen increasingly positive results on a consistent basis by Cvent's extensive database of 74,000+ meeting planners. Visit The Woodlands is at the 2 Diamond level with its current partnership with Cvent. For the 2020 and 2021 agreement with Cvent, staff is suggesting to transition to the Diamond Plus partnership level. This transition will bring Visit The Woodlands to appear within the first search page when planners are considering the Houston area. In addition, Visit The Woodlands will receive banner ads in Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston markets. The Diamond Plus Package will be for a two-year agreement, which would cost \$28,764 in 2020 and will be \$30,649 in 2021. This will save 6% of the current annual cost.

7. Receive, consider and act upon the 2020 Media Placement Plan;

Motion by Director Don Norrell, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve the 2020 Media Placement Plan. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)

Ashley White explained that marketing and advertising play a key role in fulfilling Visit The Woodlands' mission. The 2020 Media Plan has four major components: Leisure, Meetings, International and Co-op advertising efforts. A media flowchart was presented providing a high-level overview of ongoing efforts throughout 2020, which includes both print and digital campaigns targeting meeting planners and leisure travelers. New placements for 2020 include print advertising in Mexico and the incorporation of Orange142 to help target meeting planners. Visit The Woodlands will continue partnerships with both Connect and Madden Media to target meeting planners through integrated marketing campaigns and will expand the partnerships with both AJR Media and TripAdvisor. The expenditures related to the media plan and media buys will be facilitated by Visit The Woodlands' Agency of Record, Adcetera Design Studio, Inc. These expenditures were approved by the Board of Directors in the 2020 Budget process. Earned media is tracked with a monitoring software. Paid media receives the most engagement and both values are presented in the monthly report.

Chairman Bruce Reiser arrived at 12:10 p.m.

8. Receive, consider and act upon a membership to the Texas Hotel Lodging Association group listing partnership;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve a membership to Texas Hotel Lodging Association group listing partnership to be funded from reserves. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins presented an initiative brought by Director Domenick during the 2020 Budget process. Director Domenick expressed interest in Visit The Woodlands becoming a member of Texas Hotel Lodging Association group listing partnership, as it would benefit the hotel community in The Woodlands. The Texas Hotel and Lodging Association is a nonprofit trade association representing every aspect of the lodging industry in Texas. THLA advocates for legislation, regulations, and resources that promote a strong, vibrant, and growing lodging and tourism industry in Texas. THLA currently has over 120 cities, counties, individual hotels, chambers of commerce and CVB's in their group-listing program, such as the Houston Hotel Association. Membership benefits include listing of The Woodlands properties on THLA partner tourism trackable websites, such as TravelTexas.com, TexasLodging.com, TourTexas.com, as well as complimentary legal services, local area seminars, legislative advocacy and additional services. The annual cost would be \$14,452, which includes a 15% discount. This membership was not allocated for in the 2019 budget.

Director Domenick and Director Viteri are supportive of this initiative and believe it will increase all area hotels' credibility and exposure, as well as serving as an incentive for area hotels to utilize the resources available. Discussion followed.

9. Receive, consider and act upon issuance of a Request for Proposal for Convention Center expansion study;

Nick Wolda explained that after the increased yearly success since the opening of the Convention Center in 2002, demand for the convention space has possibly exceeded capacity. After having lost various convention groups to larger convention centers, staff recommends an expansion study would be valuable to determine if the Township could benefit from a larger convention space. Chairman Rieser added that this expansion would mean a new source of revenue for the Township. Director Domenick added that the ownership group is excited about a potential expansion study, but asked to defer this issue to a later date to be able to better prepare on this matter. Discussion followed. Chairman Rieser moved to table this item.

10. Receive and consider an update from the Big Idea Group;

Motion by Director Brian Boniface, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to accept the update from the Big Idea Group. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown and President Nick Wolda have met with key stakeholders regarding the future of The Woodlands as a destination. The meetings were successful, positive feedback and numerous ideas were received. The group is determining which ideas are feasible in The Woodlands. Vice Chairman Brown encouraged the Board to submit ideas to the group and consider what could be beneficial to our community 5, 10 and future years down the road. Discussion followed.

Agenda Items #11 and #12 were moved down on the Agenda after Executive Session.

13. 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.

14. Reconvene in Public Session;

Reconvened in Public Session at 1:10 p.m.

11. Receive, consider and act upon an advertising cooperative placement with United Airlines' Hemispheres Magazine;

Motion by Chairman Bruce Rieser, seconded by Director Brian Boniface to allow President Nick Wolda to negotiate a two-page spread at a cost not to exceed \$35,000 dollars with United Airlines' Hemispheres Magazine. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Ashley White stated that Visit The Woodlands is presented with advertising opportunities that can amplify The Woodlands' message and build brand awareness in conjunction with an editorial placement. Hemispheres Magazine reached out with an opportunity regarding the 2019 November issue. Hemispheres Magazine is the in-flight magazine for United Airlines, which has 1.3 million U.S. subscribers and it reaches over 56% of business travelers. Visit The Woodlands has the opportunity to purchase advertising to complement an 8,000-word article about the area. The placement is for a full-page ad to be shared with The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership. This expenditure is not currently allocated in Visit The Woodlands marketing budget and staff is not authorized to utilize funds from reserves without prior approval from the Board of Directors. Chairman Rieser supported this opportunity and encouraged staff to acquire a two-page ad placement in the magazine if possible. Discussion followed.

12. Receive, consider and act upon any matters regarding Staff Initiative Reports;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Brian Boniface to approve the Staff Initiative Reports. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Josie Lewis provided a report on the Sales Department. Sales missions included Cvent Connect in July, Connect Marketplace in August, IMEX America in September and TSAE New Ideas Conference in September. Conferences coming up include Connect Texas in Grapevine and MPI Plan Your Meetings Event in Houston. Currently, the department is working on a plan for the new Sales Specialist staff member, an upcoming Simpleview CRM update focused on Sales and upgrades to the Servicing Program. The department will host the Q3 Advisory Committee and All Hotel Partner meeting, along with three important site tours. Next, Ashley White shared an update on the Marketing Department. Simpleview conducted a site visit to better understand The Woodlands as a destination. In addition, there will be a Simpleview CRM data clean-up in preparation for the website launch. The department has approved the wireframe of the revamped website. The Marketing department conducted aerial video and photography of the destination and is working on future media and PR efforts. Elizabeth Eddins provided the local tourism efforts. The department celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Moon Landing at Waterway Square and accompanied Market Street at their Fall Art Show. Visit The Woodlands staff attended TACVB Annual Conference in Denton, Texas and the Future of Montgomery County: The Woodlands, Conroe and more event hosted by Bisnow. During TACVB Idea Fair Awards and Annual Conference, Visit The Woodlands received 1st Place in Local Awareness for Insider's Guide artwork / window clings, 2nd Place in Cooperative Marketing for the "Hotel Book Program" and 3rd Place in Convention Promotion for the Meeting Planner Guide.

15. Receive, consider and act upon the 2020 Service Agreement between The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, and The Woodlands Township;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Kevin Viteri to approve the 2020 Service Agreement between The Woodlands Convention and Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, and The Woodlands Township. Motion carried. Director Don Norrell abstained from voting.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Don Norrell (ABSTAIN)

Bret Strong explained that reviewing this agreement is an annual requirement. The agreement outlines the services to be provided by each party and defines the Township's funding requirements for the 2020 budget year.

16. President's Report;

President Wolda attended the 34th Annual Texas Travel Industry Association Summit in September 2019. He serves on the TTIA Board. Ms. Eddins attended as a speaker. Mr. Wolda welcomed Ashley Fenner as the new part-time Administrative Assistant and expressed gratitude to Chairman Rieser for representing Visit The Woodlands at the Bisnow conference on September 5, 2019.

17. Board Announcements;

Director Domenick announced the renovation for The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center is being finalized.

18. Agenda items for next meeting;

Chairman Rieser mentioned that next Regular Board meeting is set for October 16, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.

19. Adjournment.

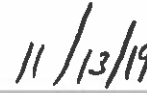
Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Adjourned at 1:27 p.m.



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



Date