



August 17, 2022
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) held their Board Meeting on August 17, 2022, at The Woodlands Township located at 2801 Technology Forest Boulevard, The Woodlands, 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
 Cameron Klepac, Director
 Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, Director
 Monique Sharp, Director
 Jenny Taylor, Director

Staff Present: Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Assistant Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; Monique Sharp, The Woodlands Township President/CEO; Nick Wolda, President; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Convention Development Specialist; Gabby Pena, TWCVB Administrative Analyst

1. Pledge of Allegiance;
 Led by Chairman Bruce Rieser.

2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;
 Chairman Bruce Rieser called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.m.

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to adopt the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

3. Public Comment;
 No public comment.

4. Consider and approve Minutes from April 2022 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick, seconded by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on April 20, 2022. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Minutes accepted.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

5. Consider and approve Minutes from May 2022 Special Board Meeting;

Motion by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick, seconded by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve the minutes from the Special Board Meeting on May 18, 2022. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Minutes accepted.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

6. Consider and approve Financial Report through June 2022;

Note: Due to technical difficulties, agenda item 6 was presented immediately following agenda Item 7 and prior to Agenda Item 8.

Kellan Shaw, Township Director of Finance, gave the Financial Report. At the end of June, actual revenues totaled \$985,579, compared to a \$1,208,306 budget, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$222,727. This was due to the Township transferring less funds than anticipated as a result of supplemental hotel tax revenue being higher than budgeted by \$169,454. Additionally, there were favorable variances in operating expenses totaling \$222,727. The Actual Expenditures at the end of June totaled \$985,579, compared to budgeted expenditures of \$1,208,306. The favorable variance of \$222,727 is attributable primarily due to timing differences of line items within the budget. As of June 30, 2022, the undesignated fund balance for Visit The Woodlands was \$1,405,194.

Motion by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor to adopt the Financial Report. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Financial Report adopted

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

7. Receive, consider, and act upon the 2023 Budget Proposal of Visit The Woodlands;

Elizabeth Eddins presented Visit The Woodlands Budget Proposal related to allocations in sales, marketing, strategic partnerships, and the general fund. The 2023 Budget has increased to \$3,303,212 versus the 2022 Budget of \$2,827,916. Chairman Rieser said it would be helpful to have the 2019 actuals on the screen as well since it is very similar at \$3.1 million. He also mentioned that Visit The Woodlands initiatives help in the collection of other tax revenues within the Township like sales tax. He mentioned that, in the last 6 years, the Township has seen an increase of approximately 35%, which can be attributed to non-property tax revenues. He discussed the importance of sales and hotel tax collections and its benefits to the residents in keeping property taxes low. Director Domenick inquired about revenue projections for 2022. Visit The Woodlands and Township staff are projecting approximately \$9 million, in 2023 based on the STR report, data analytics, and discussions with other hotel properties. Ms. Eddins provided a general overview of the \$3.3 million budget which includes general expenditures, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion, and convention sales. The general department budget is \$1.3 million, which includes office space, equipment and data services, contracted services, and administrative costs. The strategic partnerships budget is growing this year at \$491,000 and will include visitor services, special events such as IRONMAN, tourism/leisure

initiatives, advocacy and business development, market research, tradeshow booth development and staff travel. The marketing promotion budget is \$1.1 million, and includes advertising, FAM tours and media activations, sales and marketing collateral, visitor maps, website and digital tools, photo and video development, social media and public relations. The advertising budget is broken down further into leisure, meetings, co-op, and international. The convention sales budget is \$351,000 and includes sales missions and tradeshow, incentive funds, tradeshow sponsorships, RFP bid proposals and fulfillment, site visits and FAM tours which are important for attracting meeting planners to The Woodlands, CRM support, and servicing and promotional items which will include welcome gifts and pushing promotion into the bridal market. Chairman Reiser mentioned that staff is working on creating more Sports Tourism in The Woodlands. President Wolda reported the Hotel Tax collection in June of 2022 was the second highest in Visit The Woodlands history which indicates hotel business continues to rebound. President Wolda said this budget will be presented to the Township Board the week of August 24, 2022 during Township Budget Workshops where all meetings are open to the public. Executive Director Eddins thanked the Board for their direction, guidance, and support getting Visit The Woodlands back to this level.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

8. Receive, consider, and act upon the creation of a new printed magazine produced by Visit The Woodlands.

Executive Director Elizabeth Eddins discussed the idea of Visit The Woodlands publishing a bi-monthly magazine to showcase businesses around the Township on their investments in The Woodlands, the history of their business, etc. In response to Director Taylor's question on why Visit The Woodlands is proposing a printed magazine versus digital, Ms. Eddins said that the initiative will have a digital copy, but that a tangible copy in people's hands and in businesses is also needed. Chairman Rieser said that he has been encouraging this project as it is aimed toward local businesses who have made an investment in doing business within The Woodlands Township. Director Dr. Sekula-Gibbs was supportive of the magazine and thinks that it is a great idea to show local businesses that they are valued by the Township and Visit The Woodlands. Ms. Eddins said that the magazine will feature Calls to Action to the local businesses, as well as, various QR codes throughout the magazine that will lead to more information on the Visit The Woodlands' website. Chairman Rieser wanted to point out that this magazine will be beneficial to meeting planners as it will highlight hotels, hospitals, restaurants, and other aspects of the community. Director Klepac suggested that there be a column within the magazine for updates on what Visit The Woodlands is doing around the area to help local businesses. Director Brown agreed with the idea of doing both an digital and paper copy of the magazine. Ms. Eddins said that another hope for the magazine is that the public will be able to use the magazine as a guide for what to do around the area and give insight on resources available to both visitors and residents. Director Dr. Sekula-Gibbs inquired about the name of the magazine and if it will include advertisements. President Wolda said that Visit The Woodlands staff is exploring options on the new name and advertising would not be available within the publication. Bret Strong, legal counsel for Visit The Woodlands, expressed the merits of emphasizing the contributions of investing in The Woodlands Township.

Motion by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Cameron Klepac

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

9. Receive, consider, and act upon approval for Visit The Woodlands staff to submit a proposal to host TSAE New Ideas Conference in The Woodlands in 2024.

Josie Lewis, Director of Sales, proposed a plan to submit an RFP to host the Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) New Ideas conference in The Woodlands in 2024. This event is a 3-day conference that brings in between 500 to 600 association and industry professionals from around the state. In order to host this event, Visit The Woodlands would be responsible for hosting the opening night reception and dinner for all attendees; planning and executing 10+ destination excursions; and covering the transportation costs to and from the above hosted events. Director Domenick stated that The Woodlands Waterway Marriott hosted this event in 2008 and it was a beneficial event. Mrs. Lewis shared that the Economic Impact of the Texas Association markets represent is \$2.5 billion through association meetings and events; about 50,000 meetings held annually; and over 11.6 million total meeting attendees. These statistics were published by TSAE with a report conducted by Downs St. Germain Research. President Wolda stated, The Woodlands hosted the TSAE Board of Directors Retreat in June 2022. The attendees expressed enjoying the destination and learning what The Woodlands offers for meetings and events. Mrs. Lewis thanked Market Street and Tommy Bahama Restaurant for their support in hosting the welcome dinner and reception for the TSAE Board of Directors Retreat. Mrs. Lewis also mentioned that the costs associated with this event would be worked into the 2024 Budget, if the event is secured.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

10. Receive, consider, and act upon an update of 2022 Marketing efforts, including Fashion Forward photo and video production;

Ashley White, Director of Marketing, gave an update on the photo/video shoot that was produced in May 2022. Staff worked with different partners at 12 locations throughout the week. In addition to various Visit The Woodlands staff members on site, there were 20 crew members and 45 talent members throughout the week working on this project. Various areas around The Woodlands served as backdrops. Ms. White showed a 2-minute video promoting The Woodlands as a place to visit. Chairman Rieser said that the Board always sets lofty expectations which Visit The Woodlands staff always exceeds.

Motion by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

11. Staff Initiative Reports;

Elizabeth Eddins reported that Tourism is officially back in full swing. Some of the events that have really drawn tourists to the area are The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival, Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas, The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, and Wine & Food Week. Staff has generated a great deal of media coverage recently, including a feature with KPRC's Last Minute Road Trip segment featuring The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center and The Woodlands Waterway.

Ms. Eddins and Mrs. White attended the IPW International Travel Show in Orlando where they met with over 30 international travel planners. IPW 2023 will be in San Antonio. Visit The Woodlands plans to leverage San Antonio's proximity to get travel planners to The Woodlands. Ms. Eddin also discussed a recent marketing promotion in San Miguel de Allende where she and Director Taylor met with media to promote The Woodlands for tourism. Director Taylor voiced that this was a productive series of sales meetings and has already seen results from the travel mission to San Miguel de Allende. Ms. Eddins said that there were multiple media presenting opportunities and that the community kept

up-to-date with new restaurants and retailers opening in the area.

Ashley White mentioned the Live Nation Ad at The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion was doing well and that all attendees would be able to access the QR Code. Visit The Woodlands also has ad placements in Texas Monthly, Texas Highways, Tour Texas, Houstonia, and Paid Search & Paid Social. Visit The Woodlands is rolling out new meeting promotions with the new marketing collateral featuring Texas TreeVentures and the Town Center Trolley. Mrs. White works closely with Mrs. Lewis to determine which meeting planner advertising buys are most beneficial. Visit The Woodlands has started to advertise within Association Leadership, which is the official magazine of TSAE. Website number highlights from Q2 are up 84% year over year with 222,000 users, as well as, increased sessions and page views. Visit The Woodlands has seen 85% of the website visitors as new visitors. Visit The Woodlands has sent over 6,100 hotel booking referrals to hotel partners. Social media numbers have been very strong with over 5 million impressions, 154,000 engagements and 77,000 conversions in Q2. The online audience has grown by almost 3,000 followers in 3 months.

Visit The Woodlands has been working with social media influencers on a quarterly basis on hosted collaborations. Visit The Woodlands Marketing Coordinator, Amber George, has overseen these efforts. Josie Lewis, Director of Sales, discussed two recently hosted meeting planner FAM Events. MPI Houston Area Chapter Board of Directors Retreat was cohosted with Visit Shenandoah and Visit The Woodlands. This event brought in 16 Board Members. Staff also welcomed the TSAE Board of Directors, bringing in 27 individuals. Staff has already received one RFP from hosting the TSAE BOD Retreat, representing over 1,000 room nights.

Josie Lewis also showcased Q2 Sales Efforts and reported that the sales team worked on 38 organic leads and 62 CVENT leads, with 4 in-person site tours. Ms. Lewis and Ashley Fenner, Senior Sales Specialist, recently participated in Connect Marketplace in Detroit. While there, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Fenner represented Visit The Woodlands with a tradeshow floor booth in the Texas aisle. Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Fenner also participated in the corporate appointment track and met with 27 meeting planners to showcase The Woodlands. The sales team travel schedule is gearing up in the coming months with Smart Meetings, TSAE New Ideas Conference, Small Market Meetings, and more. Ms. Lewis also mentioned a few key groups that were serviced in Q2 by Visit The Woodlands, including The Woodlands Financial Group Annual Convention, Academy Store Directors Conference, and more.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

12. 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;

Chairman Rieser announced there was no need for an Executive Session.

13. President's Report;

President Nick Wolda announced that Ashley Fenner was promoted to Senior Sales Specialist. He also reported that Julie Quinn has joined the Visit The Woodlands Sales team from the Township Neighborhood Services Department as the new Servicing Specialist. Mary Murphy has joined the Marketing team as the new Public Relations Coordinator. Josie Lewis joined the Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Houston Area Chapter (HAC) Board of Directors. The chevron championship of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) will debut in The Woodlands in 2023. The Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas was designated as the "America's Championship" for 2023. Chairman Rieser mentioned that he wanted to discuss the possibility for a coffee table book highlighting The Woodlands as a place to visit. President Wolda responded that staff would discuss and bring back options at an upcoming meeting.

14. Board Announcements;

None.

15. Agenda items for next meeting;

None.

16. Adjournment at 1:00 p.m.

Motion by Director Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

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

Date