



March 20, 2024
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 March 20, 2024 at The Woodlands Township located at 2801 Technology Forest Boulevard, The Woodlands, Montgomery County, Texas, 77381 at 8:30 a.m. The roll was called and those in attendance were:

- Present:** Brad Bailey, Chairman
Jennifer Gohagan, Vice Chairman
Richard Franks, Secretary/Treasurer
Cameron Klepac, Director
Linda Nelson, Director
Monique Sharp, Director
Kim Lowe, Director
- Absent:** Jenny Taylor, Director
- Staff Present:** Nick Wolda, President, Visit The Woodlands; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Assistant Director; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Convention Development Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Mary Murphy, Tourism Specialist; Julie Quinn, Servicing Specialist
- Attendees:** Dana Lemons and Churchill Christmas, The Woodlands Township Help Desk Analysts; Kellan Shaw, The Woodlands Township Chief Financial Officer; Bret Strong, The Woodlands Township Legal Counsel; Jordan Sexton, Tara Vasovic-Frederick, Jordan Nutt, Adcetera Design Studio, Inc. Agency Representatives

1. Pledge of Allegiance;
Led by Brad Bailey, Chairman.

2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;

This meeting was called to order by legal counsel at 8:31 a. m., and it was noted items 10 and 11 were erroneously numbered and would be switched to reconvene into public session before item number 10. A motion to adopt the meeting Agenda by the Members passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment;

None

4. Receive, consider and act upon a Proclamation of support for Global Meetings Industry Day 2024;

Vice Chairman Jennifer Gohagan read a proclamation stating that on April 11, 2024, Visit The Woodlands will join the annual worldwide recognition of Global Meetings Industry Day and champion the benefits as well as impact of professional meetings and events held in The Woodlands. Global Meetings Industry Day is fueled by the U.S. Travel Associations Meetings Mean Business Coalition and spotlights the proven value that business meetings, conferences, conventions, tradeshows and exhibitions bring to businesses worker and the economy. In The Woodlands, meetings are essential to stimulating the region's economy and bringing in new visitors who stay in The Woodlands 14 hotels, dine in restaurants, and shop at local stores that in turn bring new revenue to The Woodlands. In 2023 over 2,203 professional meetings and events took place that represented over 114,000 hotel rooms and utilized over \$34 million in total room revenue. On behalf of The Board of Directors for Visit The Woodlands, Chairman Brad Bailey, proclaimed April 11, 2024 as Global Meetings Industry Day.

5. Consider and approve Minutes from January 18, 2024 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion to approve the January 2024 Minutes passed unanimously.

6. Consider and approve Financial Report through December 2023;

Kellan Shaw, Township Chief Financial Officer, delivered the Financial Report. At the end of December, year-to-date revenues totaled \$3,303,212 compared to a \$3,369,223 budget, for a favorable variance of \$66,011.

The expenditures budget year-to-date totaled \$3,453,212 with year-to-date actual of \$3,490,268 with an unfavorable variance of \$37,056. Ms. Shaw noted that the majority of this is due to the Connect Texas event that happened in October. She gave a reminder that in May 2023 the Board approved up to \$100,000 for Connect Texas that was not previously budgeted for during the 2023 budget workshop in 2022.

The beginning fund balance for January was \$1,235,799, less the holiday lighting budget amendment (up to \$150,000), which was almost entirely spent. Due to the agreement any expenditures over the budgeted amount would come out of fund balance of \$37,056 with ending fund balance of \$1,077,698. Kellan Shaw spoke with Nick Wolda and there are invoices to reclass to 2024. It is believed those are 2024 expenditures and the number of \$37,056 will be reduced.

The year-to-date sales tax deposits, year to date budgeted is \$66,583,841. Year-to-date actual collected \$72,217,102 for year-to-date favorable variance of 5.6 million. That is 8.5% over

budget and a little over 5 million collected from the prior year in 2022.

The Hotel Occupancy Tax deposits ended with a favorable variance of almost 716,000 or 8% over budget and a little more than a million dollars more collected in 2023 than 2022. The report through February for hotel occupancy tax deposits, so year to date, we're almost \$100,000 over budget or 8% and about 153,000 more collected than in 2023.

Motion to approve the Financial Report through December 2023 passed unanimously.

7. Receive, consider and act upon an update regarding #SoWoodlands Magazine;

President Nick Wolda highlighted some past issues of a publication that is produced four times a year. This was started towards the end of 2022 into 2023 and a new issue should be in mailboxes. Currently the publication is being sent to only retailers, hotel businesses and properties, not residents.

Chairman Bailey has asked for staff to research the possibility of how we could get this out to the community, so they can understand the importance of tourism, conventions, and meetings to our overall economic health of The Woodlands Township. It was suggested to insert the publication into The Woodlands Community Magazine, which is currently going out to approximately 40,000 homes.

It is being recommended to insert the #SoWoodlands inside The Woodlands Community Magazine four times a year.

Nick Wolda stated The Township Board of Directors would be reviewing the future on the publication and asked if Director Sharp wanted to speak on that.

Director Sharp stated that any action Visit The Woodlands Board would take today, March 20, 2024 will be subject to the expected approval by The Woodlands Township Board at its next meeting to move forward with the community magazine.

Vice Chairman Linda Nelson suggested that if it is decided to move forward with the publication, there needs to be something on The Township Community Magazine cover so residents know #SoWoodlands Magazine is included inside, thus making it more appealing to the viewer.

Vice Chairman Jennifer Gohagan asked if the issue period for the Community Magazine had changed, Nick Wolda confirmed that was correct.

President Nick Wolda discussed cost for the 2024 year. It is anticipated to produce two issues for the 2024 budget. If the Board agrees, it will be worked into the budget cost for 2025 that will be discussed in May. The cost for 2024 to produce two issues would be approximately somewhere around \$50,000 to \$55,000. That is about 25 to 27.5 per issue, less than 80 cents or approximate with the message of the importance of tourism and conventions. The publication is to encourage all residents to think about The Woodlands as a destination to refer and promote the community.

Chairman Bailey stated we have a community that is very engaged, whether through business trade associations, collaborations with businesses and almost a sell in our own backyard mentality of bring your business to The Woodlands. If more people are promoting local business, this magazine can help highlight things the Township Magazine can't. Chairman Bailey stated he really liked the impact sheet that takes the numbers and displays in a graphic way. It takes our marketing local and puts it in front of people that know our community in a

different way.

Motion to approve and produce two issues of #SoWoodlands Magazine to be inserted into The Woodlands Community Magazine in the summer and fall of 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$55,000 with a budget amendment from the fund balance passed unanimously.

8. Staff Initiative Reports;

Executive Director Elizabeth Eddins announced starting Thursday, March 21, 2024 through Saturday, March 23, 2024 Visit The Woodlands will be hosting Chic Magazine from Monterrey, Mexico which is a luxury upscale magazine. The staff is working with an international PR agency on this opportunity, which is for a three-day itinerary. Ms. Eddins is excited to announce The Woodlands will be featured the cover of Chic Magazine. They will be doing a ladies itinerary, covering what to do in The Woodlands. The itinerary includes shopping, upscale dining, The Waterway and sunset at Hughes Landing. Ms. Eddins thanked our partners at Market Street for through their help and collaborations on this project.

Ms. Eddins also announced The Woodlands was chosen as the destination for the Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus Regional Workshop. That will take place in May of this year right after National Travel and Tourism Week. This is a similar organization to the Texas Travel Alliance, which is an advocacy organization for destinations for convention and visitor bureaus across the state. They will be offering a workshop for partners to learn what convention and visitors bureaus do. It will be complimentary to attend so any Visit The Woodlands partners that would like to attend are welcome to.

Director of Sales, Josie Lewis, gave an update on sales efforts. Since the beginning of this year, 98 leads have been worked. Ms. Lewis thanked Ashley Fenner, Senior Sales Specialist, who travels to many tradeshows on behalf of Visit The Woodlands. The 98 leads represent just under 50,000 rooms and over \$31.9 million in estimated economic impact. Ashley has participated in over nine site tours so far in 2024. Julie Quinn has also been assisting with servicing, and planning visits with clients.

Director of Sales, Josie Lewis, reported on sales team highlights for the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference food truck village that took place at the Gold Lot at the Pavilion. Ms. Lewis thanked Julie Quinn, Servicing Specialist, who spent months planning the event. Great feedback was heard from the clients as well as attendees. An additional thank you was given to The Woodlands Township, and the Parks and Rec Department team for the setup and assistance of the event.

Ms. Lewis also co-hosted Visit The Woodlands' Sales and Marketing Committee meeting earlier this month, which was a great opportunity for partners to come in and learn about what's been done as well as current and upcoming events.

April will be the kickoff of the sales travel of the year. There are two upcoming shows in April, kicking off with Connect Spring Marketplace. In May, the Sales Team will be heading to HelmsBriscoe's Annual Business Conference and MPI's World Education Congress event. For Global Means Industry Day, the sales team is excited to do their partner pop-ins to touch base with hotel partners and provide goodies as a reminder of the impact Visit The Woodlands has on the destination. The sales team is working hard to bring in an MPI Houston Area Chapter may program to The Woodlands in May.

Ms. Lewis also announced a new sales position that can be found on LinkedIn or The Woodlands Township jobsite.

Per the recommendation of Chairman Baily, the Backyard Sales Campaign was launched to help local business professionals bring their meetings and events to The Woodlands. Ms. Lewis thanked the marketing team for their assistance with collateral and a webpage to support the program.

Director of Marketing, Ashley White, started by extending a thank you for the support of #SoWoodlands and approving the budget amendment. She mentioned that it is an award-winning publication and gave recognition to Public Relations Coordinator, Mary Murphy, who works on the publication.

Amber George, Social Media Coordinator, developed Art Gladness, which can be found on Visit The Woodlands social channels. The campaign gives information about public art in The Woodlands and through April 18. The public can vote on their favorite art piece and there is a championship at the end of the month. Mrs. White thanked Amber George for her hard work on the campaign and overall social efforts.

Mrs. White gave an update on the hotel booking engine, which is officially live on the website and allows Visit The Woodlands to track hotel bookings down to point of sale. The marketing team is currently working with partners to set up attribution links. Once implemented, Visit The Woodlands will be able to track hotel bookings for specific events - for example, Pavilion concerts. Reports and updates will be provided later in the year.

Director of Marketing, Ashley White, stated the team is currently developing new hotel site tour videos. She mentioned the videos were launched by the sales team during COVID but continue to be a useful sales tool. Visit The Woodlands is working with local partners like the Westin, the Resort, Embassy Suites, and the Marriott to create updated virtual hotel site tours. Ms. White also mentioned the videos have won awards. The team is currently in the process of updating the Westin and the Resort shoot dates in April of this year.

Mrs. White stated that the Marketing and Sales Committee meeting took place earlier this month. She mentioned that it was a great opportunity to provide an update to Visit The Woodlands partners, but also, for team members to hear partner feedback.

Mrs. White found a CO-OP advertising program that allows Visit The Woodlands to place digital advertising on behalf of many partners. Each partner can have their own unique messaging with matching advertising dollars. The program is expected to launch in Q2 of this year. Additional advertising reporting will be provided in April as the team is currently wrapping up Q1.

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;
10. Receive, consider and act upon an agreement with World Triathlon Corporation;
No action
11. Reconvene in public session;

12. President's Report;

President, Nick Wolda, announced an offer was made and a new Administrative Analyst would start on Monday, March 25th and reminded Board Members of the Senior Sales position available out on the Township website. President Wolda thanked and welcomed newest Director, Kim Lowe. Director Lowe was named the Sales Director of the Year for Coral Tree Hospitality. Nick Wolda also congratulated the team (Amber George) on The Platinum AVA award for Art Gladness. A Gold award was given to #SoWoodlands Magazine and an honorable mention for the video recap of Connect Texas.

Chairman Bailey recognized President Wolda on his 25 years with The Woodlands Township

13. Board Announcements;

Director Cameron Klepac announced the Pavilion is 24 days from kicking off their concert season. Events will start the weekend of the Art Festival expecting probably close to 11,000 attendees for the first show, projecting it to be one of the busiest seasons to date. March 1, the Pavilion welcomed its new CEO Jeff Young.

Director Klepac also announced there are 31 Live Nation shows announced for the 2024 season so far, with budgeted for 50 this year. She mentioned there is a trend of concerts moving into the September and October time frame.

Chairman Bailey announced that he went to the LPGA Media Days and got to see what was planned for the upcoming Chevron Championship.

Chairman Bailey stated that he Texas Travel Alliance Unity Dinner had over 500 travel industry professionals in attendance, which Board and staff attended as well. Also last week Chairman Bailey and Director Richard Franks attended The Chambers Between The Trees and spoke on tourism and important things happening in The Woodlands.

14. Agenda items for next meeting;

Chairman Bailey mentioned he would like to discuss options on how to get a Visit The Woodlands ad on the back of The Woodlands Express park & ride buses.

15. Adjournment at 9:45 a.m.

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.



Richard Franks, Secretary/Treasurer
The Woodlands CVB Board of Directors

17 April 2024
Date