



January 18, 2023

8:30 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 January 18, 2023 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
Fred Domenick, Vice Chairman
Richard Franks, Secretary/Treasurer
Cameron Klepac, Director
Linda Nelson, Director
Monique Sharp, Director
Jenny Taylor, Director
- Staff Present: Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Executive Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; Mary Murphy, Tourism Specialist; Nick Wolda, President, Visit The Woodlands; Julie Quinn, Servicing Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Convention Development Specialist; Gabby Pena, TWCVB Administrative Analyst
- Attendees: Tuan Nguyen, The Woodlands Township Help Desk Analyst, Ana Cosio, Resident, Nathan Muha-Prado, The Strong Firm, Mario Santos, SanMarez Media Arts & Entertainment, John Anthony Brown, Former Vice Chairman

1. Pledge of Allegiance;

Led by Brad Bailey, Chairman.

2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m., and a motion to adopt the Agenda passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment;

None.

4. Receive, consider and act upon recognition of 2022 Directors;

- President Wolda thanked the three Visit The Woodlands outgoing Board Directors: Bruce Reiser, John Anthony Brown, and Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs for their service to Visit The Woodlands
- John Anthony Brown was in attendance. He thanked the staff and congratulated the new board.

5. Receive and approve Minutes from the Board Meeting on October 19, 2022;

Motion to approve the Minutes as read passed unanimously. Chariman Bailey, Secretary/Treasurer Franks, and Director Nelson abstained as they were not Directors at the time of the meeting.

6. Receive and approve Minutes from the Annual Board Meeting on December 14, 2022;

Motion to approve the Minutes as read passed unanimously.

7. Consider and approve Financial Report through November 2022;

- Kellan Shaw, Township Director of Finance, delivered the Financial Report. At the end of November, actual revenues totaled to \$1,907,599 compared to a \$2,244,849 budget, resulting in an unfavorable variance of (\$337,250). The Supplemental hotel tax revenue showed a favorable variance of \$271,573, offset by an unfavorable variance in operating transfers of (\$615,056). This unfavorable variance in operating transfers was due to the Township transferring less funds to Visit The Woodlands as the supplemental hotel tax revenue was higher than anticipated and expenditures were less than budgeted.

- The Actual Expenditures at the end of November totaled \$2,024,846, compared to budgeted expenditures of \$2,244,849. The favorable variance of \$220,003 is primarily attributed to timing differences of line items within the budget, lower than budgeted contract services, and a savings in salaries and benefits due to open positions earlier in the year.

- As of November 30, 2022, the undesignated fund balance for Visit The Woodlands was \$1,287,947.

- Director Taylor asked Vice Chairman Domenick how many rooms were out of commission this summer. Vice Chairman Domenick responded that there were 175 rooms out of commission. Director Bailey asked for the 2019 HOT collection, which were \$9.2 million.

- Motion to approve the Financial Report through November 2022 passed unanimously.

8. Receive, consider and act upon affirmation of the officers of the Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors as authorized signers on the Visit The Woodlands bank accounts;

Motion to approve the officers of the Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors as authorized signers passed unanimously.

9. Receive, consider and act upon updates to the 2023 Marketing and Sales Committees;
 - Executive Director Elizabeth Eddins requested a renewal of the 2023 Marketing and Sales Committees. The Marketing Committee is chaired by Ashley White, Marketing Director, and consists of members from Visit The Woodlands community partners. The purpose of the Committee is to encourage partnership and education with industry partners and local stakeholders in an effort to elevate awareness of The Woodlands as a meeting and leisure travel destination. The Sales Committee is chaired by Josie Lewis, Director of Sales, and consists of staff representatives from The Woodlands hotel properties. The purpose of the Committee is to position The Woodlands as a premier destination for meetings, conventions, and events by focusing on the client/visitor experience.
 - Motion to approve the renewal of the Marketing and Sales Committees passed unanimously.

10. Receive, consider and act upon the request for a renewal of a contract for Destination Marketing and Management Reporting Software;
 - Ashley White, Marketing Director, requested a renewal for the software Madden Voyage+. This platform features information on visitor services, visitation statistics, visitor origin statistics, traveler behavior, and the top markets in Texas. Mrs. White used the recent “Redefine Winter Chill” campaign statistics to show how they used Voyage+ data to focus this campaign to the 5 coldest states that had high potential to travel to The Woodlands. Visit The Woodlands placed campaign advertisements via platforms like Instagram and Amazon CTV.
 - Director Taylor requested numbers on how many website visits were driven by the “Redefine Winter Chill” campaign advertising. Mrs. White shared that the advertising campaign was still in market, but the initial data she received for conversions caused by the “Redefine Winter Chill” campaign was strong.
 - Motion to renew the contract for Destination Marketing and Management Reporting Software passed unanimously.

11. Receive, consider and act upon a partnership renewal with Market Street to manage the 2023 Visitor Services Program;
 - Ms. Eddins requested a partnership renewal with Market Street to manage the 2023 Visitor Services Kiosk and Concierge Service. This location is used as a resource for maps, visitor guides, and other visitor information. The Kiosk is also used as a location for our group business to pick up their servicing gifts in person.
 - Director Nelson asked what questions are most commonly asked at the Visitor Services Kiosk. Director Taylor said that a lot of people ask about restaurants, TreeVentures, location of different businesses and what events were coming up to plan their next visit.
 - Motion to approve the agreement between Visit The Woodlands and Market Street passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 vote abstained (Director Taylor).

12. Receive, consider and act upon 2023 legal services for The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau;
 - President Wolda requested to renew the contract with The Strong Firm and continue their use as Visit The Woodlands legal services. The Strong Firm has given Visit The Woodlands a reduced rate of 30%. The Strong Firm also maintains a close location to Visit The Woodlands and support of the community.
 - Motion to renew The Strong Firm as Visit The Woodlands legal services passed unanimously.

13. Receive, consider and act upon establishing a Destination Development Needs Assessment;
 - President Wolda opened the discussion talking about the importance of visitor spending in The Woodlands which makes up approximately 55% of the Township Budget.
 - He also addressed that competition has heated up in the Marketplace as other communities are trying to replicate offerings in The Woodlands.
 - President Wolda deferred to Chairman Brad Bailey who requested this item to be on the Agenda.
 - Chairman Bailey opened the floor for discussion about new ideas on how to bring overnight visitors to our community. He wants to reimagine the Christmas experience during November and December.
 - Vice Chairman Domenick said The Woodlands Waterway Marriott discussed a concept of a destination fee. This program promotes the destination and ensure heads in beds. Vice Chairman Domenick expressed his desire to work with attractions like TreeVentures and RivaRow Boat House on this endeavor. Not every guest has to pay the fees, but they could add the fees onto the cost of their stay if they are interested.
 - Director Nelson said that Grapevine, TX has a Christmas celebration that is very well established and well done. She also visited Peddler's Village in Pennsylvania, which had a shopping and Holiday experience in their town center that encouraged shop owners to decorate their storefronts and inspired visitors to spend time and money in the destination.
 - Director Taylor said that Visit The Woodlands should look at ticketed events that are exclusive during a longer term commitment of an ongoing event from November through December. She said the Dallas Galleria conducts a Snow Day with a small village and a train with Santa. Director Taylor advised looking into 3rd party vendors that are event producers, that they could help with this. She also suggested looking into IFEA for ideas.
 - Director Klepac said that she attended the APAC Conference, where there are over 500 exhibitors, including event producers. One example she shared was a Pixar themed mini golf that is created and carried out solely through a vendor.
 - Mr. Strong reminded the Board that The Woodlands Township takes ownership of The Woodlands Waterway in the near future.
 - Chairman Bailey directed staff to research tourism experts who can help determine needs as well as develop an action list.
 - Motion to establish a Destination Development Needs Assessment passed unanimously.

14. Staff Initiative Reports;

Executive Director Elizabeth Eddins updated the Board on how she and staff members Ashley White and Josie Lewis will be speaking at TACVB Winter Conference this week. Ms. Eddins also wanted to congratulate Visit The Woodlands on winning the Smart Meetings 2022 Platinum Choice Award. She also mentioned that Visit The Woodlands will have Luxury Advertisement Placements in several magazines including Vogue, Condè Nast Traveler, and Architectural Digest.

15. 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;

16. No Executive Session;

17. President's Report;

- President Wolda announced that Visit The Woodlands is the Title Sponsor of Taste of the Town which will be on January 26, 2023. Visit The Woodlands will have a 10x30 photo booth area at the event. The planning for the chevron classic is in full swing and Visit The Woodlands is working closely with The Township and IMG to ensure a successful event. The Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas competition will be back in The Woodlands this year, this time as the IRONMAN Americas Championship, which will bring in top competitors from Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and South America.
- Director Nelson mentioned that Memorial Hermann IRONKIDS will be April 15, 2023 at Northshore Park.

18. Board Announcements;

- Director Taylor announced that Market Street will have several openings in the next few months including Sixty Vines, Bosscat Kitchen & Libations, Rhone, Omega, and Real Luxury Cinemas. Kendra Scott moved to their new location and opened their Sip and Sweet's component as well.
- Chairman Bailey announced that Visit The Woodlands and the Township will be working together on launching a video series for the websites and social media about hotels, restaurants, and business around the community.
- Director Nelson announced that the Economic Outlook Conference will be February 24, 2023. During the conference, there will be a panel of business leaders discussing why they chose The Woodlands for their headquarters. Visit The Woodlands will have an expo booth during the Economic Outlook Conference.
- Vice Chairman Domenick announced that The Woodland Waterway Marriott Hotel is adding three new rooms on the 14th floor, formerly the Concierge Lounge. The Concierge Lounge has moved to the first level in the restaurant area. During the three-month renovation this past summer, The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel scored in the top 3-5% in key metrics of the Marriott Brand last year and was ranked #11 in staff service out of 335 Marriott Hotels.
- Director Klepac announced there will be about 40 Live Nation shows performing at The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion this concert season. Before February 1, 2023, about 25% of those shows will be announced. The Performing Arts series with The Houston Symphony will be back to a full season this year. The Pavilion is replacing all Season Seat box seats this year with new ones.

19. Agenda items for next meeting;

None.

20. Adjournment at 9:46 a.m.;

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

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

Date