



**March 8, 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 March 8, 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 Marketing Director; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Sales Director; Mary Murphy, TWCVB Tourism Coordinator; Nick Wolda, TWCVB President; Julie Quinn, TWCVB Servicing Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Coordinator; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Sales and Servicing Coordinator; Gabby Pena, TWCVB Administrative Analyst
- Attendees: Kellan Shaw; Director of Finance, Tuan Nguyen, The Woodlands Township Help Desk Analyst, Ryan Callison, Madden Media, Karen Conner, Madden Media, Chris Nunes, The Woodlands Township Chief Operating Officer, Jenny Carattini-Wright, The Woodlands Art Council Executive Director, Dario Pallotta, The Woodlands Art Council Operations Coordinator, Kayla Trascher, The Woodlands Art Council Administrative & Event Coordinator, James Stilwell, The Woodlands Art Council President, Glen Rector, The Woodlands Art Council Vice President

1. Pledge of Allegiance;

Led by Chairman Bailey

2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Motion by Director Linda Nelson, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks (ABSENT)

3. Public Comment;

James Stilwell, President of The Woodlands Arts Council, expressed his thanks for a great partnership with Visit The Woodlands for The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival, an event that brings in visitors to hotels and is a long-standing favorite for locals.

4. Receive, consider, and act upon a proclamation recognizing the impact of the Lunar Planetary Science Conference in The Woodlands Township;

Vice Chairman Domenick read the proclamation. He mentioned that The Woodlands Waterway Marriott is fully booked the week of this conference due to the Lunar Planetary Science Conference (LPSC). Josie Lewis, Director of Sales, pointed out that this convention has selected The Woodlands for 17 years and welcomes over 1,800 lunar and planetary scientists from around the world. Mrs. Lewis invited the Board to visit the LPSC Food Truck Village from March 13-16, 2023, from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. on the Gold Lot at The Pavilion.

Josie also recognized Julie Quinn, Servicing Specialist, for her efforts and thanked the Marketing Team for their collateral and digital support for the event.

5. Receive, consider and act upon a proclamation in support of Global Meetings Industry Day on March 30, 2023;

Chairman Bailey read the proclamation. Mrs. Lewis shared that, Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) is an International Day of Advocacy to showcase the impact meetings, conferences, and events have on people, businesses, and communities. Mrs. Lewis shared, in celebration of GMID, the Sales Team will be coordinating GMID specific partner meetings to ensure the hospitality community knows their efforts make an impact in The Woodlands. In addition, the Sales Team is developing the first ever Meeting Planner Round Table to be held on March 30, 2023. This event will bring together seven local meeting professionals and the Visit The Woodlands Sales Team to discuss industry updates and trends, and how to become better partners to encourage new booked business. Mrs. Lewis invited the Board to wear blue on March 30, 2023, in honor of GMID.

6. Consider and approve Minutes from the January 18, 2023 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion to approve the minutes passed.

Motion by Vice Chairman Fred Domenick, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks (ABSENT)

7. Consider and approve Financial Report through December 2022;

Kellan Shaw, Township Director of Finance, delivered the Financial Report. At the end of December, actual revenues totaled \$2,320,257, compared to a \$2,507,330 budget, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$187,073. The Supplemental hotel tax revenue showed a favorable variance of \$295,364, offset by an unfavorable variance in operating transfers of \$490,641. 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 December totaled \$2,494,349, compared to budgeted expenditures of \$2,757,330. The favorable variance of \$262,981 is primarily attributed to lower than budgeted contract services, and a savings in salaries and benefits due to open positions earlier in the year.

As of December 31, 2022, the undesignated fund balance for Visit The Woodlands was \$1,231,103.

Motion to approve the Financial Report through December 2022 passed.

Motion by Director Linda Nelson, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks (ABSENT)

8. Receive, consider and act upon amending the Service Agreement between The Woodlands Township and The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau doing business as "Visit The Woodlands" to address sponsorships by Visit The Woodlands that include requests to utilize Township facilities (C-2022-0484A);

Bret Strong, Legal Counsel, presented this Agreement to the Board. Chairman Bailey asked when this structure came to be and why. Mr. Strong explained events at Township facilities impact the community and there is a cost involved for events to use facilities. This structure allows Visit The Woodlands to consider participation by reserving Township facilities to generate sales and hotel tax for the community.

Motion to approve the amendment to the Service Agreement between The Woodlands Township and Visit The Woodlands passed unanimously.

Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks arrived during this agenda item.

Motion by Director Linda Nelson, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

9. Receive, consider and act upon strategic partnership with The Woodlands Arts Council in regards to The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival;

Chairman Bailey requested this agenda item be discussed after Executive Session.

After Executive Session, President Nick Wolda presented this item for the Board to consider Visit The Woodlands entering into a Facilities Sponsorship with The Woodlands Arts Council to produce The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival.

The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival is recognized as the #6 fine arts festival in the nation based on

artist sales (source: The Art Fair Source Book). Now in its 18th year, The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival is expected to draw 20,000 visitors.

In prior years, The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival had a Host Venue Agreement with The Woodlands Township for use of The Woodlands Waterway, Town Green Park, Town Center Parking Garage, and Waterway Square. The five year Host Venue Agreement with The Woodlands Arts Council and The Woodlands Township expires this year, 2023. The Woodlands Township Board of Directors voted in 2018 to discontinue Host Venue Agreements once they have expired and designated Visit The Woodlands to evaluate any future sponsorships received from third party organizations. In these instances, when a request is received, Visit The Woodlands is tasked with evaluating the economic benefit of hotel utilization, hotel and sales tax collection, and overall economic development generated by the event/festival. Visit The Woodlands would then consider requests for support of an event/festival that includes a request for use of Township facilities and related services owned and/or operated by the Township and, if agreed upon, would pay for or in part the associated costs. The Woodlands Arts Council requested the following dates over a five year period to utilize The Woodlands Waterway and Township facilities for the production of The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival:

April 12-14, 2024

April 11-13, 2025

April 10-12, 2026

April 9-11, 2027

April 7-9, 2028

Motion to approve the strategic partnership with The Woodlands Waterway Arts Council passed unanimously.

Motion by Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

10. Receive, consider, and act upon a strategic partnership with IMG in regards to the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) The chevron championship;

Chairman Bailey asked what the benefits were with bringing the LPGA to The Woodlands. Executive Director Elizabeth Eddins told him that Visit The Woodlands commercials will be played nationally throughout the weekend along with many other benefits that are still being negotiated. Visit The Woodlands will also obtain B-roll footage that can be used to promote the event in future years.

Director Nelson mentioned she met with IMG and discussed The chevron championship. IMG is impressed with the support the event is receiving from The Woodlands. As the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas is the same weekend, all hotels are fully booked and LPGA players are having a hard time finding places to stay. President Wolda added that the agreement with IMG will allow Visit The Woodlands to have full use of the chevron championship name to be used in promotion of its destination efforts.

President Wolda also thanked Dr. Chris Nunes for all of his hard work in securing transportation for the tournament.

Motion to approve a strategic partnership with IMG passed unanimously.

Motion by Director Linda Nelson, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

11. Receive, consider, and act upon Visit The Woodlands participation in IPW 2023 in San Antonio, Texas;

Ms. Eddins compared this tradeshow to the Tourism Superbowl. This networking event is where destinations can meet with supplier organizations, travel buyers, and travel journalists. Visit The Woodlands will have a double-booth that focuses on nature in The Woodlands. This is a big selling point for The Woodlands as we are an oasis and nature forward destination where visitors feel safe and comfortable here for both leisure and business.

Motion to approve Visit The Woodlands participation in IPW 2023 passed unanimously.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Cameron Klepac

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

12. Receive, consider, and act upon an update from Madden Media, Agency of Record for Visit The Woodlands;

Ryan Callison and Karen Connor from Madden Media presented a quarterly report to the Board. They discussed The Woodlands' year-over-year hotel performance and congratulated The Woodlands for excelling above the competition with high ADR, RevPAR, and Occupancy Rates. Mr. Callison noted Madden Media has the ability to see what other tourism entities are putting into the market and developed Visit The Woodlands' creative with a competitive edge, breaking through the 'noise' that other tourism entities are putting into the market. Mr. Callison also discussed Madden Media's primary goals for expanding the Visit The Woodlands' brand and reach in 2023, which includes geo-fencing key events and conferences, developing high impact digital ads, targeting affluent audiences in Mexico, and creating elevated destination product specialties. Chairman Bailey asked Madden Media about the ability to compare Visit The Woodlands' overall performance to its competitors. Mr. Callison clarified comparing Visit The Woodlands' performance directly to other destinations is difficult due to different organizations having different budgets for marketing. However, Madden Media is able to look at the performance of creative for different destinations and speculate why it is failing or succeeding. Motion to approve the update from Madden Media passed unanimously.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Linda Nelson

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

13. Staff Initiative Reports;

Ms. Eddins presented on Visit The Woodlands' International Promotion opportunity with Chic Magazine to promote Mexican markets. They spent a few days in The Woodlands experiencing different attractions, dining at several notable restaurants, and interviewing various chefs, such as Austin Simmons of TRIS and The Kitchen. Ms. Eddins reported that Visit The Woodlands staff and Board members traveled to Austin with the Texas Travel Alliance, and met with Legislators to advocate for Texas Tourism efforts. The tourism industry in The Woodlands employs over 2,300 people and brings \$11.6 million in local taxes annually. Visitors annually spend about \$253.6 million while in The Woodlands. Marketing Director, Ashley White, reported on the current projects for Asset Development which include 'Word from the Chairman' video series and storytelling video series. Visit The Woodlands was recently able to capture footage from the Texas Travel Alliance Unity Dinner and the Economic Outlook Conference. Upcoming projects include Lunar Planetary Science Conference, Global Meetings Industry Day, LPGA The chevron championship, and Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Americas Championship. Mrs. White reported that the Marketing Team has been busy building landing pages for Visit The Woodlands' website, including landing pages for Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Americas Championship, LPGA The chevron championship, and St. Patrick's Day offers. Microsites were built for the Lunar Planetary Science Conference and Global Meetings

Industry Days. Amber George, Communications Coordinator, finalized Visit The Woodlands' 2023 Social Media Ambassador, *Becky's Travel List*. So far, Becky has promoted The Woodlands on her social media by posting content about Texas TreeVentures and The Woodlands Public Art Walking Tour. The 2022 Social Media Ambassador, *Sincerely Karin*, is still collaborating with Visit The Woodlands and recently posted about Kirby Ice House and North Italia. Mrs. White reported that the second issue of the *#SoWoodlands* publication will be sent out soon. In this issue, there will be 'This is the Life': Brad Bailey; 'How it Began': Waterway Arts Festival; 'New in Town': Art Benches; 'Why The Woodlands': TRIS and IRONMAN; 'The Impact': Memorial Hermann IRONMAN and LPGA: The chevron championship; 'Q&A': Josie Lewis; and 'Then & Now': The Woodlands Waterway. Visit The Woodlands' recent media placements in *Texas Monthly*, *City Lifestyle Magazine*, *Community Impact*, and *Prevue Meetings + Incentives Magazine*. Mrs. Lewis reported that the Sales Team has conducted four site tours, 127 leads generated, and 21 groups that have booked so far in 2023. She discussed lead volume increased significantly since January and emphasized the positive impact and incredible timing of the Sales Team's size increase to allow for the increase in lead development and momentum. Mrs. Lewis shared, since the start of the year, the Sales Team has traveled across the country at six different sales shows to promote The Woodlands. Mrs. Lewis thanked Ashley Fenner, Senior Sales Specialist, who represents Visit The Woodlands at many industry tradeshows. Mrs. Lewis reported on the upcoming events and projects for the Sales Team, including the Lunar Planetary Science Conference from March 13-17, 2023. She invited the Board to join staff at the LPSC Food Truck Village Monday through Thursday. She also mentioned Global Meetings Industry Day is March 30, 2023, and requested the Board wear blue in support of Meetings Matter. Mrs. Lewis reported Julie Quinn, Servicing Specialist, is actively developing new promotional items to be used at upcoming tradeshows, area activations, and local strategic leisure events. Mrs. Lewis praised Julie for her efforts in working the wedding market and developing impactful partnerships in this market. Motion to approve the staff initiatives report passed unanimously.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Linda Nelson

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

14. 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;
15. Reconvene in public session at 10:36 a.m.;
16. President's Report;  
  
President Wolda congratulated Ashley Fenner, Senior Sales Specialist, on her five years working for The Woodlands Township and Visit The Woodlands.
17. Board Announcements;  
  
Chairman Bailey mentioned that Texas TreeVentures will be reopening soon adding 17 new elements to the already existing 75.
18. Agenda items for next meeting;  
  
None.
19. Adjournment; Motion to adjourn at 10:46 a.m. passed unanimously.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Richard Franks

**Vote:** 7 - 0 Passed

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

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Date