

**MOTIONS PASSED AT THE COMBINED BOARD MEETING, Tuesday, April 11, 2023**

Approved Consent Agenda  
**Ms. Pease/Mr. Walsingham**

Approved Action Item A  
**Ms. Pease / Mr. Casto**

Approved Action Item B  
**Mr. Casto / Ms. Pease**

COMBINED BOARD MEETING  
Bay County Tourist Development Council  
Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.  
Panama City Beach

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Council Room, PCB City Hall

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman Chester called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Seven Members Present

Mr. Wilkes & Mr. Jansen were Absent

A. Invocation

Mr. Chester gave the Invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Pease led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minutes)**

None

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approve 2023 Turtle Watch & Leave No Trace Contracts

B. Acknowledge Receipt of the February 2023 Tourist Development Tax Collection Report

Mr. Rowe read the consent agenda into the record.

**Ms. Pease moved; seconded by Mr. Walsingham to approve the Consent Agenda.**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. House Bill 7053 & House Bill 979 Review, Dan Rowe

Mr. Rowe began with discussing House Bill 979. He said this bill could disrupt our ability to do beach renourishment by adding vague provisions of having to have an outside third party contractor to come in and do an analysis of the environmental impact of any renourishment project. He also said this is more of a dredging bill than beach renourishment bill, but we have been tagged in the bill. He stated where the bill is with regards to committees and that he believes it will not move through the House. He said that our Representatives understand how the bill would work against the renourishment work and that it would add very unnecessary provisions and make our projects much more difficult. Mr. Rowe also stated that the bill is opposed by many beach front communities across the state.

Mr. Rowe then discussed House Bill 7053. He said that this bill is the most destructive bill proposed in years that deals with the Tourist Development Tax and funding for Visit Florida. It will move the funding the Visit Florida out of the state revenues and on the TDT from around the state. The larger population TDC/CVB's over 75,000 would have to pay five percent of their total collections to Visit Florida for a period of three years. After three years, that would become an optional payment to

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Visit Florida. Of those dollars, 75 percent would have to be used for rural communities and state parks. For Bay County, that would only include St. Andrew's and Camp Helen State Parks. Counties such as Walton County that are rural counties would be the beneficiary to a larger portion of those funds.

Mr. Rowe said that this isn't the most problematic part of this bill. The other part of this bill eliminated the ability of the county commission to increase the TDT tax rate. He said that last year we qualified for the sixth penny and that after this goes into effect it would take a referendum of the voters to pass that sixth penny. Also, this bill would eliminate the county commissions ability to bond any of the TDT proceeds by requiring a referendum of the voters, effective July 1, 2023 if it passes. He stated as an example that the bonding of the Sports Park could not have happened if this bill was in place at that time.

Mr. Rowe stated that the most problematic portion of this bill is that it proposes that every six years the TDT would be up for renewal by the voters. The only exception would be for TDT funds used to secure a bond prior to the effective date of the bill.

He discussed the political atmosphere for the bill as well as the expected outcome of its movement. Mr. Rowe answered questions from the board.

#### B. FY 2023 Mid-Year Review, Dan Rowe

Mr. Rowe gave a summary of the first half of the year regarding revenues as well as trends in visitor bookings and demand drivers. He discussed how the destination would benefit from a convention center and that it may be time to begin those discussions and add it to the strategic plan. Especially with the potential negative effects should HB 7053 pass.

Mr. Rowe also discussed that the sports park review will take place at the next board meeting. He then answered questions for the board.

## VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Discuss and Consider for approval, funding of Bay Way Sunday service in support of workforce development, and send to the BOCC for consideration.

Mr. Rowe stated that this request is vital to enable service industry workers to be able to work on Sundays. The loss of these workers on Sunday will greatly impact the services provided to the tourism industry for that day. This is for a two year commitment only, then will be paid by the county. Mr. Rowe answered questions from the board. Mr. Patronis asked that the amount paid is the shortfall of revenue which includes the bus riders ticket purchase. Mr. Rowe said he believes the numbers shown reflect that and he will make sure it does. Ms. Pease spoke about the Sunday service being very important as the majority of service workers live in town. She said they can't afford to take a ride share to a job on the beach from town and the services needed are critical to the quality of the visitor experience. Mr. Rowe confirmed for her that this commitment is only during the tourist season for two years. She also discussed the visitor surveys reflecting dissatisfaction in room cleanliness began during the pandemic and is a critical component to maintain visitation. Mr. Rowe suggested to make the second year funding contingent on the success of the first year regarding ridership of the hospitality and service industry workers. The board agreed. They also discussed the CRA front beach road project. Ms. Pease made the motion to fund year one up to 125,000 dollars, net loss to include the ticket revenue collected, with year two to be reviewed based on the ridership of year one.

**Ms. Pease moved; seconded by Mr. Casto to approve.**

**Motion passed unanimously**

B. Discuss and consider for approval the establishment of Foundation for Parks and Recreation Community Support, Inc.

Mr. Rowe discussed the nexus of parks and tourism. He said this foundation would be a vehicle for other investments and donations by individuals and organizations to enhance parks. This would act as a conduit for those funds as well as the TDC to allocate funds for capital improvements to parks that could be recognized separate of other projects. Ms. Pease stated that she saw the need throughout the county parks and that local residents and organizations needed a way to help and this foundation is the way. Mr. Rowe stated that all CVB funds used for any park improvements will continue to be brought before the board to approve and will have to meet all legal guidelines for use of funds. The foundation will be able to go out for funding from individuals and organizations. Mr. Casto stated this will be a great tool to help our community.

Mr. Rowe asked that the motion be made to include 100,000 funds from the tourist development budget to establish the corporation and marketing & branding.

**Mr. Casto moved; seconded by Ms. Pease to approve.**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**VII. PRESIDENTS REPORT**

Mr. Rowe said there will be an amendment to the St Andrews School lease to move it to being leased to Destination Panama City, which will keep it under the TDC umbrella. This lease will function similarly to the Sports Park lease with the county.

He also stated that the design for the indoor sports center is progressing. The architects will be in town and he invited the board members to come be part of that meeting.

**VIII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**NONE**

**IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**NONE**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Cook, Recording Secretary