

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURIST
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

Regular Meeting - June 8, 2021 - 3:00 PM

Ernie Lee Magaha Government Building , Board Chambers, 221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 32502

1. Call to Order - Chairman Bear

2. Public Comment.

Butch Hanson – Spoke on behalf of the Chappie James Memorial Foundation to request assistance in funding the General Chappie James memorial plaza. The presentation depicted where the statue would be located and information that highlights his career. Their budget for this project is about \$940,000 dollars and they are requesting \$300,000 in funding to go towards the memorial plaza.

Commissioner Bender discussed looking at the budget and potentially carving out some funds to go towards this project.

Board member Reeves discussed a few ways the TDC could provide funding to assist with this project.

Chair Bear expressed excitement in the project and encouraged discussion including the possibility of assisting in this project.

Reeves motioned for the board to support the furtherance of the Chappie James memorial.

Commissioner Bender stated that there could not be action taken on a public comment item.

The motion failed due to a lack of a second.

3. Approval of Prior Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes

Motion: Move to approve minutes
For Information:
Made by:Reeves
Seconded by: Bender
Disposition: Unanimous approval
Speaker(s):

I. a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 2021 Meeting - Chairman Bear*

That the Board approve minutes from previous meeting

4. Status of Funds Available, TDC Collections and Receipts – Clerk & Comptroller Office

Motion: Move affirmative
For Information:
Made by:

Seconded by:
Disposition: Carried unanimously
Speaker(s):

I. a. Information on Status of Funds Available

Mike Davis provided an update to the Tourist Development Council on available funds. As of May 24, 2021 there was \$5.7 million available in TDT revenue. Chair Bear asked for clarification on the financial audit trail and asked about the collections of the fifth cent. He asked for an update regarding the expenditure audit trail. Mike Davis will look over the material to make sure all information is correct and up to date.

5. New Business

I. a. American Rescue Plan Act - Chairman Bear

b. Bay Center Update - Michael Capps

c. State of Pensacola Tourism – Joseph St. Germain and Erin Dinkel, Downs & St. Germain

d. Updates from County Administration - Wesley Hall, Assistant County Administrator

e. Visit Pensacola Updates - Darien Schaefer, Visit Pensacola

f. Updates from Pensacola Sports, ACE, Naval Museum and UWF Historic Trust

a. Administrator Gilley discussed the American Rescue Plan act and updated the board on the amount of funding they are requesting to be allocated to the TDC. She also discussed the restrictions and preliminary spending plan for the American Rescue Plan dollars.

b. Chair Bear recognized Cyndee Pennington on her retirement and thanked her for her service and dedication to the Bay Center for the past 36 years.

Cyndee thanked the board for the recognition and stated she has had a wonderful journey and looks forward to enjoying her retirement. She stated she would be assisting in the transition of Michael Capps into his position as general manager of the Bay Center.

Michael Capps updated the board on the events at the Bay Center. He stated they have had several graduations and discussed the technological updates in the Civic Center as well. The manager's food and beverage departments are being updated. The bookings at the center are constantly improving and have a variety of shows booked. They have opened at 100% occupancy as well.

Board member Patel encouraged the Bay Center to host more ballroom/wedding events to increase the number of individuals utilizing the Bay Center and booking rooms locally in Pensacola. He was excited to

hear that the Bay Center is working towards hosting these types of events. Chair Bear congratulated Mr. Capps on his appointment as the General Manager of the Bay Center.

c. Downs and St. Germain's research was hired by Visit Pensacola to research the reasons tourists choose Pensacola as their vacation destination. During their update, the agency discussed the state of tourism in the Pensacola area. They discussed the importance of tourism, the journey to recovery, emotional connections when referring to Pensacola's tourist, and research initiatives. All the research that is used was gathered by visitors who vacationed in this area. The economic impact visitors have made to the Pensacola area was a little over 1.4 billion. The beach, water, and relaxation of Pensacola is what resonates most with tourists and the agency encouraged an emphasis on beaches when advertising. The beach is how Pensacola differentiates from other destinations. There were more than 900 individuals included in the first study, and it encompassed both first time and returning visitors.

Commissioner Bender made several comments regarding the presentation and expressed the importance of understanding this information and the key reason tourist come to Pensacola and asked questions regarding the agency's research on air travel.

Chair Bear expressed the importance of diversifying our messaging to tourists to ensure that even if natural disasters strike, our tourism industry is not solely dependent on the beach. He encouraged the continuation of advertising to different tourism industries such as advertisement geared towards cultural tourists and diversifying their tourist base.

There were no further comments or questions for the group and Chair Bear thanked the agency for their presentation.

d. Assistant Administrator Wesley updated the board on the Minority Business Expo. The conference is projected to have almost 200 attendees and is a highly anticipated event. He also invited all the TDC members to attend and would like this to be an annual event.

e. Darien Schafer updated the board on Visit Pensacola's marketing efforts and introduced new staff members joining the Visit Pensacola team. Schaefer updated the board on TDC collections and stated that revenues are up. Projections and trends are showing similar growth and are expected to trend upwards. The requested amount for the 2022 unified budget is \$9,582,500. This is 62.3% of the total estimated TDT receipts of \$15,375,000 based on all five cents. Visit Pensacola is asking to receive fifth cent dollars this year and the following fiscal year to spend the dollars in the most efficient way. Visit Pensacola is requesting the support of the TDC to use the excess funding to develop an emergency marketing fund. They would like to develop a capital improvement fund to assist in emergencies and unexpected circumstances. Schaefer updated the board on grant funding and will provide updates to the board as he receives more information.

Commissioner Bender asked the board to have an additional meeting in

July to review the budget and develop a recommendation to provide to the BOCC for the upcoming budget workshops.

Visit Pensacola updated the board on their marketing efforts and the way they spent their funding. Some funding was used on the coastal value promotions marketing plan to increase the amount of air travel to the panhandle area, the campaign is called the fly market support campaign.

f. Nicole provided an update on FooFoo Fest. The team is looking forward to the event and looks forward to partnering with various agencies to market the event.

6. Other Business

I. a. Audit and Agency Update - Chairman Bear

Chair Bear updated the board and informed them that audit letters have been sent to the Auditor General Sherrill and the Joint Legislative and Auditing Committee. There is no action that needed to be taken. Chair Bear wanted to provide the board with updates. Ms. Johnson will forward all documentation and emails to the board members.

Chair Bear thanked Zenani Johnson for her service to the County and the TDC . He welcomed Tina as the new liaison for the TDC.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 pm.