

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TDC)

The Indian River County (IRC) Tourist Development Council (TDC) met at **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 22, 2024**, in the County Administration Building, Building A, Commission Chambers, 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting, review the agenda or Minutes on the IRC Website.

Present were: **Chairman Joseph Flescher**, Indian River County Commissioner, District 2; **Linda Moore**, City of Vero Beach, **Jennifer Bates**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Karen Mechling**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative; **Will Collins**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Keith Kite**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Steve Hayes**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative; and **Amanda Smalley**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative.

Absent was: **Christopher Nunn**, City of Sebastian.

Others Present were: **John A. Titkanich, Jr.**, County Administrator; **Kristin Daniels**, Office of Management & Budget Director, **Elise Kriss**, Senior Budget Analyst; **Ben Earman**, Director of Tourism & Marketing at Visit Indian River; **Krista Hoyt**, Visit Indian River; **Nicholas Sanzone**, Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce; **Jody Van Order**, Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce Operations & Tourism Assistant; **Ruth Stanbridge**, Indian River County Historical Society; **Rick Hatcher**, Play Treasure Coast; **Robyn Berry**, Special Events Coordinator Vero Heritage Center; **Stephanie Bunker**, Vero Heritage Center; **Kendra Bergman**, Coastal Connections; **Yvonne Steere**, Cultural Council; **Sheila McAvoy**, Cultural Council; **Penny Chandler**, Indian River County Historical Society; **Larry Winter**, Treasure Coast Vacation Rentals; and **Ashley Brown**, Recording Secretary.

Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Flescher called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at which time it was determined there was a quorum present. Chairman Flescher led the pledge of allegiance and welcomed all those in attendance.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the Agenda.

ON MOTION BY Ms. Moore, seconded by Ms. Smalley, the Council unanimously (8-0) approved the Agenda as written.

Approval of the Minutes of February 21, 2024

The Minutes were approved with no additions, deletions, or edits requested.

ON MOTION BY Ms. Mechling seconded by Ms. Moore, the Council unanimously

(8-0) approved the February 21, 2024 Minutes.

Authorized Uses of Tourist Tax Revenue per Florida Statute 125.0105(5)(a)

County Administrator, John A. Titkanich, Jr. filled in for County Attorney, Bill Debraal, and discussed Florida Statute 125.0105(5)(a). Firstly, Chairman Flescher informed committee members that this year there is no budgetary excess, rather, there is a deficit. For this reason, committee members will have a tough job in determining how the funds are allocated. Mr. Titkanich then explained that the core purpose of the Tourist Tax Revenue is to promote tourism.

Individuals that visit and patronize Indian River County stay in our hotels. These hotels pay a tax which is the revenue source for today's meeting. The Tourist Development Tax is sometimes referred to as resort tax, bed tax, local option tourist tax or transient rental tax. Indian River County has a Tourist Development Tax Rate of 4%. Every person who rents or leases living accommodations including hotels, apartments, RV parks, condominiums, timeshares or single-family homes (rented for a period of six months or less) is subject to the tourist development tax.

Tourist Tax Revenue Update – Kristin Daniels, Management & Budget Director

Elise Kriss, Senior Budget Analyst, provided revenue updates. She broke down the 4 cents allocations: there are 1 and 2/3rd cents for Tourism Development Agencies; 2 and 1/12th cents for Beach Restoration and 1/4 cent for Jacke Robinson's Training Complex lease obligations. March collections were down \$29,256, or 4.4% compared to the last fiscal year. Year-to-date collections are down \$243,508, or 8.1%. However, revenues are above budgeted projections by \$11,336, or 1.8% per month, and \$315,084 or 12.9% compared to the budget year-to-date.

Mrs. Daniels compared the revenue by month for the last four fiscal years. We are slightly below last year. As far as the annual review, we are currently at \$2,758,783. Last year, the total that we collected was \$4,879,316. While there is a trending decrease, the County tends to budget conservatively so we are still exceeding the budget slightly. Mrs. Daniels clarified that we are not in a position where we are eroding the fund balance. There is a slight change in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 overall Tourist Tax budget since the interest income is expected to be higher. As such, Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget is \$1,700,631, which is a \$21,850 or 1.3% increase in funding.

Description of Tourist Development Grant Ranking Sheets

Mrs. Daniels explained to committee members that the provided funding request books include all applicant requests. She noted that the proposed request from all agencies exceeds the available funding by \$52,941. She also pointed out that the two Chambers will provide their presentations during the August meeting. Furthermore, funding is based upon a ranking system: a maximum of 10 points for the packet, a maximum of 10 points for the presentation, a maximum of 50 points for the program impact on tourism, and a maximum of 30 points for the effective use of tourism dollars. The total maximum points available is 100. Each of the nine voting members will assign points which will be tallied. The agency with the highest overall total points will receive the highest ranking with the subsequent rankings to follow. The highest total points available to earn is 100 on an individual basis or 900 when tabulated. This ranking system is put in place to help if any funding shortfalls are to occur.

2024-2025 Budget Presentations

Chairman Flescher discussed the main reason for today's meeting— presentations by five local agencies. He reminded committee members that Indian River County Chamber and Sebastian River Area Chamber will present at the next meeting on 08/21/2024. *Recordings of the budget presentations are maintained on file in the Board of County Commission office.*

The following representatives from each Agency presented and answered questions from council members:

1. Sheila McAvoy, Cultural Council of Indian River County
2. Ruth Stanbridge, Indian River County Historical Society
3. Rick Hatcher, Play Treasure Coast Sports Tourism
4. Robyn Berry, Vero Heritage, Inc.
5. Kendra Cope Bergman, Costal Connections, Inc.

Following the completion of the final presentation and subsequent inquiries, TDC members submitted their rating sheets for the Budget Department to tabulate.

At 4:47 PM, Chairman Flescher announced that the Council would take a 10-minute break.

At 5:03 PM, Chairman Flescher called the meeting back to order.

Discussion of Budget Requests for 2024-2025 Fiscal Year

After taking a short break, committee members discussed the allocations of funds. As there is a deficit of \$52,941, not all agencies will be able to receive their full request. Upon a lengthy deliberation, committee members voted on the following fiscal distributions:

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL Fiscal Year 2024/2025 TDC's Funding Recommendation

Organization	2023/2024 Funding	2024/2025 Recommendation	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
Indian River County Chamber of Commerce	\$932,170	\$926,748	(\$5,422)	-0.6%
Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce	\$212,530	\$252,143	\$39,613	18.6%
Cultural Council	\$65,000	\$40,000	(\$25,000)	-38.5%
Historical Society	\$32,000	\$45,000	\$13,000	40.6%
Treasure Coast Sports Commission	\$280,000	\$270,000	(\$10,000)	-3.6%
Vero Heritage	\$34,000	\$30,600	(\$3,400)	-10.0%
Coastal Connections	\$15,000	\$11,000	(\$4,000)	-26.7%
Sub Total	\$1,570,700	\$1,575,491	\$4,791	0.3%
Reserve for Contingency	\$108,081	\$128,081	\$20,000	18.5%
Grand Total	\$1,678,781	\$1,703,572	\$24,791	1.5%

ON MOTION BY Ms. Bates, seconded by Mr. Hayes, the Council unanimously (8-0) approved the funding recommendations listed above.

Other Matters

Ms. Bates commended the performance of the Blue Angels that recently visited Vero Beach.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:44 p.m.

Next Meeting Date

The next Tourist Development Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the County Administration Building “A”.**