

ATTACHMENT A

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Williamsburg Tourism Council Meeting
January 21, 2020

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING

Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg, Virginia

January 21, 2020

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Williamsburg Tourism Council (WTC) was convened at 1:00 p.m. on January 21, 2020, at the Williamsburg Lodge, City of Williamsburg. A quorum was present with the following attendees:

Tourism Council Members Present:

Jeffrey D. Wassmer

Ruth Larson

Doug Pons

Neal Chalkley

Michael Claar

Kevin Crossett

Susan Bak

Kevin Lembke

James Horn

Cheri Green

York County Board of Supervisors

James City County Board of Supervisors

Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg

President, Williamsburg Hotel & Motel
Association (WHMA)

Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association (WARA)

VP of Strategic Communications, Colonial Williamsburg

Senior Director of Marketing and Retail Operations,
Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF)

President, Busch Gardens/Water Country USA

President and Chief Officer, Jamestown Rediscovery

Chair, Board of Directors, GWCTA

Staff Members Present:

Vicki Cimino

Julie O'Neil

David Turner

Jodie Lumley

Jill Pongonis

Dave Potter

Julia Smyth-Young

Mikey Jasiczek

CEO

Marketing Communications Director

Finance Director

Executive Assistant/Operations Manager

Familiarization Tour Coordinator

Industry Relations Manager

Sales Director

Marketing Manager

I. Call to Order

Jeffrey Wassmer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mickey Chohany was represented by Michael Claar.

Rita McClenny was not in attendance.

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Minutes

Wassmer requested a motion to approve the December 17, 2019, meeting minutes. Doug Pons motioned and Neal Chalkley provided a second. Minutes were approved.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Ruth Larson noted that the revenue label "SB 942" will be changed to "Sales Tax (58.1-603.2)."

Larson shared Year-to-Date financials (through November 30, 2019).

Revenue/Expenses:

- Sales Tax revenue (SB 942/\$58.1.603.2) is \$3.2 Million over budget
- Transient Tax is \$338,000 over budget
- Expenses are \$1.3 Million under budget
 - Larson explained billings were not yet received, noting program evaluation and staffing

Cash on Hand:

- Total = \$7.5 Million
- Over budget by \$375k
 - Maintenance of Effort funds were not received at close of November, however the first payment of \$750,000 was received in December

Transient Tax:

- September 2019 Total = \$152,301
 - A 24% increase from September 2018 total of \$123K

Sales Tax:

- September 2019 Total = \$933,606
 - September 2019 realized a 6% increase over September 2018
 - Larson noted that the third quarter of 2019 saw a 6% increase over the third quarter of 2018

Monthly Finance Meeting:

- Larson reminded the Council that the finance meeting is held on the second Thursday of each month; all are invited to attend

Smith Travel Research:

- Cimino reviewed "Current Month" November 2019 vs. November 2018 report
 - Occupancy was up less than one percent
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR) and Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) had increased over November 2018
 - Neal Chalkley stated that occupancy is the best the destination has experienced since November 2007

V. Executive Director Report

A. Hiring

- Cimino introduced two new staff members:
 - Sales Director – Julia Smyth-Young
 - Marketing Manager – Mikey Jasiczek
- Public Information Officer and additional sales positions are to be posted
- Cimino stated that the Personnel Handbook is in progress and is being modeled after the Virginia Tourism Council; completion date should be on or before January 31, 2020

B. Procurement

- Research and Advertising Agency of Record procurement processes are complete and contracts have been awarded
- Requests for Proposals (RFP) have been issued for internal strategic planning, mail house distribution, and audit services
- An RFP for legal services is in draft form
- Jeff Wassmer inquired if Commonwealth policies had been followed; it was confirmed that the Department of General Services procedures were followed

C. Marketing/Communication

- Cimino noted that the strategy, advertising, website, search engine optimization, and content were in the process of transitioning to the advertising agency of record, Connelly Partners
 - Susan Bak asked if the public relations would still be handled by Precepture and that was confirmed
- The region earned media coverage from “Southern Living,” “Bob Vila,” “Cheapism,” “Country Living,” “Times Union,” “The Daily Meal,” and more
 - There were 12 media placements that resulted in 40.7 Million impressions
- Cimino stated the 2020 Spring campaign, “Checks Every Box,” would speak to the variety of activities offered within the destination
 - Bak noted that while there was an overall budget increase in 2020, the spending level for spring remained the same as 2019
 - Cimino responded that more resources would be devoted to summer
 - Kevin Lembke noted that any budget adjustments should be rooted in strategy to ensure funds are invested appropriately
 - Bak mentioned that April is JYF’s busiest month, primarily due to groups
 - Ruth Larson added that the Council should trust the process and the team that was put in place until given reason not to
- Cimino outlined plans for future asset captures
 - Previous asset captures included millennials/summer, family/fall, family/holidays
- Cimino noted the Ad Effectiveness/ROI study result rollout is pending

D. Tourism Forum

- Cimino shared plans for a Tourism Forum tentatively scheduled for May 2020
 - General session followed by four concurrent sessions
 - Location is to be determined

E. Comments

- Kevin Crossett inquired if brand identity development is included in Connelly Partners' scope of services
 - Cimino verified that branding is a deliverable included in the agency's scope
- Crossett also mentioned that it would be beneficial to make note of the \$45 million art museum expansion
- Bak requested to receive more information on media strategy, plan, and creative, noting that she is the main point of contact for the JYF marketing group
 - Wassmer suggested a separate meeting be convened
 - Larson disagreed, citing decisions are to be made by Tourism Council staff
 - Doug Pons encouraged more communication between various marketing groups
 - Wassmer agreed
 - Cimino reiterated that Connelly Partners joined the Visit Williamsburg team less than a month ago
 - As plans are finalized, she/staff would be happy to meet with suppliers on a one-on-one basis

VI. Chair Report

Wassmer has requested a meeting with Senator Norment; he planned to discuss HB1270. Wassmer noted the bill would sunset the tourism tax.

Larson commented that the bill has passed subcommittee and went on to the Finance Committee.

Wassmer proposed that meetings of the Williamsburg Tourism Council be moved from every month to every other month. Larson motioned. Pons provided a second. Motion passed.

Cheri Green asked that meetings in which budget will be discussed are scheduled to run longer than the standard 60-minute meeting.

V. Old Business

None.

VI. New Business

None.

VII. Adjournment

The next meeting will take place on March 17, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. at the Stryker Center.