

ATTACHMENT A

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

March 19, 2019
Williamsburg Tourism Council

**WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL
MEETING
STRYKER CENTER, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA
March 19, 2019
Meeting Notes**

A meeting of the Williamsburg Tourism Council was convened at 1:00 p.m. on March 19, 2019 at the Stryker Center, City of Williamsburg. A quorum was present with the following attendees:

Tourism Council Members Present:

Honorable Jeffrey D. Wassmer,	District 4 Supervisor, York County Board of Supervisors
Honorable Ruth Larson,	Chair, James City County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Mitchell Reiss,	President, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
Doug Pons,	Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg
Neal Chalkley,	President, Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association
Kevin Lembke,	President, Busch Gardens Williamsburg
Mickey Chohany,	Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association/Second Street Restaurant
Philip G. Emerson,	Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
Jeanne Zeidler,	Chair, Board of Directors, Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance

Staff Members Present:

Jody Puckett,	Administrator, Tourism Council
Dave Potter,	Director, Marketing Communications, Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance
Joanna Skrabala,	Associate Director of Digital Marketing, Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance

I. Call to Order

Jeff Wassmer calls the meeting to order.

II. Public Comment

There are no other public comments.

III. Minutes

The minutes for the February 19 meeting were approved.

IV. Executive Director Announcement

Mr. Wassmer announced that Victoria Cimino will be the Executive Director for the Tourism Council. He said she is excited to start and will begin April 15.

V. Treasurer's Report

Jody Puckett reported on the updated revenues and expenses. She presented the information a little differently, as based on last meeting's feedback. The cash projections slide showed more details as to how the money is being used. The checking account has a little over \$3 million and interest is being accrued in this account and the money market account. The reserve funds were still being processed and had not yet been credited to the account.

Ms. Puckett reported that the transient tax was down for January, but the SB 492 taxes through December 2018 showed an uptick.

She also reported that all processes had been reviewed by local CFOs, are being reviewed by the auditors, and will be implemented by April 1.

VI. Committee Reports

Bylaws Committee

Mr. Chohany reminded the group that the bylaws were to be something foundational and were intended to be modified as needed. Mickey requested the lawyer, Greg Davis, explain items that needed clarification.

Mr. Davis said bylaws refer to the "Virginia Tourism Alliance," which is not a real organization; however, courts and lawyers would rely on intent and would recognize this entity as being legitimate. He said the name would be fixed in the future.

Mr. Davis said the draft bylaws stated that meetings would be held after 3 days' notice and special meetings would be held after 2 days' notice. This would be changed to 2 days' notice for both.

Mr. Davis stated there was a question about calling a closed session and whether it would need to comply with FOIA regulations. He said these would not apply to the Tourism Council for now and closed session could be called by the majority of the council.

Mr. Davis said there was a provision in the draft to allow Council members to take action without a meeting. Because this is a common and expedient way to handle matters, it would remain in the draft.

In the draft, Mr. Davis said that the Tourism Council could establish committees as needed on their own, with consideration to the Executive Director. The draft would also allow the Executive Director to hire staff without the approval of the Tourism Council.

Mr. Pons asked if there was a question about whether the Tourism Council was considered a public body. According to Mr. Davis, the intent of the legislature was to create a body that would not be burdened with the legalities of a public body; however, a written opinion about this is being pursued by legislative services.

Mr. Davis said that because the Tourism Council is a body of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, the bylaws would need to be approved by the Alliance.

Mr. Chohany questioned if the GWCTA should have a vote on the Tourism Council to be more inclusive. Mr. Wassmer agreed that both entities should be treated with equality; however, the Tourism Council must also adhere to the state code.

Ms. Zeidler said that once the Tourism Council's bylaws are approved, she should take to the GWCTA. She said the Business Council was close to finishing their bylaws, as well.

Mr. Emerson questioned the term limits and member terms.

The bylaws were voted on and approved with the following amendments. There would be no term limits for members; it would be left up to the organization to appoint council members. The bylaws can only be changed with two thirds votes of the voting members.

VII. Marketing Director Update

Dave Potter reported on the "Funexpected" campaign and presented the TV spots that started airing March 15.

Mr. Potter presented PR highlights, including 38 million impressions with 16 media placements, 15 travel writers, 5.4 million impressions in social media, plus the continued success for introducing Instagram stories and Pinterest.

Mr. Potter reported that the LPGA Pure Silk Championship will be presented by Visit Williamsburg, allowing the destination more access in other markets for advertising.

Key dates for planning including June 19 (beginning process), August 20 (strategy approval), and October 15 (plan and budget approval).

Mr. Potter stated that staff worked with the advisory groups and agency partners to create an enhanced marketing plan.

Michelle Evans from Watauga Group presented an enhanced media plan with a \$2.5 million increase to add more media – digital, TV, OTT, and print – to proven, planned, and new markets.

Mr. Lembke asked what percentage of the \$2.5 million would be going to new markets vs. saturation in current markets. Ms. Evans said that more than half would go to saturation in current markets.

Mr. Pons asked what the group hoped to accomplish with the additional spend.

Ms. Evans said that the increase in spend would put an enhanced focus on that ROI metric. She recommended another proposal for a marketing mix model. At this time, Mande Harvey from Luckie presented a research plan to increase overnight visitation, based on a statistical model to identify drivers. The collection phase would start as soon

as possible and would be used for next year's planning. The cost for this project would be \$375,000.

Mr. Emerson asked if there was a price alternative. Mary Winslow from Luckie said that the conversation study could be scaled down to decrease costs.

This project would work alongside the SIR research component to ensure that efforts would not be duplicated.

At this time, Mr. Potter presented additional spend recommendations in PR, including a proposal to bring the TODAY Show to Williamsburg, live satellite tours with Emily Kaufman, and more press trips.

Because of the new Executive Director coming very soon, Mr. Wassmer asked what needed to be decided at this meeting and what could wait. Mr. Potter recommended the group approve the additional media spend, the research marketing model, and the satellite tours.

Mr. Chalkley stated that he thought the group was being too premature and all should wait until the new Executive Director arrives. Mr. Pons stated that the group didn't want to miss the summer season.

Mr. Emerson requested a motion to approve a \$2.4 million spend, including \$2 million to media, \$275,000 to research, and \$125,000 to PR.

Mr. Wassmer asked that agencies present if this amount would work; Ms. Winslow said it would work, but not be as effective due to scaling back.

Mr. Wassmer said that if approved, the group can always come back and shift money and spending, if need be.

Mr. Pons requested a motion to approve a \$2.4 million increase, but upping research to \$375,000 and decreasing media to \$1.9 million.

The second motion passed.

VIII. Administrator Update

Ms. Puckett presented the steering committee for the SIR research project. Neal requested to be added to the committee, as well.

IX. Presentation

At this time, Mike Giardino, the Executive Director of the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport presented.

X. Chair Report

Mr. Wassmer announced that there will be a Tourism Forum on Thursday, May 2 from 4 – 6 pm at Busch Gardens. This will a good time to introduce our new Executive Director to the community.

XI. Old Business

There was no old business.

XII. New Business

There was no new business.

XIII. Closed Session

XIV. Adjournment

The next meeting will be April 16, 2019, 2:30 pm, at the Stryker Center.