

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE

June 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mark C. Burt, Marie Pound, Peter Fikas, Neal Patel, Andrew Thomas

Absent: Angela Emerson

City representatives: Amanda Rowan, Kelly McMullen, Taylor Gray, Tracy Hegler

Mr. Mark Burt called the meeting to order. The FY 22-23 meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fikas made a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Pound seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

City Manager Tracy Hegler introduced herself, City Treasurer Ms. McMullen, and City Grants Specialist Ms. Gray. Ms. Hegler updated the Committee on the changes made to the 30% designee guidelines. In the past City staff would choose and approve the designees to receive the 30% marked for tourism advertising required by the State. The State has changed it to fall under the Accommodations Tax Committee's purview. While historically the local Chamber received the greatest amount, they were also the only agency applying. In recent years, Experience Columbia has begun to market the City and Lake Murray Country began marketing the City as well without Accommodations Tax funding. Both are now applying. City Council has requested the Committee not only to review these applications but review the "Return on Investment" (i.e. what is the money being used for, how is that impacting Cayce, and how is it encouraging tourism to the Cayce area). The Committee should vote on what percentage of the 30% each of the three entities will receive. If the Committee is unable to determine the return on investment, they may request City staff to ask the agency to submit additional information for clarity.

Mr. Patel remarked that he was concerned that some of the requesting groups were not contacting the local hotels before their events. Chairman Burt suggested including something in the application packets that required the event's flyer to list of hotels and restaurants and include that in their packet. Mr. Patel suggested that if a group was utilizing social media they could send the links and screenshots of that advertising. Ms. Hegler explained that once awarded a grant the groups received an award letter and conditions could be added to that letter. Chairman Burt asked for clarification on the current amount that can be awarded. Ms. McMullen stated that after deductions required by the State, \$58,633.57 was available for tourism funding.

Chairman Burt asked the Committee to begin voting on the 30% designees. Mr. Fikas asked if the Chamber's request \$98,980.00 was a typo. Ms. Rowan stated that she confirmed with the Chamber that was the correct requested amount. Chairman Burt asked the Committee to review Lake Murray County's application. Ms. McMullen stated the Lake Murray Country received 25% of the 30% funds last year. Mr. Patel made a motion to award Lake Murray Country 30% of the 30% fund this fiscal year. Mr. Fikas seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Burt asked the Committee if they wanted to award the same amount to Experience Columbia. He suggested in the future having a representative of each of the 30% designees attend the meeting and explain what they do to market the City of Cayce. Mr. Patel made a motion to award Experience Columbia 35% of the 30% fund, leaving 35% for the Greater CWC Chamber. Mr. Fikas seconded. The motion passed. Mr. Fikas then made a motion to award the Greater CWC Chamber the last 35% of the 30% funds and Ms. Pound seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Committee then reviewed the Accommodations Tax Report for FY23-24. It was noted there was currently approximately \$58,633.57 in the account and \$50,850.00 in requests. Next the Committee reviewed the Accommodations Tax Funding Requests for FY23-24. Chairman Burt asked what the ad specialty items were used for. Ms. Rowan explained they were promotional items given away at various City events. She stated that the Police Department would like to start promoting the City by giving away advertising specialty items at their events when they are performing community outreach. Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the ad specialties for the City, Ms. Pound seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Patel made a motion to approve the full amount for the Police Department ad specialty items, and Mr. Fikas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Airport High School requested funds for FY23-24 for the Girls' Junior Varsity and Varsity Soccer Tournaments in the amounts of \$2,500.00 each. Both events were noted to bring in tourists and visitors from 50 miles outside of Cayce. Mr. Burt noted that the applications failed to check which hotels were contacted. He stated that in the future he would like to require the events to contact local hotels and restaurants or advertise them in their marketing. Ms. Gray said this could be added to the award letters moving forward as a condition of the award. She also suggested the City create a sample application and post it online, to show groups how the application should be completed. Ms. Rowan stated that in the past, applications have always been mailed out, but with the new form software they could now be posted online with certain fields required before the application could be submitted, preventing incomplete applications in the future. Ms. Pound asked if it was a legal requirement that participants stay in local hotels. Ms. McMullen stated it was not a law and they were not required to stay locally but events would be required to highlight the local establishments. Mr. Patel asked if there was a way to make local establishments aware of these events. Ms. Gray suggested that after Council approve the Committee's recommendations to award a social media post could be created detailing who was awarded and for what event. Chairman Burt stated that while the Committee could approve the grants this year, moving forward those conditions would need to be met. Ms. Gray suggested approving this year so as not to confuse the applicants. Ms. Pound made a motion to approve the request for the Girls' JV Soccer Tournament, Mr. Thomas seconded. The motion was passed unanimously. Ms. Pound made a motion to approve the Varsity Tournament request and Mr. Thomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the Cayce Fall Fest for the full requested amount of \$15,000.00 and Ms. Pound seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Burt noted that the Public Safety Foundation was requesting funds for a new event. Ms. Rowan gave a brief explanation of the Pickleball event. Chairman Burt requested that their award also include the special conditions of advertising local hotels and restaurants. Mr. Fikas made a motion to approve the requested \$2,550. Ms. Pound seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Cayce Serves was also a new event request for FY 23-24. Mr. Fikas made a motion to approve the request for \$2,300. Ms. Pound seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tartan Day South has requested \$17,000 in their application. Chairman Burt suggested the Committee approve the requested amount. Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve Tartan Day South's request for \$17,000 and Ms. Pound seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Total requests submitted equaled \$50,850.00. Total amount recommended was \$50,850.00

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned, with Mr. Fikas making a motion to adjourn and Ms. Pound seconding.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Rowan