

TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES MARCH 28, 2024

Commissioner Victor Iverson called the meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:30 AM on Thursday, March 28, 2024, in Conference Room #182 of the Washington County Administration Building, 111 East Tabernacle, St. George, UT. Those in attendance: Tourism Tax Advisory Board: Dorothy Heers, Brett Burgess, Kevin Smith, Rich Stehmeier, Tracey Welsh and Ken Neilson. Other attendees include Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Commissioner Victor Iverson, Tourism Director Brittany McMichael, and Tourism staff members Sara Otto, Joyce Kelly, Jamie Allen, Leslie Fonger, Chad McWilliams and Heath Hansen.

WELCOME

Commissioner Victor Iverson welcomed all in attendance and determined that a quorum existed for voting on action items.

CONSIDERATION OF JANUARY 25, 2024 MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to approve the January 25, 2024 Minutes.
Motion seconded by Rich Stehmeier and carried by a unanimous vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2024 hotel occupancy through February is even with 2023, down -7% from 2022 and down -5% from 2021. RevPar through February is down -4% from 2023, down -7% from 2022 and up 9% from 2021. ADR through February is down -4% from 2023, equal to 2022 and up 14% from 2021. 2024 Zion National Park visitation through February is up 8.4% from 2023 down -14% from 2022 and down -20% from 2021. St George Regional Airport visitation through February is up nineteen percent 19% from 2023, up thirty-two percent 32% from 2022 and up 49% from 2021.

Tourism Advisory Board Chair, Commissioner Iverson, moved agenda item number nine to agenda item number four due to time constraints.

ZION NATIONAL PARK UPDATE

Heath Hansen, Greater Zion Regional Tourism Regulatory Affairs Director, spoke about updates within Zion National Park. He stated that the park has begun construction on parts of its road, planning to improve traffic flow within the park. He also stated that Washington County is working on plans to help mitigate some parking congestion at the park's South entrance.

CONSIDERATION OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS

ST. GEORGE CITY DIXIE SUNBOWL

St. George City is seeking up to \$2,000,000 for the reconstruction and renovation of the Dixie Sunbowl.

Shane Moore, St. George City Parks and Recreation Director explained that the Sunbowl's current state is too large for rodeo and event needs. He presented a plan to reconstruct and renovate the Sunbowl to feature a standard rodeo space, more seating, a concert courtyard, and improved ADA accessibility.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to recommend up to \$1,750,000 of requested funds to reconstruct and renovate the Dixie Sunbowl, of which \$1,000,000 comes from Transient Room Tax (TRT) funds and \$750,000 comes from Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention (TRCC) funds.
Motion seconded by Ken Neilson and carried by unanimous vote.

HURRICANE CITY 4-PLEX GYMNASIUM

Hurricane City is seeking \$1,500,000 to complete construction of its four-plex gymnasium complex. This project is part of a larger sports complex that will allow more out-of-area tournaments to visit Hurricane City.

Tiffani Wright, Hurricane City Recreation Director, explained that the project will complete the construction of a two-story recreational facility that will house four basketball courts or twelve pickle ball courts.

MOTION: Motion by Dorothy Heers to recommend up to \$2,000,000 to fund the completion of the Hurricane City 4-plex gymnasium of which \$1,000,000 comes from Transient Room Tax (TRT) funds and \$1,000,000 comes from Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention (TRCC) funds.
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF MARKETING PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS

Sara Otto, Greater Zion Marketing Manager, presented a marketing partnership of \$20,000 with Local Studio to promote and tour the Forever is Now Film, a film about stewardship in Zion National Park, including Greater Zion messaging at the beginning and end of each show.

MOTION: Motion by Tracey Welsh to approve up to \$20,000 for a Marketing Partnership with Local Studio.
Motion seconded by Rich Stehmeir and carried by unanimous vote.

Chad McWilliams, Greater Zion Sports and Adventure Sales Manager, presented a marketing partnership of \$100,000 with Trail Hero for the title sponsorship of its 2024 Trail Hero and Trail Hero Music Festival event, including weekly broadcasts of the Greater Zion stewardship message and additional targeted messaging of the Greater Zion area throughout the year and during the event.

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to approve up to \$100,000 for a Marketing Partnership with Trail Hero.
Motion seconded by Tracey Welsh and carried by unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING REQUESTS:

Non-Profit Sporting Event Requests

The Huntsman World Senior Games is seeking \$55,000 to promote and market the 2024 World Senior Games. The recommendation is \$55,000.

MOTION: Motion by Rich Stehmeir to approve funding as presented.
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by unanimous vote.

D-1 Prospects is seeking \$6,000 to offset field rental costs during its Hurricane Heat Fastpitch event. The recommendation is \$6,000.

MOTION: Motion by Brett Burgess to approve funding as presented.
Motion seconded by Tracey Welsh and carried by unanimous vote.

American Fastpitch Association is seeking \$47,500 to offset field rental costs during its 2024 American Fastpitch Nationals tournament. The recommendation is up to \$18,000.

MOTION: Motion by Dorothy Heers to approve up to \$18,000 to offset field rental costs.
Motion seconded by Nate Wells and carried by unanimous vote.

Non-Profit Marketing Sponsorship Requests

Arts to Zion is seeking \$11,055.45 to print and distribute 80,000 gallery and museum maps. The funding recommendation is \$11,055.45.

The Silver Reef Foundation is seeking \$5,993.66 to print and distribute 35,000 Silver Reef Museum guides. The funding recommendation is \$5,993.66.

MOTION: Motion by Rich Stehmeir to approve funding as presented.
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by unanimous vote.

Non-Profit Event Funding Requests

The Film and Media Alliance is seeking \$2,000.00 to promote and market the Desertscape International Film Festival. The recommendation is \$2,000.00.

St. George Dance Company is seeking \$2,900.00 to promote and market the Red Rock Dance Festival. The recommendation is \$2,900.00.

Red Rock Music Association is seeking \$10,000.00 to promote and market its Southern Utah Blues Festival. The recommendation is \$10,000.00

Tuacahn Center for The Arts is seeking \$75,000.00 to promote and market its 2024 Broadway in the Canyon season. The recommendation is \$75,000.00

**MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to approve funding as presented.
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by unanimous vote.**

Brittany McMichael presented a request from the Jehovah's Witness Convention Group seeking subsidies of \$7,500.00 per weekend, up to four weekends, during their 2025 Summer conventions.

**MOTION: Motion by Tracey Welsh to approve subsidies as presented.
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by unanimous vote.**

TOURISM UPDATES

Joyce Kelly, Greater Zion Sales Manager spoke about the success of her Berlin sales mission, stating that the international luxury tourism market is increasing and that international visitors are excited about the release of the Horizon films.

Kevin Smith spoke about Tuachan's increased seating.

**MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to adjourn.
Motion seconded by Tracey Welsh and carried by a unanimous vote.**

The next meeting will be held on May 23, 2024.

Minutes prepared by Jamie Allen
Adjourned at 12:09 PM