Utah County Tourism and Tax Advisory Board Meeting
Monday, June 7, 2022 @ 11:30 a.m.
Utah Valley Convention Center

**Board Members Present:**
John Garfield, Marriott
Kevin Santiago, Communal
Chad Linebaugh, Sundance
Danny Wheeler, Utah Valley Convention Center
Jared Kearns, UVU

**County Representatives Present:**
Laurel Price, Utah County Commission Liaison
Bill Lee, Utah County Commissioner
Amelia Powers Gardner, Utah County Commissioner
Tom Sakievich, Utah County Commissioner

**11:40 a.m.** **Welcome and working lunch**
John Garfield welcomed everyone to lunch and turned the time over to Danny Wheeler for a Funding update.

**11:42 a.m.** **Funding Review Update- Danny Wheeler**
Danny provided an update on historical TRCC/TRT revenue. Looking back to 2012, we have seen Consistent steady growth through 2019 with a slight dip in 2020. 2021, however, saw a large increase in both TRCC and TRT funds.

Through the first quarter of 2022, we are seeing a 63% increase in TRT from 2021. January, February, March 2022 all record months for TRT funding.

John Garfield mentioned that this will be the most expensive year of travel probably in the history of travel. Hotel rates are skyrocketing. With staffing shortages in the hotel industry, the way to control occupancy is through rates. This will also spill over to other travel industries like airlines, culinary etc.

Danny gave a project update. In early 2022 UCCU seating update and Payson Forebay Trail were paid out. There are four projects that have been recommended by the TTAB Board and are waiting for commission action. Sky Nav, Explore Utah Valley, Saratoga Springs, North Marina, Rock Canyon Trailhead Improvements, Salem Connector Canal.

Commissioner Powers Gardner and Sakievich had a discussion about the projects that still need to get on the commission agenda. Commissioner Powers Gardner is going to follow up on the Sky Nav, Explore Utah Valley recommendation.

Danny mentioned that 2022 will be the first year that the total debt service bond for the convention center will be able to be paid out of the TRT and not have to roll over funds from the TRCC.

There was a brief discussion on the Freedom Festival funding and the tourism revenue that comes in from the Freedom Festival weekend for restaurants and hotels in the Provo area.

Danny also stated that there is an expectation that the car rental tax will go up with the opening of the Provo airport. There are currently four car rental counters at the airport and agreements with three car rental companies.

**11:55 a.m.** **Approval of Minutes**

John Garfield entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Chad Linebaugh made a motion to approve the minutes from February 7, 2022 and April 18, 2022. Kevin Santiago seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**12:00 p.m.** **Timpanogos Storytelling Festival**
**Project Funding Request: $27,500**
**Project Reviewer: John Garfield**
**Project Presenter: Jennifer Nelson| Debbie Richin|Bill Lepp**

Debbie gave an update on the festival. This September, 2022 will be 30 years for the festival. TSF Brings people from all over Utah as well as other states to Utah County. Bill Lepp is a favorite storyteller, and he mentions that TSF reaches more people than the national festival in Tennessee if you include the outreach to schools in the area. TSF is very family friendly and affordable for families.

One third of the TSF audience comes from outside of Utah County. Tickets are on sale for 2022 now and so far, 50% are from outside Utah County. Chad asked if all the events are taking place at Thanksgiving Point. Debbie mentioned that the main festival is at Thanksgiving Point. There is also still an online component for participants which will continue. TSF storytellers visit schools all over the county the week before the festival.

Danny asked what the $27,500 request goes to. Jenn said it will go toward advertising the event through social media, production of ads for advertising. TSF is requesting an increase of $5000 for this year. IN the past they have received $22,500. John Garfield asked what TSF would be able to do with more funding if they received more. Jenn said that they would hire a social media expert to push more out on social which is they're biggest advertising.

Bill asked what the capacity would be at Thanksgiving Point. Jennifer said they have plenty of room for growth at all of the venues they provide at Thanksgiving Point. Amelia asked how TSF would feel about partnering with Explore Utah Valley on advertising for the festival since that is what Explore Utah Valley does for the county all the time.

**12:40 p.m.** **TTAB Priority Listing & Additional Discussion**

Amelia mentioned that Explore Utah Valley has the tools to help with advertising and has great access to analytics and metrics so that they could provide the county the ROI on the advertising. There was a discussion surrounding this idea. Amelia mentioned we would need to talk to Lee Adamson and see what bandwidth they have and ideas on how they could handle this.

Danny Wheeler mentioned that the funding has gone to production costs for video advertising and so some of the funding would need to go to TSF for that. There was a discussion about how well attended and great the festival is for visitors. Also, it was discussed that because this is a top storytelling festival in the nation, it is a great idea for the county to support it.

John mentioned that he is getting a sense that there is an interest to fund the $27,500 and perhaps explore some advertising dollars through Explore Utah Valley. Ameilia was reaching out to Lee Adamson to get his ideas and suggestions. There was a discussion about collecting marketing metrics and analytics from Explore Utah Valley that could benefit several county events. Bill Lee made the point that all the organizations may not want to all work together, which is something to consider.

John Garfield said that he'll let the commission work on the potential advertising with Explore Utah Valley but as a board today, they'll entertain a motion on the $27,500 funding for TSF.

Danny Wheeler made a motion to approve the recommendation of $27,500 to the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival. Kevin Santiago seconded it. The vote was unanimous. Amelia clarified that the board would be willing to entertain a motion at a later time on the advertising dollars after working with Explore Utah Valley.

Danny Wheeler mentioned that we need to be sure that we are using TRT dollars first on tourism and promotion and making sure that the appropriate projects are coming out of the appropriate fund. Bill Lee said that Danene Jackson will ensure that the projects are paid out of the appropriate funds.

Chad Linebaugh extended an invitation to the board, commissioners and policy advisors for the Sundance Summer Theater VIP night on July 20.

Commissioner Sakievich restated that we need to have a year's worth of budget buffer in the TRCC budget.

Commissioner Powers Gardner stated that given people being done with COVID, it is nice to see the boon in tourism dollars but there are a lot of economic models that show a recession is coming. We should prepare for this and put some away.

Danny mentioned that the parking garage adjacent to the convention center is scheduled to open next month. It will be paid parking and there are discussions that are beginning for the daily rate. The county is part owner of the parking garage and so they will have a say in those discussions.

Next Meetings: August 1-Hyatt Place, Provo
October 3/December 5 11:30am-1:00 pm

**Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.**