



Town of Hilton Head Island
Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 9:00 am

MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Committee: James Fluker, *Vice-Chairman*; Richard Thomas, Stephen Arnold, James Berghausen, John Farrell and Margaret Johnson

Absent from the Committee: Julie Martin

Present from Town Council: William Harkins, Tamara Becker and Tom Lennox

Present from Town Staff: John Gruber, Deputy Town Manager; John Troyer, *Director of Finance*; Rene Phillips, *Web Developer* and Cindaia Ervin, *Finance Assistant*

Present from the Media: None

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. FOIA Compliance:

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Swearing in of Reappointed & New Members

a. James Fluker

Director of Finance, John Troyer, swore in reappointed committee member James Fluker. He congratulated him on behalf of Town Council and thanked him for his important role he will continue to serve in the community.

b. John Farrell

Director of Finance, John Troyer, swore in reappointed committee member John Farrell. He congratulated him on behalf of Town Council and thanked him for his important role he will continue to serve in the community.

c. Margaret Johnson

Director of Finance, John Troyer, swore in committee member Margaret Johnson. He congratulated her on behalf of Town Council and thanked her for her important role she will now serve in the community.

4. Crystal Award Presentation

a. Andrew Brown

Director of Finance, presented Mr. Brown with his Crystal Award. Mr. Brown served six years on the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and Mr. Troyer thanked him for his excellent service on behalf of Town Council.

5. Special Orders

a. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mr. Thomas made a motion to appoint James Fluker as Chairman. Mr. Arnold seconded. After discussion by the Committee, by way of roll call, the motion was approved by a vote of 6-0-1.

Mr. Thomas made a motion to appoint Stephen Arnold as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Farrell seconded. After discussion by the Committee, by way of roll call, the motion was approved by a vote of 6-0-1.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. Special Meeting-May 19, 2021

Chairman Fluker asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 19, 2021. Mr. Arnold moved to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Berghausen seconded. By way of roll call, the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1.

b. Special Meeting-May 26, 2021

Chairman Fluker asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 26, 2021. Mr. Berghausen moved to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Thomas seconded. By way of roll call, the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1.

7. Appearance by Citizens

Cindaia Ervin, Committee Secretary, stated that there was no written public comment; however, there was one request from a citizen to speak to the Committee by phone.

Skip Hoagland, *Windmill Harbour*, addressed the members of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee regarding his concerns of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, the Freedom of information Act and other issues related to the Town of Hilton Head Island.

8. Unfinished Business- None

9. New Business:

a. Discussion Regarding Potential Improvements to the Accommodations Tax Grant Application for 2022.

Chairman Fluker along with other Committee members felt that in the past years there has been confusion regarding the "Summary of Grant Requests" section of the Accommodations Tax Grant Application. The Committee felt that there needed to be a way for the Committee to retrieve the visitor and tourist's data and the applicant to provide the most accurate information. There was talk about adding improved definitions of visitors and tourists that will provide the applicant with how to distinguish the two. The Committee asked potential applicants that were in attendance, how best the information can be collected and provided; and many had thoughts that an improved definition would be helpful. They also came to a consensus that due to Covid-19 many organizations provided virtual options of attendance. While they understood that those were not "physical" attendees, they felt it was important to ask for that data also. Along with the improved visitor vs. tourist definitions, the Committee felt it was important to add website links for additional information that the potential applicant could use when applying to assist them in determining if Accommodations Tax funds are a suitable use for their organization. Those websites would guide the potential applicants to the State of South Carolina's Code of Laws for Accommodations Tax funds and the Tourism Review and Expenditure Committee (TERC)

frequently asked questions pages. The thought of the Committee was that while Town Staff assists with questions if needed, the potential applicant may have more specific questions that the websites would be able to assist with.

The Committee felt that adding the following to the “Summary of Grant Requests” section would be an improvement:

- A. Total Number of Physical Tourists Served:** _____
(A Tourist is considered a non-resident, traveling more than 50 miles to the Town of Hilton Head Island)

- B. Total Number of Physical Visitors Served:** _____
(A Visitor is considered a non-resident, who travels 50 miles or less to visit the Town of Hilton Head Island)

- C. Total Number of Physical Residents Served:** _____
(A Resident is considered any person who claims their property address within the limits of the Town of Hilton Head Island as their primary residence.)

- D. Total Number of Physical Patrons Served (A+B+C=D)** _____

How was the Number of Visitors Documented? (250 words or less)

(Please explain if you had virtual events and approximately how many visitors attended).

With those additions Mr. Fluker charged Ms. Ervin and Mrs. Phillips with updated the necessary information prior to the upcoming Accommodations Tax Grant Application. Mr. Arnold made a motion to approve the improved application recommendations. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion. By way of roll call, the motion was approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

10. Adjournment:

Chairman Fluker adjourned the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Submitted by: Cindaia Ervin, Secretary

Approved: August 12, 2021