

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Date: November 28, 2012 **Time:** 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Robert Stenhammer, *Vice-Chairman*; John Munro, Frank Soule, Trish Heichel, Stewart Brown, Mike Alsko

Members Absent: Bret Martin, *Chairman*

Council Present: William Harkins

Staff Present: Susan Simmons, *Director of Finance*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; Erica Madhere, *Finance Assistant*

Others Present: Various representatives from organizations that applied for ATAX Grants, members of the public

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. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Heichel moved to approve the Minutes of October 18, 2012. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously. (6-0)

4. Chairman's Report:

Mr. Martin was not able to attend, therefore Vice Chairman, Robert Stenhammer, led the meeting. Mr. Stenhammer thanked all of the Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant applicants for everything they contribute to tourism on Hilton Head Island. The Committee's objective is to maximize the return on investment of the ATAX grants, and the process is a difficult one as almost two million dollars was requested and roughly half that amount will be available for grants. He let the applicants know the committee's questions are meant to be inquisitive and not judgmental.

5. Unfinished Business:

a. Approval of 2013 Meeting Dates:

Mr. Stenhammer explained the dates have been reformatted in order to make the funds available to the grantees on January 1. Mr. Brown encouraged organizations to communicate with the Committee if the new format causes them to be in a quandary. Ms. Heichel moved to accept the 2013 Meeting Dates. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously. (6-0)

Ms. Simmons, Finance Director for the Town, approached the dais and informed the Committee that the amount available for the new 2013 grants will be determined very soon.

It will be derived from the actual revenue for the first three quarters and estimated revenue for the fourth quarter based on data from previous years combined with information on current trends in the local hospitality industry.

6. New Business:

a. Hearing of applicants

Mr. Stenhammer stated that the Committee would begin the hearing of applicants. The following applicants made presentations to the Committee:

1. Art League of Hilton Head Island
2. Hilton Head Wine and Food, Inc.
3. Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce
4. Hilton Head Island Institute
5. Hilton Head Island Airport
6. LoCo Motion
7. Hilton Head Dance Theatre
8. Hilton Head St. Patrick's Day Parade

During the presentation by the Art League, Ms. Heichel disclosed a potential conflict of interest and did not participate. The required disclosure form is attached.

During the presentation by LoCo Motion, Laura Morgan, President and CEO of Carolina Cups, requested to amend the purpose of the grant so that it would be used solely for a statewide marketing campaign, which would saturate key feeder cities with TV advertising for the event itself and Hilton Head Island as a destination.

The Committee broke for lunch at 12:07 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

9. Hilton Head Choral Society
10. South Carolina Lowcountry & Resort Islands Tourism Commission
11. Main Street Youth Theater
12. Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association
13. The Sandbox
14. Coastal Discovery Museum

During the presentation by The Sandbox, Anne Finn, Executive Director of Public Relations and Development, asked to amend its requested grant amount from \$70,000 to \$60,000 because The Sandbox strives to be a good neighbor in the community, and this reduction can hopefully help other organizations in need benefit from ATAX funding, as well.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Approved:

Respectfully submitted:

Robert Stenhammer, Vice Chairman

Erica Madhere, Secretary