



Board Meeting Minutes from January 20, 2022

Sussex County Council Chambers Room

In attendance: Anne Brown, Terry Carson (with proxy for Matt), Carol Everhart, Bonnie Hall, Jamie Hayman, Liz Keller, Maggie Lingo, Rob Marshall, Fred Mast, Bill Pfaff, Linda Price, Betsy Reamer, Jo Schmeiser, Lauren Weaver, Scott Thomas

1. **Call to Order time:** 9:33am by Bonnie H.
2. **Welcome and Introductions:** Bonnie H. welcomed everyone and those in attendance introduced themselves through alphabetical roll call.
3. **Approval of the October Meeting Minutes**
Motion by: Rob M.. **Seconded by:** Jamie H. **Passed by** the board.

4. Committee Reports

- **Finance** – Presented by Rob M.

The finance committee reviewed the 2nd quarter financial reports at our meeting 1/12/2022. In attendance were Rob Marshall, Scott Thomas, Bill Pfaff, Fred Mast, Matt Parker, Jamie Hayman and Bonnie Hall. Our revenue from the state lodging tax is again much better than predicted. The financials show that revenue is up 100% for the 1st two quarters over last year (12/31/20), and up 44.25% over 2 years ago (12/31/19). Fred looked back over prior years, and total revenue of \$1,049,627.60 was collected in the entire 6/30/17 Fiscal Year, which was the highest year of revenue collections ever for SDT. Currently through 6 months - SDT has collected \$1,271,113.62. As a reminder, generally we have received about 85% of our annual funds at this point. The numbers below are what is in

our accounts as of 12/31/21. Operating Account = \$592,422.04 restrictions include Culinary Coast funds = \$9,564.42 & Sussex County Buy Local Campaign = \$5,869.5 Net Amount = \$576,988.13 Reserve Account = \$94,446.88 (this includes the allocated reserve amount in the budget transferred in July) The financial statements should be more “normal” this quarter than they were last quarter, and therefore a little easier to understand/read. The monthly PAT checks from the State were all received this quarter and the distribution checks to all of the chambers were written out this quarter accordingly. The only item of note is the print publication line item that has not been allocated. We are rebidding the visitors guide and will update when committed. The finance committee recommends approval of the 2nd quarter financial reports. COMMITTEE NOTES: We discussed grant funding status. At this time Scott and staff have applied for approximately \$400,000 in potential grant funds. We also discussed one of goals for this year to create a policy for investing funds that will gain a return. We should have this available for board approval at our next board meeting. Much of our remaining discussion focused on our expected surplus. We estimate at this time that our surplus to be at least \$350,000 over projected revenues. This is barring a dramatic change to expected proceeds (hotel revenue) over the next 5 months. We feel comfortable authorizing \$100,000 to the marketing committee for committing to initiatives during the remainder of the 2022 FY. We would also like to ask the board to specifically put the remaining surplus issue on the retreat agenda. The Finance Committee plans to meet again on April 7, 2022 at 10:30am.

Motion to approve the 2nd Quarter Financial Statements by Rob M.,
Seconded by Jamie H. **Passed** by the board.

Motion to obtain board approval for appropriating \$100,000 of the current surplus to the Marketing Committee to utilize throughout the remainder of FY 2022 by Bill P., **Seconded by** Jamie H. **Passed** by the board.

- Rob M. informed the board that he has sold his business, The Atlantic Oceanside Dewey Beach Hotel & Resort, and will soon be stepping down from the RBDB Chamber Board as well as the SDT Board. Therefore a new Finance Committee Chairperson will be needed.

- **Policies & Procedures** – Presented by Bonnie H.

- Board vote to remove the “Greater Seaford Chamber of Commerce” and “Laurel Chamber of Commerce” and replace with “Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce” in Section 9 of the SDT Bylaws.

Motion by: Rob M., **Seconded by:** Bill P. **Passed** by the board.

- All weighed voting will remain the same in Section 9.
- Scott will update the SDT Bylaws
- Bonnie instructed Scott to incorporate some of the 501(c)6 non-profit information that Fred shared into the Board Orientation Binder.
- Bonnie recapped her meeting with Scott and Sheldon Hudson regarding the Millsboro Chamber of Commerce. Scott will work to schedule an Executive Committee meeting with the Millsboro Chamber Board in February – early March timeframe.

- **Marketing** – Presented by Bonnie H.

- Bonnie outlined and called out highlights of SDT’s Second Quarter Marketing Report and Publicity Value Chart that was distributed to the Board.
- Bonnie reported that Culinary Coast partner participation cost has increased from \$5,000 to \$6,000 and kickoff meetings are being arranged by SDT and Baltz & Co. for the 2022 PR Program.
- Bonnie indicated that the Marketing Committee meets next on February 8th and will prioritize its wish list that will include the \$100,000 surplus amount being utilized.

- **Advocacy** – Presented by Lauren W.

Affordable Housing:

Update from Kay Wheatley:

- State is conducting a needs assessment for each county
- There is no time frame for its completion
- Pete S. would like to see before he proceeds with the conversation.

Considerations:

- Housing on top of another building
- Rehoboth Area, Bethany Fenwick Area, Inland area (3 projects)
- Dan Bullock still interested from the developer side
- Asked to keep state-owned land in mind
- Land preservation money (?)
- Look at what Ag is doing to replicate incentives for landowners and builders
- Properties Identified (parcel #)

Update Troop 7 Location

Pyle Center

Substation Road-

STR Legislation:

- Pete S. recommended to Kay that she reach out to Danny Short and have him weigh in on House Republican Caucus support
- Kay and Scott met with Danny Short: he would be willing to support and he helped identify potential sponsors (Bill Bush, Valerie Longhurst and Michael Ramone were mentioned)
- Scott shared the legislation with Danny Short
- Scott is invited to SCOAR Rentals Affairs Committee on February 16

Next Steps:

Kay to reschedule meeting with Bill Pfaff & Planning & Zoning

Contact- Ron Gray, Gerald Hocker, Ernie Lopez, Steve Smyk (Individually)

Set up meeting w/ Sen. Hocker first

Dredging and workforce housing could be connected to legislation via General Fund earmarks

Make sure talking points are the same for each meeting

Kay to call Pete to update him on meeting with Danny Short

5) **DTO Report** – Presented by Liz K.

- Due to state employee Covid-19 travel restrictions, DTO staff has not attended any consumer travel shows
- Delaware awareness campaigns currently scheduled to run late February through June.
- Seeking more federal and state funds to assist tourism businesses
- The first week of May is National Travel & Tourism Week for which the DTO is planning to revamp its Delaware History Trail
- The DTO plans to have an updated toolkit for businesses to assist with Covid-19 response and marketing (available via its website portal early-mid February)

6) SDT Board Retreat on April 14

- Set for 8:30am – 4:00pm at the Bethany Beach Ocean Suites
- In March, Scott will send questions (from our facilitator, Maribeth Dockety) along with the DMO Shared Community Value Workbook to the Board in preparation for the retreat.
- SDT Advisory Board members and staff will be attending the retreat

7) Other Business / Announcements

- Scott announced that Caitlin Chaney's last day with SDT will be February 4th. She will be the Communications Specialist at the Center For Inland Bays.

8) Next Board Meeting & Retreat will be on April 14, 2022 from 8:30am to 4:00pm at the Bethany Beach Ocean Suites.

Meeting adjourned at 10:36am. Motion by Bill P., Seconded by Jamie H., Passed by the board