



**ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE MEETING
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MARCH 30, 2017 ♦ 4:00 P.M.**

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

1. CALL TO ORDER. Vice Chairman Harrison called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Harrison, and members Harbin, Lane-Laveglia, Livesay, and Martin were in attendance. Chairman Truett and member Servant were absent. A quorum was present. Others present: Administrator Fellner and Town Clerk Herrmann.

2. MINUTES APPROVAL. Ms. Martin moved to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2017 meeting as presented. Mr. Livesay second. All voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS. (3 minutes per speaker) There were no public comments.

4. BUSINESS.

i. Grant Request, Guy Daniels Foundation (the "Foundation"). A representation from the Foundation was not present. The committee discussed the grant application at length.

Ms. Martin said the Rotary Club's Turkey Trot gives money back to the town, but the Foundation continues to receive grant funds, and over the years has received in excess of \$36,200. Town records only go back to 2009; but her husband was a councilmember from 2002 to 2010, and he recalled giving the Foundation grant funds. In her opinion the Foundation has had lots of time to become self-sufficient financially and it should stop relying on the town's accommodations tax revenue. Ms. Fellner explained that the Turkey Trot was taken over by a for-profit company, although the Rotary Club still sponsors the event. The Foundation contributes to the town in other ways like paying all overtime for employees that assist with the event, providing trash cans at beach walkovers, painting access ways, etc.

Ms. Harbin moved to approve the grant request to the Guy Daniels Foundation, so additional discussion could be held. Ms. Lane-Laveglia second.

Ms. Harbin asked how much had been given in scholarships over the years. Ms. Martin said the website reports \$100,000 in scholarships to 16 needy students in Horry and Georgetown Counties. Ms. Harbin asked why tourists that participate in the event were not qualified for scholarships. No one present was able to answer the question. Ms. Martin continued saying Ms. Harbin made a very good point in that providing scholarships is not an allowable use for accommodations tax revenue.

Ms. Lane-Laveglia said there are tourists that come into town for the event. Ms. Harbin agreed saying that the realty company where she works receives reservations from tourists who come into town for this event, and rent a condominium near the place where the event is held. In her opinion, the event qualifies for an accommodations tax grant.

Chairman Harrison agreed saying the Foundation holds an event; it is not a business.

Mr. Livesay said at the last meeting there were comments about meeting deadlines in order to present a grant request. There were a few requests that met the deadline, but the Foundation did not submit its request timely. Chairman Harrison said applications for the next fiscal year are accepted from October 1st until December 31st annually. But, grant applications will be accepted any time. Ms. Herrmann noted that the Foundation's request is for the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, which should have been submitted by December 31st. It was received March 10, 2017 at 4:45 p.m. by the town clerk.

54
55 Chairman Harrison said that Mr. Servant and others expressed concern at the last meeting that no
56 representatives were present to answer questions about the grant requests. To be consistent with that concern,
57 that should be considered with this request.
58

59 Ms. Harbin asked when the grant amount increased from \$5,000 to \$6,500. Ms. Martin said in 2015 the
60 Foundation received \$5,000; 2016 it received \$6,500. Chairman Harrison said the committee could consider the
61 amount; the amount requested did not have to be approved.
62

63 Ms. Martin agreed to perhaps one half, or some other award, but not \$6,500. She encouraged the
64 committee to reduce the amount annually to encourage the Foundation to be financially self-sufficient.
65

66 Ms. Harbin suggested granting \$5,000, as she was not in favor of \$6,500. She did not support cutting the
67 amount in half, because she knows the benefits to the town, whether it is image, tourism, or participants. It is a
68 good investment in the town and its tourism industry.
69

70 Ms. Lane-Laveglia agreed with Ms. Harbin, but she personally knows people that come into town for the
71 event.
72

73 Ms. Harbin moved to amend her motion to award the Foundation a grant in the amount of \$5,000. Ms.
74 Lane-Laveglia second. Vice Chairman Harrison, and members Harbin, Lane-Laveglia, and Livesay voted in favor.
75 Member Martin voted against. **MOTION CARRIED.**
76

77 **ii. Grant Application Form.** Ms. Herrmann explained that the committee had not reviewed the grant
78 application form in many years. In light of comments made at the last meeting, the form was amended to include
79 that "Failure to submit expenditure reports shall result in withholding consideration of any further grant request"
80 for the committee's consideration as a way to make those who receive grants comply.
81

82 Ms. Martin moved to accept the recommendation to amend the grant application form to add "Failure to
83 submit expenditure reports shall result in withholding consideration of any further grant request." Ms. Harbin
84 second. All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**
85

86 After a discussion about requiring a representative to be present when grant request are considered, Ms.
87 Lane-Laveglia asked if there was any reason this should not be done. Ms. Fellner said no, there would be enough
88 time allowed for a representative to attend the meeting to speak on their behalf. Vice Chairman Harrison moved
89 to require that a representative be present to answer questions about a grant request. Ms. Martin second. All
90 voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**
91

92 **iii. Economic Development Website.** Ms. Fellner explained that the Chamber of Commerce is willing
93 to develop a website for the town, because it would have some applications for the tourism industry. The last
94 calculated balance was \$28,000; currently, the balance in the 5-percent money is probably about \$34,000. The
95 Chamber was not certain the 5-percent accommodations funds could be used, but he would check with the
96 Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (TERC.) Before Ms. Fellner met with Mr. Dean, she needed to know
97 whether the committee was interested in pursuing this. If not, it would be approached from a different
98 perspective when it is presented to Town Council.
99

100 Ms. Martin said after reviewing the links sent, she found nothing relating to tourism or tourism related
101 businesses. In her opinion, it was not an appropriate expenditure.
102

103 Ms. Fellner said a site would be developed specifically for Surfside Beach, which is why the 5-percent
104 monies could possibly be used. There is a very fine line; the town is trying to develop business, and at the same
105 time trying to attract people to come here. Attracting people to an event is different than moving a household or

106 business into town. I did not want to even open a dialog with Mr. Dean until the accommodations tax committee
107 had a chance to comment.
108

109 Chairman Harrison said everything he saw on the link and newsletter was about business. I would have a
110 hard time making a connection that would allow accommodations tax funds. After speaking with Mr. Truett today
111 (who also chairs the business committee) we both felt that the business committee members should discuss this.
112 "It's right up their alley." The overall concept is great, but how will you pay for it?
113

114 Ms. Fellner asked the committee member would they be willing to reconsider this should TERC respond
115 that the 5-percent moneys can be used for this purpose. Chairman Harrison said it depends on TERC's response.
116 He did not want to commit either way now.
117

118 Ms. Lane-Laveglia asked what part of this would qualify. Ms. Fellner said Conway's page does not include
119 much on tourism, but I see it as an integral component of our site, because that is who we are and what we do.
120 Tourism drives our economic engine. The entire site would not be funded by accommodations tax monies; only a
121 portion. The millennials do not want to read; they want YouTube videos, so they would be produced for different
122 town functions and uploaded to the site. That would have nothing to do with this committee; but there is a whole
123 component that will deal with tourism over which this committee would have input. There are many possibilities.
124

125 Chairman Harrison asked if this would be in addition to the town's website. Ms. Fellner said it would be
126 connected to the town's website, but would also have its own domain.
127

128 Ms. Harbin said she might be convinced to support the site, but it depends on the amount of money. Ms.
129 Fellner said it probably would not be a lot of money to keep the site up after the initial generation. The Chamber
130 has staff resources that will keep cost down. You can get a turnkey website today for \$8,000 that is pretty nice
131 with deep layers on it. For me, one of the most attractive points is the YouTube channel. We need a lot of videos
132 on the site. To create the site will probably cost about \$8,000, but maintenance should not be more than about
133 \$3,000 each year. Again, not all of that would be from accommodations tax funds; only a small portion, one-
134 eighth or one-fourth.
135

136 Ms. Lane-Laveglia asked if approval was sought today. Ms. Fellner said she just wanted to know if the
137 committee would consider this, if TERC allows the expenditure. Town Council also needs to consider this proposal
138 after a discussion is held with Mr. Dean.
139

140 Mr. Livesay believed one site was sufficient. In his opinion the information should not be diluted between
141 the two sites. He asked who was behind selling these sites. Ms. Fellner said she understands his concerns. The
142 two sites would connect to each other and the user would not know they were sent to a different site. The
143 connection would be seamless. It would be connected but separate for those who are not interested in
144 government business.
145

146 The committee **CONCURRED to hear additional information about an economic development**
147 **website.**
148

149 **6. PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

150
151 Mr. Ron Ott, 7th Avenue North: I guess I better be generalized on this, because council still votes on
152 some of this. I want to thank this committee for bringing the argument here. You're a watchdog group and you
153 bring the argument and argue it out in front of the people. That's transparency. That's what I like. As for money,
154 I like money being designated to how it's going to be used. I also like these ocean lifeguards. The ones that are
155 out there every day, and they stay still have to go through college, and stuff. I like to see scholarships for those
156 types of kids out there. And that's a pretty tough job. It ain't like sitting around the pool. Sometimes they've

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee
March 30, 2017

157 gotta go in that water, and I don't want to go in. But they have to go in. Thank you again for volunteering for this
158 job.
159

160 **7. COMMITTEE COMMENTS.** There were no committee comments.
161

162 **8. ADJOURNMENT.** Ms. Harbin moved to adjourn at 5:43 p.m. Mr. Livesay second. All voted in favor.
163

164 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Prepared and submitted by

166 Approved: _____
167

Debra Eaddy Herrmann, CMC, Town Clerk

168
169
170
171 _____
172 James S. Truett, Chairman – Member

173 _____
174 Randy Harrison, Vice Chair, Lodging Member

Kathryn M. Martin, Culture/Arts Member

175 _____
176 Carolyn Harbin, Committee Member

Melodye Lane-Laveglia, Committee Member

177 _____
178 Gary Livesay, Committee Member

E. J. Servant, III, Committee Member

181
182 Clerk's Note: This document constitutes action minutes of the meeting that was digitally recorded. Contact the
183 town clerk for appointments to hear audio; bring a flash drive to obtain a recording copy. In accordance with
184 FOIA, meeting notice and the agenda were distributed to local media and interested parties via the town's email
185 subscription list. The agenda was posted on the entry door at Town Council Chambers. Meeting notice was also
186 posted on the Town marquee.