



ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
9:00am, Friday, March 19, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom call due to COVID-19 Pandemic
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Rusty Williamson, Julise Spell, Doug Truslow, Ray Burns, David Nelson

Absent: Malcolm Burgiss

Staff Present: Asst. Administrator Hanna, Treasurer Suggs

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Nelson nominated Mr. Williamson as Chair of the ATAX Committee. There was no second for the nomination, but Mr. Williamson accepted the nomination.

Mr. Truslow nominated Mr. Burns as Chair of the ATAX Committee. There was no second for the nomination, but Mr. Burns accepted the nomination.

Mr. Williamson declined the nomination.

The nomination for Mr. Burns as Chair of the ATAX Committee passed unanimously.

Mr. Williamson nominated Mr. Truslow for Vice Chair of the ATAX Committee. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of the previous meetings' minutes – June 16, 2020 and February 11, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Burns made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting. Mr. Williamson seconded the motion.

VOTE: A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Spell, Nelson

Abstentions: Truslow, Burns

The motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Williamson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting. Mr. Truslow seconded the motion.

Mr. Truslow noted a technicality to the minutes under the nomination of Chair and requested his question regarding the budget process under the FY22 Budget discussion be added.

VOTE: The amended minutes of the February 11, 2021 passed unanimously.

3. Financial Statements – Treasurer Suggs

Treasurer Suggs stated the total ATAX fund balance is just over \$2M as of 2/28/2021. No additional payments have been received since the February meeting. Year-to-date expenditures are approximately \$212,000.

She reviewed a detail expense statement ending 2/28/2021. A brief discussion ensued around expenses for the upcoming Music in the Park.

MOTION: Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the expense as presented. Mr. Williamson seconded the motion.

However, since this item was not included on the agenda, it was determined that the approval for the event will be deferred to City Council. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Williamson rescinded the motion and the second respectively.

Treasurer Suggs said the \$25,000 budget line item the ATAX Committee oversees for distributions to approved applications is normally \$50,000, but it was reduced last year due to COVID. She expects that amount to return to \$50,000 in this year's budget. She did note that the Committee can approve requests that may total more than \$50,000 in a year if necessary.

4. Old Business -- none

5. New Business

A. Presentation by the Charleston Visitor's Bureau regarding the use of accommodations tax funding

Mr. Perrin Lawson, Deputy Director of the Charleston Visitor's Bureau, gave a presentation of how the monies they receive from the Isle of Palms are used to support the tax revenues created by visitors to the island. He shared some of the print and social media placements they have placed over the past year. He also revealed some projects they will be working on in 2021 including a new partnership with the Smithsonian magazine, a relaunch of charlestonexplore.com, and a redesign of the wedding guide and its website.

Mr. Lawson shared some revenue data, suggesting that the summer season for the Isle of Palms could be busy. He clarified the data is reflective of short-term rentals. Revenues from hotel accommodations are configured differently. He reported the CVB outlines its plans for the year in its Bureau Book, but the plans are fluid depending on needs of the area.

Discussion ensued as to how the Charleston Visitor's Bureau uses the monies it receives from the Isle of Palms and whether or not those monies are being used in a way that directly benefits the taxpayers on the island. Mr. Truslow said he would like to see more detail in the audit the CVB provides to the City each year.

B. Consideration of an application for funding by MUSC Hollings Cancer Center's LOWVELO bike ride event in the amount of \$10,000

MOTION: Mr. Truslow made a motion to defer the presentation for the LOWVELO bike ride event until the updated application is completed by the organization. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Burns, Truslow

Nays: Nelson, Williamson, Spell

The motion failed.

Shannon Rice gave a brief presentation about the event to be held on the island on November 6, 2021. She indicated that City Council has already approved the event, noting that the Fire Department has been very helpful. Mr. Truslow asked if this organization is listed as a 501(c)(3), and Ms. Rice said they were under the MUSC Foundation.

MOTION: Mr. Truslow made a motion to defer the vote on this until there is an updated application. There being no second, the motion failed.

MOTION: Mr. Williamson made a motion to approve the application grant as presented. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion. A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Nelson, Spell, Burns, Williamson

Nays: Truslow

The motion passed 4-1.

6. Miscellaneous Business

MOTION: Mr. Truslow made a motion for the next meeting to be on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 9am. Mr. Williamson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Truslow made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Nelson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:38am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk