

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, July 27, 2017**

**1:30 P.M.**

**City Council Conference Room A**

**Suite 425, City Hall**

**117 West Duval Street**

City Council President Anna Lopez Brosche, Board Chairperson

City Council Vice President Aaron Bowman, Board Vice Chairperson

City Council Member Lori Boyer, Board Member

Barbara Goodman, Board Member - Excused

M. G. Orender, Board Member - Excused

Kirit Patidar, Board Member - Excused

Craig Smith, Board Member (arr. 1:51 p.m.)

Jeffrey Truhlar, Board Member

Annette Hastings, TDC Executive Director

Jeff Clements, Chief of Council Research

Kim Taylor, Assistant Council Auditor

Phillip Peterson, Principal Auditor

Lawsikia Hodges, Deputy General Counsel

**Meeting Convened 1:36 p.m. Meeting Adjourned: 4:26 p.m.**

**Call to order**

Chairwoman Brosche called the meeting to order and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. The purpose of meeting is to discuss a transitional contract for tourist bureau services, the new contracts for the convention sales/service and tourism marketing components, and development of a new tourist bureau services RFP.

**Transition Contract for Tourist Bureau Services**

Deputy General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges discussed a proposed timeline developed by Greg Pease, Chief of Procurement, of the actions needed to process the tourist bureau services RFP procurement, including suggestions for ways to potentially shorten the normal process in order to get a new contract in place as quickly as possible after the expiration of the existing contract. Ms. Hodges proposed that the group enter into a new 90-day transitional contract (not an extension of the existing contract) for Visit Jacksonville to continue providing its current services until a new contract is awarded. This would require a single-source procurement authorization. In response to a question from Council Member Bowman, Council Member Boyer explained why the tourist bureau services contract was being re-advertised and the need for the transitional contract to bridge the gap to a new contract period. Pending the arrival of an additional member to achieve a quorum, the item was postponed.

**New Marketing Services Contract**

Michael Munz of the Dalton Agency and Katie Mitura of Visit Jacksonville made a PowerPoint presentation of proposed metrics to evaluate performance under the new contract for marketing services. Ms. Mitura said that a meeting would be held with the TDC shortly after the finalization of a contract to present proposed media campaigns for the year, each of which will include specific measurements. Brian Kincaid of the Dalton Agency reviewed the data analytics aspects of performance measurement for the contract. He reviewed 3 types of measurements – attitudinal (awareness tracker, brand lift studies, etc.), behavioral (site traffic, number of new users, etc.) and outcome (total visitors, occupancy rates, sign-ups). Carly Bower of the Dalton Agency discussed quarterly media measurement metrics reported by numbers (spending by medium, cost per site visit, room nights, occupancy rates, etc.), by geography (total site visits and new users by location) and by source (paid advertising, organic searches, TV and radio, Google, Facebook, etc.). Council Member Boyer asked the Dalton Agency to provide further information on how other types of marketing (i.e. brochures, historic downtown walking tour information, etc.) will be evaluated. In response to a question from Council Member Bowman, the Dalton representatives confirmed that the evaluations of campaign success will offer opportunities for changing campaigns to optimize performance based on feedback.

Ms. Bower presented a series of additional metrics that measure consumer response to different types of advertising based on the desired action for each medium. Benchmark goals will be set based on website traffic compared to media spend rates in the previous year. In response to a question from Ms. Boyer, Ms. Bower said that the proposed benchmark goal for FY2018 is a 10% increase in total site visits to the Visit Jax web site resulting from a 40% increase in total media spend, following a projected 5% growth rate of site traffic in FY17. TDC member Truhlar asked about the potential for measuring the value of in-kind contributions. Ms. Bower showed an example of a reporting dashboard slide to be presented to the TDC quarterly. Council Member Boyer asked that leisure contract and convention contract data be presented ~~on separate slides~~ so that performance under each of the contracts is very clear. Katie Mitura said that monthly shifting of funding among media to take advantage of changing effectiveness will be done internally by Visit Jax and reported to the TDC. The TDC will be consulted before any major campaign changes are made. Council Member Boyer expressed interest in seeing the comparative metrics on general brand awareness campaigns (where is Jacksonville and what does it have to offer) versus various specific campaigns (Jacksonville Ale Trail, Jazz Festival, etc.). Ms. Mitura said that Visit Jax plans to split out the leisure and convention marketing components into two separate web sites which will make measurement and evaluation easier. Council Member Boyer asked how the suggested metrics in the presentation will be converted into specific contract performance provisions. Deputy General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges asked for Visit Jax’s assistance in converting the proposed measures into contract language. Ms. Boyer noted that the TDC had approved three contract goals regarding growth in web site traffic, growth in visitors and growth in TDC revenues. Adam Schaeffer of Five Cannons suggested the addition of contract language regarding fraud prevention (particularly non-payment or reimbursement for fraudulent site clicks, which is common in the field). Ms. Mitura said that Visit Jax already works with its media partners on viewabilty and fraud prevention.

Ms. Hodges reviewed the Annual Performance Evaluation language in the latest draft of the proposed contract, which the TDC will use to evaluate performance each spring for use in preparing a proposed budget for the following fiscal year. Evaluation will take place in the first quarter of the calendar year to inform the budget proposal in the second quarter and the City Council’s budget approval process in the third quarter. Ms. Hodges welcomed comments on the draft contract from all interested parties. She noted that the new contract moves from a “lump sum in advance” payment basis to a “monthly reimbursement for actual expenses” basis, plus a fixed monthly overhead/basic expenses allowance. In response to a question from Council Member Boyer about the possibility of Visit Jax submitting invoices for large annual media buys early in the year, Phillip Peterson of the Council Auditor’s Office said that that method does increase the possibility that the applicable subfund might be temporarily put into a negative cash balance until bed tax collections catch up in later months, but this should generally not create a problem unless collections fall off dramatically.

Ms. Hodges discussed Visit Jax’s requirement under the contract for having a letter of credit in place to ensure performance and noted that Visit Jax had inquired about whether interest on the letter of credit is a reimbursable expense. She noted that the letter of credit language in the tourist bureau RFP differs from that in the tourist marketing and convention sales RFPs. Ms. Hodges explained the Ordinance Code prohibition on making payments in advance on service contracts. She said that the Code could be waived, but that raises questions about whether that may have affected response to the RFP if that policy had been advertised in the RFP. Ms. Boyer suggested the possibility of paying the fixed monthly overhead charge (rent, payroll) at the beginning of each (1 day in arrears) and processing the variable expenses (media buys, etc.) further in arrears after submission and review of invoices. Council Member Bowman asked for a calculation of the interest cost on the use of the line of credit for the current year’s expenses to get an idea of the potential cost under the new contract. Mr. Astleford noted his understanding that public funds cannot be used to pay for interest charges. Ms. Hodges noted that the Jacksonville Children’s Commission and the Public Service Grant chapters of the Ordinance Code contain specific provisions allowing them to pay contractors in advance; the TDC chapter has no such proviso. Michael Munz discussed a possible method for invoicing for media buys when the orders are placed rather than after they run so that Visit Jacksonville can be reimbursed earlier in the process.

Ms. Hodges asked what action, if any, the TDC wanted to take with regard to conflicts of interest of Visit Jacksonville staff and board members as discussed at an earlier meeting. Ms. Boyer briefly reviewed the discussion from the previous meeting for the benefit of the new members. Ms. Hodges said that she had inserted contract language stating that vendors may not have board policies that conflict with the TDC contract provisions. She proposed several possibilities for dealing with policies prohibiting conflicts of interest by board members who may belong to various organizations that have dealings with or interests in tourism and accommodation facilities. The group agreed that language providing that board members and employees of the contracted agency are responsible for faithful performance of the TDC contract, which supersedes any other potentially conflicting policies, would be sufficient to address the concerns. Ms. Hodges stated that she had incorporated suggestions for clarifications provided by Visit Jacksonville into the latest draft of the contract and that she would send electronic copies of the latest revision to Visit Jacksonville and to the Dalton Agency.

**Motion** (Boyer/2nd Bowman): adopt the following marketing contract performance measures: 1) an annual 5% increase in leisure market visitors as determined by the Longwood study data; 2) an annual 5% increase in total tourist development tax collections; 3) a 10% annual increase in site traffic to the Visit Jacksonville web site; and 4) goals, targets and metrics for individual campaigns will be set by TDC when each campaign is approved, in accordance with the measurement criteria described in the PowerPoint presentation earlier in today’s meeting.

Public comment - none

The Boyer motion was **approved unanimously**.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** (Boyer/2nd Bowman): approve the minutes of the June 28, 2017 TDC Special Meeting as distributed – **approved unanimously**.

**Transition Contract for Tourist Bureau Services**

The group returned to the discussion begun earlier of the need for a transitional contract to continue tourist bureau service provision until the new RFP can be issued and a new service contract executed.

**Motion** (Boyer/2nd Bowman): Approve Competitive Sealed Proposal Evaluation Committee (CSPEC) to grant a single-source procurement award to Visit Jacksonville for a three-month term (October 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017) under the terms of the existing contract in an amount not to exceed $78,750 on a reimbursable basis to perform Tourist Bureau Services.

Public comment – none

The Boyer motion was **approved unanimously**.

**New Convention Sales Services Contract**

Lawsikia Hodges requested that the TDC members review the proposed contract and provide her with feedback before final approval. Ms. Boyer asked that Visit Jax provide staff with the cost of the ~~Starwood~~ STR and Longwood reports so that the TDC can purchase those independently rather than Visit Jacksonville making the purchase. Ms. Boyer also asked for a reporting requirement for Visit Jax employee hiring to ensure that budgeted employees are actually hired and for a true-up mechanism that ensures that overhead expenses are correctly calculated and invoiced. She requested that the contract specifically require 5 convention sales personnel at all times; Council Member Bowman suggested a time limit on hiring for vacancies in those positions. Visit Jacksonville CEO Paul Astleford requested consideration of revised City travel policy requirements to meet the realities of the convention sales and service industry. Ms. Hodges said that would be discussed at an August TDC meeting. Monica Smith of Visit Jacksonville raised an issue regarding collaboration with hotel partners and SMG as the City’s venue manager on sharing cost for participation in meeting trade shows and asked the TDC to reconsider its instructions to Visit Jax to not participate in co-ops with hotels because of the potential conflict of interest of those hotels benefitting from the TDC’s marketing efforts. Ms. Boyer explained the TDC’s concern over possible “pay for play” considerations that would favor some hotels over others and that produced revenue that accrued directly to Visit Jacksonville without going through the TDC’s budget. She doesn’t object to all interested hotels being allowed to participate, but does not want to see any exclusivity or unfair advantage. She suggested amending the Ordinance Code to provide specific authorization for the practice and to create procedures for receiving, depositing and expending funds from co-op partners. Ms. Smith asked for TDC clarification of the policy regarding confidentiality of booking clients; Ms. Hodges will review the state law and provide guidance privately.

**Tourist Bureau Services RFP**

Council Member Boyer described the shortcomings in the previous responses to the first RFP and distributed a sheet of suggestions for enhanced language to be included in the new RFP that would elicit responses to the TDC’s areas of interest from the first round. Suggested language included a paragraph adding more detail to the respondents’ proposals for transitioning to new visitor center facilities and a requirement for more detailed annual plans regarding new visitor kiosks, new media content, any research needs, strategies for increasing traffic to visitor centers and strategies for correcting any deficiencies identified in visitor surveys. She noted that Visit Jax had requested that in the future the TDC use the term “tourist information center” rather than “tourist bureau” because in the meeting industry the use of the term “bureau” implies convention and visitor bureau, focusing on convention recruitment. State law uses that term specifically so the TDC will need to use it for some purposes, but could use a different term that might be more of a term of art in the industry in the RFP. Ms. Boyer suggested changing language in the minimum requirements section to allow proposers to qualify if “at least one” (rather than “each”) of the key personnel has the required 3 years of previous experience with similar service at a North American destination or for a hotel company; the group agreed.

TDC Administrator Annette Hastings read into the record a recommendation and several questions from TDC member M.G. Orender, who was absent from the meeting: 1) recommendation to add additional language on p. 33 after (ii) describing “electronic kiosk”; 2) why is reference made to the Town of Baldwin?; 3) under insurance requirements, if one entity gets multiple contract awards, does it need to have separate insurance policies for each component contract or can it have one umbrella policy? The group agreed to the addition of electronic kiosk language for clarity. Ms. Boyer said that the Town of Baldwin is referenced because the TDC is a countywide entity and it serves the Town of Baldwin as part of the consolidated government. Ms. Hodges stated that the contractors need to meet the contract requirements for insurance; whether that is in the form of one policy or multiple policies isn’t important, as long as the coverage requirements are met satisfactorily. She suggested that City Risk Manager Twane Duckworth be consulted for a definitive answer.

**Motion** (Boyer/2nd Bowman): approve Council Member Boyer’s suggestions for additions to Tourist Bureau Operation Plan (p. 35) and Evaluation Criteria (p. 56) and to make various scrivener’s corrections.

Public comment - none comment

The Boyer motion was **approved unanimously**.

In response to a question from Ms. Hodges, the TDC clarified that they expect to see a fully revised version of the RFP at its August 16th meeting to be approved for issuance.

**Motion** (Smith/2nd Boyer): the TDC approves the RFP as amended in this meeting; authorizes transmittal of the RFP to CSPEC, with Council President Brosche authorized to review the final draft of the RFPC’s action to ensure consistency with today’s actions; appoints Council President Brosche to represent the TDC at the CSPEC meeting; with a 21-day RFP advertisement period and designating all TDC members to evaluate the responses received.

**Public comment**:

Debra Braga, the attorney for the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, said that the JAA provides a rent-free visitor information booth in the Jacksonville International Airport and pays $30,000 per year to Visit Jacksonville to operate the booth for the benefit of the airport’s customers. The airport is a regional asset and the Authority insists that the information provided there not be limited to just Jacksonville – the facility attracts a regional traveling audience both inbound and outbound and wants to be able provide regional attraction information. A Jacksonville-only information booth could be accommodated if rent was paid to the JAA for the space. The TDC was agreeable to providing regional information at the site if other jurisdictions are willing to provide financial support for their materials. Ms. Boyer suggested that the contract will probably be worded to have the payment from JAA for operation of that facility flow through the TDC rather than directly to the contractor. Mr. Astleford said that Visit Jacksonville will be inviting Nassau and St. Johns counties to be part of any visitor center.

The Smith motion was **approved unanimously**.

**TDC Meeting Schedule for August and September**

The group reviewed a proposed meeting schedule for August 16th, the week of August 28th, and the week of September 11th, with a possible meeting on the week of September 25th if necessary.

**Closing Comments**

Council Member Boyer reported that the TDC code provides for appointment of advisory committees of non-TDC members to advise on certain issues and she suggested appointment of a committee to study and make recommendations on TDC use of event grants. Ms. Boyer also distributed and discussed information about the Bartram Trail in Putnam County and its many and varied information outlets (YouTube page, multiple kiosks, web page, etc.), which has become quite a tourist attraction for that county.

Commissioner Truhlar asked about appointments to fill upcoming vacancies on the commission; Ms. Brosche is working on making those appointments.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

Posted 8.21.17 9:00 a.m.