

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Isle of Palms, South Carolina

November 13, 2007

The regular meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 10:55 a.m. on Tuesday, November 13, 2007 in Council Chambers, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Chairwoman Julia Tucker, Committee members Malcolm Burgis, Margaret Miller and Jimmy Ward, as well as City Administrator Tucker, City Treasurer Suggs, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. Committee members who were absent were Terri Haack, David Nelson and Rick Linville; there was a quorum to conduct business.

1. **Call to order.** Chairwoman Tucker called the meeting to order and stated that the public and the press had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes:**

MOTION: Margaret Miller moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 15, 2007 as submitted; Jimmy Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT** – Treasurer Debbie Suggs

Treasurer Suggs began her report by referring the Committee members to the annual report filed with the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee. She also made reference to a letter she had received from the State Treasurer denying the bank service charges on the ATAX account.

Since this is the first financial statement this committee has seen for FY 2007-2008, the Treasurer reviewed the Balance Sheet that showed assets in excess of one million dollars. She was very pleased to report that the September 2007 payment was the largest ever received at \$524,458.94, representing a 24% increase of 2006. Treasurer Suggs believes the increase can be attributed in part to the diligence placed on collecting taxes on short-term rentals; the Charleston Visitors Bureau also believes that Air Tran has brought additional visitors to the area.

Expenditures were the next item for Treasurer Suggs. On page 3, it was pointed out that registrations had exceeded expenses in the Beach Run so that there had been no cost to the Committee for that event. Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that the 2008 IOP Connector Run and Walk for the Child will have a change in route due to the construction of the Public Safety Complex and the work on the Ben Sawyer Bridge. A digital camera was purchased for the Police Department, and it ran somewhat over budget, therefore a motion was requested for approval of the over budget status.

MOTION: Margaret Miller moved to approve the overage produced in the purchase of the Police Department digital camera; Jimmy Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Old Business:** None.

5. **New Business:**

A. Requests from Recreation Committee/Recreation Department

1. Annual Tree Lighting, December 6, 2007 - \$5,000.00

Director Page reminded the Committee that this is an item that they have seen before and that there are no significant changes from last year. The funds that will come from ATAX will be used for advertising in the *Island Eye*, the City's e-newsletter and other outlets outside the area as well.

MOTION: Margaret Miller moved to approve \$5,000 for the Annual Tree Lighting on Front Beach; Jimmy Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. LowCountry Blues Bash, February 9-10, 2008 - \$9,550.00

Director Page remarked that they are requesting more money this year because the entertainment is continuing to increase their charges. Administrator Tucker stated that to the best of her memory the City usually gets a return of between \$3,000 and \$5,000 on this event.

MOTION: Jimmy Ward moved to approve \$9,550 for the LowCountry Blues Bash; Malcolm Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Request from the Fire Department

Annual July 4th Fireworks Display - \$30,500.00

Chief Graham informed the Committee that there would be the same shooter that the island has had in the past and that the funds will also pay for a meal for the workers.

Chairwoman Tucker commented that the Isle of Palms fireworks are spectacular compared to other communities.

Mr. Ward asked if the crowds were getting smaller. Chief Graham replied that the beach is narrower; therefore, the crowd is more spread out making it appear to be smaller. Also, the last couple of July 4th's have not been on a weekend, so the crowds may, in fact, have been smaller.

MOTION: Margaret Miller moved to approve \$30,500 for the July 4th fireworks display; Malcolm Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Suggestion for Spoleto Event Sponsorship

Enclosed in the meeting packets was a letter to Treasurer Suggs from Stephanie Steel with Spoleto suggesting that the City sponsor a Swiss ballet presentation at the Gaillard of classical and contemporary ballet. There will again be fifty (50) complimentary tickets for the City's use and extensive advertising for the City. Chairwoman Tucker again stated that she wants the Keenagers to have access to the tickets. Administrator Tucker stated that transportation had been an issue since most of these people are quite hesitant to drive downtown in the evening. Director Page said that she thought that transportation could be arranged for those interested in attending the performance. If the Committee has any input into wording on the programs, Chairwoman Tucker wanted to be certain that the website was included since there will be 80,000 ticket brochures, 30,000 bi-annual newsletters and 30,000 festival program books, plus other printed and non-printed advertising.

Chairwoman Tucker took a moment to compliment Emily Dziuban and Administrator Tucker on the City's e-newsletter; she stated that it was "wonderful" and that they were doing a wonderful job with it. The Administrator added that approximately twenty persons are signing up daily.

Chairwoman Tucker recognized Mr. Richard Full, a Mount Pleasant resident and Isle of Palms property owner who wanted to address the Committee. Mr. Full owns two (2) short-term rental properties, i.e. 102 Port-o-call and 38 Lagoon Villas; he reported that he has paid his rental licenses and that he has spent some \$10,000 on sandbags. He explained that he attended the Meet the Candidates at Wild Dunes and there he learned that accommodations taxes could be used to fight the erosion problem in Wild Dunes. He asked that the Accommodations Tax Committee increase its budget for beach erosion .

Chairwoman Tucker thanked Mr. Full for coming to the meeting and knowing who and what the Accommodations Tax Committee are. She then explained that the City Council actually sets the budget, not the Accommodations Tax Committee. Administrator Tucker stated that the Isle of Palms City Council has made an appeal to the Charleston County Council that they earmark some of County Accommodations Tax money for beach renourishment for the beaches in the county; she encouraged Mr. Full to make his voice heard on the County level as well.

The next meeting was scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2008.

Respectfully submitted:
Julia Tucker, Chairwoman