



Meeting Minutes

Douglas County Travel and Tourism, Inc.

Board of Directors

Regular Meeting

(04/08/2020)

Teleconference Via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER 9:30 AM

Dorsha Simmons

Dorsha Simmons, President (present)
Coriya Burns Falker, Vice-President (present)
Marjorie Stansel, Treasurer (absent)
Charmaine DePass (present)
Susan Henderson (present)
Dr. Romona Jackson Jones (present)
Jamil Foster (present)
Scot Gladstone (present)

INVOCATION

Dorsha Simmons

GUESTS

Michael Hightower – The Collaborative Firm (TCF)
Torri Hill – The Collaborative Firm (TCF)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Dorsha Simmons

Motion: To approve minutes from March 26, 2020 as presented.
Motion: Madame Vice President
Seconded – Scot
Approved - unanimous

ADOPTION OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Dorsha Simmons

Motion: To approve the DCTT's Board of Directors Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.
Motion: Madame Vice President
Seconded: Scot
Approved - unanimous

OFFICER REPORTS

President

Madame President confirmed Board members have access and have seen Trello. She explains this allows the Board to keep track of DCTT business. She also briefly explained Google Drive (G-Drive), but additional details will be explained later in the meeting.

Treasurer

In Marjorie's absent, Madame President asks if everyone received the Treasurer's Report via email. Everyone has received the report.

STAFF REPORTS

Collin Cash

1. Webinars

Collin –DCTT staff has participated in several webinars hosted by several tourism organizations. Destinations International suggests small DMO's start planning by creating a revised budget. Other feedback from webinar hosts includes small towns are doing better than larger markets in the current climate, as airline and medical professionals are checking into hotel rooms. In addition, anticipation for fourth quarter 2020 revenue will look better than most of the year, but RevPAR (revenue per available room) may still be down 50%. DCTT is in a unique position as we are okay financially, but there are grants available, should we need to apply. A unanimous sentiment amongst several webinar hosts, save as much funding as possible. There is no point in spending money on marketing if tourist can't visit right now. Put spending on hold.

Staff will participate in a FAU College of Business class, to obtain a certificate in Hospitality & Tourism Management. Collin is Enrolled in the class, and Evony is on the waiting list. The class is offered for free this time, typical cost is around \$900 per person. (I don't remember this being discussed)

2. Secretary of State Requirements – Update

Collin –Filed and paid DCTT's renewal fees for this year with the state. Updated officers' information.

Madame President – Requested that paperwork be uploaded to DCTT new G-Drive.

3. Strategic plan contract

Collin – DCTT staff sent the Board both RFP documents and a summary of each report. However, considering the current economy, staff recommends the Board puts this on hold, even if it moves into 2021.

4. G-Drive

Collin – Will send the entire board a link to access all documents. There are specific folders in the G-Drive for easy access to documents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dorsha Simmons

1. Bylaws – additions and revisions

Madame President – In Marjorie's absence, Board agreed to wait on vote.

Madame President – Will add as unfinished business to next Board meeting's agenda.

2. Covid-19 hotel/motel impact accommodations

Dorsha Simmons

Jamil Foster

Scot Gladstone

Madame President – Several Board members have a few ideas, thoughts, and questions they would like to share on this topic.

Jamil – asked if there was any kind of funding or resources available from the Board to assist with hotels, or guests who are displaced?

Collin – According to the Department of Community Affairs, the hotel/motel law is strict. DCTT can only use hotel/motel tax for purposes of marketing and office needs. To her knowledge, there is nothing set up for transient guests, but there are grants available to assist hotels with funding.

Scot – (Scot left the meeting temporarily)

3. The Collaborative Firm

Madame President – Introduced The Collaborative Firm to give a 10-minute overview.

Michael Hightower – Presented background information on TCF. They recommend to the DCTT Board, continued work with Johnson Family Media as the contract has already been approved, prior to the Board being formed. In addition, TCF's new recommendation to the Board is;

- 1: Tourism Assistance Group – To move forward with a short research study on tourism in Douglas County.
- 2: Red Ink Consulting Firm, LLC – To move forward with David Good and his company to create and print Black History brochures as it relates to Douglas County.

In addition, TCF would like to emphasize a digital marketing push.

As of today, \$30k has been commissioned of the \$349k to be spent. TCF is recommending the Board commits to another \$27k today.

TCF says if DCTT starts the research study now, it would allow TCF to move forward next month with a detailed plan.

Madame President

- 1: The reason why she asked for a Trello board is because when she started going through the Pillars and tasks to be completed, there was absolutely nothing complete, according to staff. When going through invoices they do not align with staff document in Trello. That is a concern, as there are no deliverables from that document completed.
- 2: Madame President states she is ok with the strategic plan presented by Collin, however it won't be complete anytime soon because of COVID-19. The Board is watching its spending in that regard. For the consulting firm that is being recommended by TCF, to be a checks and balances, she feels this is "double dipping" (this term is used loosely by Madame President), DCTT already have a consulting firm which is The Collaborative Firm. She does not want another consulting firm, consulting our consulting firm and staff. If this is the case, then that means one of the consulting firms is not needed. Once we have a strategic plan, that will give us details on whatever else is missing.

Madame President offers recommendations.

- 1: Mini PSA's 15 – 30 seconds on why Douglas County
- 2: A robust digital media campaign amid COVID-19

She expressed the need to start seeing deliverables, so money aligns up with the plan. Perhaps DCTT Board and staff needs to revisit the plan to make sure it is relevant and feasible, as many of the items are attached to events that may not happen this year.

Michael – Stated that it is incorrect to say nothing has been done. He says DCTT staff has detailed monthly reports that outline specific items that TCF completed in February. He says his company has been misrepresented.

Madame President – DCTT sees the report of what has been done through Trello. Stated she went item by item on the pillars chart with Collin and Evony... (interrupted by Michael)

Michael – Stated he believes Madam President is slightly incorrect. TCF was not hired to follow everything on the pillars. However, TCF does agree with the vast amount on the document. TCF was told to hold off on spending by Collin and start off with Black History events. As far as the consultant, what TCF is recommending in about less than 4% of the entire budget to have checks and balance to make sure everything we're doing is correct. It's the same thing that Collin is

doing. If the DCTT lets Collin do a study, and not TCF, that's inappropriate. To suggest that TCF have not done work is inappropriate. Would like that struck from the record.

Madame President – It's not about TCF, it's about spending the money.

Michael – Can you clarify nothing has been done?

Madame President – I am talking about the project in general. That's the board, the staff, The Collaborative Firm, but out of respect of the other Director's time, as some of them are running their own hotel front desks, I'm getting ready to open the floor. Do any Directors have any questions or concerns?

Madame Chair – This project is still new, and this is the first time hearing this nothing has been done. So perhaps that phrase be used very carefully. Mr. Hightower had a plan of action, and hopes Madame President allow him to share that with board. Covid-19 has really put a wrench in everything. When does this past money have to be spent?

Collin – The money had to be allocated, if not spent, by end of last year. Now that the money has been allocated to DCTT, we are not on a strict timeline. The timeline was to get it out of the hands of the county and into the tourism/marketing agency, which staff have done. It would be hopeful that DCTT could spend it by the end of this year, but again with Covid-19, DCTT is being urged to hand on to our resources.

Madame Chair – That gives a sense of relief because that means DCTT has some time. DCTT can take time and partner in a cordial and positive way. Let's move forward professionally and start off on the right foot.

Madame President – Asked if any comment from Directors. None. Asked Collin to explain "no movement" on Trello project list.

Collin – None of the projects have been completed. For example, at that point, the only thing that had actively been done was the hiring of the Johnson Family to start working on the video, but the video had not been completed. Nothing else on the list had been started. Mr. Hightower is correct, as DCTT started working on Black History Month because of timing. DCTT have had many discussions and plans with TCF, but as far as being able to check things off, nothing had been completed.

Madame President – apologized to Mr. Hightower if he felt she was saying his firm was doing no work. Stated it's not the TCP's fault or the staff's fault, but that's why the board is using Trello moving forward. Therefore, DCTT may need to re-evaluate to make sure the list is still valuable. DCTT is looking for a road map. If TCF have another list of recommendations, please share that with the Board.

Michael – Collin is incorrect in saying nothing has been done. Collin said the video has commenced. That has been done. TCF was told to keep working and planning in order to not to rush in spending. Collin said wait on spending, and TCF is glad that she did. What needs to happen right now is we have a very expanded digital program. It's time to move forward, for example, the hotels that are in the county, TCF is looking at strategic ways to host events at the hotels to drive business. TCF wants to use Nevil's firm (Tourism Skills Group) to help facilitate.

Madame President – Asked if TCF can give DCTT a a COVID-19 plan and execution working under the pillars. Asked TCF to talk to the staff and get things moving.

Michael – Yes. Collin recommended about \$41k in digital marketing and he agrees. The MOU is not to follow Collin’s plan word for word. Currently, TCF have done a 90-day plan for Marta via social media. TCF is familiar with the plan and Madame President is right on this plan.

Madame President – Asked staff does DCTT have a separate social media accounts for Douglas County Tourism.

Collin – Yes, Explore Douglas County Facebook and Instagram. Evony runs those. DCTT also has separate pages for the Film Trail and the Butterfly Trail.

Evony – Facebook social media pages for Douglas County Tourism and Douglas County Film Trail are ran by her and the Instagram page for Douglas County Tourism. She does not run the Butterfly Trail social media pages.

Collin – Marjorie runs the Butterfly trail social media page.

Madame President – Wanted to ensure DCTT have the platforms to execute the digital marketing plan. Asked if any Directors had any comments, questions or concerns.

Madame Vice President – Posed question to Evony, does DCTT have a separate page for events, or does everything go under Douglas County Tourism?

Evony – Yes, in addition to DCTT social media pages, DCTT have a website, exploredouglascountyga.com

Madame President – Asked if TCF have DCTT branding kit.

Evony – Yes, provided TCF with that information in January.

Michael – Asked if DCTT was moving forward with David good and Nevil.

Madame President – It is not agenda to vote on today. Today’s agenda was TCF presentation. When board votes on something, it will literally be on our agenda for approval. Can be put it on there if it’s the will of the Board... (interrupted by Michael)

Michael – Stated this is the second time TCF asked for recommendations to be approved. If it’s not approved this holds TCF back.

Collin – Staff has not received David Good’s (Red Ink Consulting Firm, Inc.) proposal.

Michael – Was sent in TCF’s recommendation packet last month.

Collin –Staff received only recommendation that DCTT use David Good, but staff have not received his proposal.

Michael – Stated that if staff needed that before the meeting, now is not the time to ask for this if staff need more information. This request has been on two agendas.

Collin – Confused on matter.

Michael – Offered to clear any confusion. If staff need more information, ask TCF.

Madame President – Offered a point of clarity. DCTT board haven't had anything, in the previous meetings, for approval from The Collaborative Firm. Today was supposed to be an overview of TCF. Collin was given the opportunity to discuss MOU with TCF last meeting and same opportunity was given to TCF today.

Michael – Asked Madame President about process. When TCF was hired, was told Collin would approve everything. So, with the change in leadership, TCF has submitted things to Collin for approval. This is not her fault. If that has changed, please tell TCF the process to follow. Per the Board, how should TCF move forward?

Madame President – Collin will bring items to the Board for approval. Items will be put on DCTT agenda to be approved and the board will vote on it. That is the process.

Collin – The Johnson Family, I was given a proposal. An outline of everything they were going to do that included a timeline. Staff has not received anything like that from David Good. Therefore, can't bring it to the Board, because staff has nothing to present to Board.

Madame President – Collin and Michael get together and bring something for DCTT next meeting for Board approval. Asked were there any other questions for TCF.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madame Vice President – Encourage directors to participate in DCTT social media sites.

Madame President – Asked does staff have social media promotion dollars in the budget.

Collin – Yes, there is money in the budget for social media promotions.

Madame Chair – Asked when will TCF begin pushing out the digital media plan.

Michael – TCF plan is to come back at the next Board meeting to present this information.

Madame President – Proposed a special call meeting to approve spending on COVID-19 Digital Marketing Campaign to increase awareness about why to visit Douglas County. 15 minute-minute.

NEXT MEETING: Special Board Meeting on 4/16/2020 @ 9am. Regular Board Meeting - 05/13/2020 @ 10:30am

ADJOURNMENT – 11:48AM