



Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: June 28, 2022

Recorded by Sally Westendorf

Board Members Present: Bill Bennett, Karen Bobe, Susan Boggs, Bill Brett, Robert Craft, Glen Kaiser, Mark Stillings, Gerald Tipton; (a quorum was met)

Board Members Absent: David Bodenhamer, Penny Groux, Tony Kennon, Frank Reed

GSOBT Staff Members Present: Laura Beebe, Kim Chapman, Joanie Flynn, Beth Gendler, David Greene, Jo Phillips, Michelle Russ, Sally Westendorf

Visitors: none

Call to Order

Chairman Glen Kaiser called the meeting to order at 8:35am in the conference room at the Orange Beach Welcome Center in Orange Beach, AL and via Zoom.

Glen introduced new board member, Gerald Tipton, co-owner of Lulu's.

Board Meeting Minutes

Pending an update to the attendees listed (i.e., addition of a last name), Susan Boggs made a motion to approve the May 24, 2022 Board of Director's meeting minutes, seconded by Mayor Robert Craft. After no discussion, the motion passed.

Consent Agenda Items

The following Consent Agenda Items were reviewed and discussed:

Beth Gendler reviewed the Destination Growth Indicators (DGI) report. Hotel occupancy for May was down compared to 2021 and 2019. Year-to-date hotel occupancy was down from 2021 while still ahead of 2019. The pattern was similar for most reports in the DGI report (i.e., when comparing to 2019) outside of average daily rate (ADR): up in all categories for hotel occupancy data. Similarly, vacation rental occupancy data is trending higher than 2019 figures (versus the comparison to 2021). Revenue for both retail and lodging are up. Last-minute bookings are very high, rates are lower, but still higher than 2019.

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Beth reminded the group that these data and reports are always available on the Industry Partner page on the website HERE: <https://www.gulfshores.com/partners/resources/statistics/destination-growth-indicators/>.

Members had a brief discussion about visitors and residents alike holding back on spending. Some board members reported a more stabilized workforce; however, many employees are 'unskilled,' which may impact service levels and is of concern.

Joanie Flynn provided an overview of the Communications Report, with a focus on comparing to 2019 data. New users were up 55%. Industry partner and unique referrals were up. Joanie surmised that users are likely looking for low or no cost activities (e.g., festivals / events). As well, visitors continued to drive long distances to the destination during April, with Friday reported as the highest arrival day.

Joanie Flynn reported that the BEach SAFE survey had over 2000 respondents, with over 30% coming from vacation rentals. As well, the Leave Only Footprints asset portal is being updated at present. Beth Gendler asked the group to consider the fact that there were 1 million more visitors in 2021, and how likely it is that the new and return guests need education and information about the Leave Only Footprints program before and during their stays.

Kim Chapman gave a brief overview of the H&I Report. She reported that more guests are choosing the new texting platform for immediate questions and needs. Welcome Center traffic was lower for May comparing to 2019 and 2021. However, there was an increase in referrals to Industry Partners despite the low traffic. As well, the call center increased referrals by 27%, 80% of which were new visitors.

Michelle Russ reviewed the Sales & Sports Report. All numbers were up for the month of May: leads, events, and meetings booked. As for room nights generated, corporate meetings tracked higher than other categories. Michelle reported that 17 meetings were lost, but indicated the cause was lack of availability. The Louisiana Council of Association Executives golf outing will be hosted here in October. Lastly, Michelle noted that baseball and softball tournaments are underway or happening soon and that pickleball events are in the works as well.

David Greene provided a brief update from the Finance department. He reviewed the Financial Statements, referencing a handout (item 6.1): May tax revenue (April business) was up 10.8%; YTD tax revenue was up 22% from 2021, which is 45% over budget.

Susan Boggs made a motion to approve the consent agenda items, seconded by Bill Brett. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

David Green presented Resolution 22-10, which establishes the Board's approval to initiate closing with The First Bank of Gulf Shores for the purchase of the 111+ acre property on County Road 8, Coastal-Gateway Boulevard, with Chairman Glen Kaiser and Beth Gendler as

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signatories. Bill Brett made a motion to approve; Susan Boggs made a second motion. With no additional discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

David Green presented a performance agreement with the Banding Coalition of the Americas. He provided a brief historical update, outlining previous, similar sponsorships. Bill Brett made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Mayor Robert Craft. With no additional discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

Beth reported that the Sports Facilities Study RFP will be ready to send by the end of June. She explained that the purpose of the study will be to better understand what type of sports facility to build. Bill Brett expressed the desire to change the RFP verbiage to explicitly outline the Board of Directors as a top decision maker alongside the Sports Commission. Michelle Russ and staff will work to update the wording of the document.

Beth Gendler provided an update on the CR8 property: She reported that she and Glen met with Bowden Companies, buyers of the adjacent lot to the east, to discuss a potential collaboration for a north-south road utilizing a 30-foot easement on each owner's property (ours and theirs). Beth made a recommendation to develop a facilities committee to include board members, which Glen will soon begin making appointments.

The group discussed options for the upcoming Board Retreat. The consensus was to hold the event in town this year, the week after Thanksgiving. All present agreed to placing a hold on the calendar for November 30th for an all-day strategy and planning session.

Laura Beebe briefly presented the GSOBT Annual Report for 2021 and encouraged board members to review at their leisure.

Joanie Flynn covered key takeaways from the Longwood's (Wave 62) survey during the discussion of consent agenda items. She will bring new data to the Board Meeting in July for additional review and discussion.

Adjourned

Chairman Kaiser adjourned the meeting at 10:07am.

Next Regular Meeting Date:
July 26, 2022
Location: OBWC