



Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: October 25, 2022

Recorded by Sally Westendorf

**Board Members Present:** Bill Bennett, Robert Craft, Penny Groux, Glen Kaiser, Tony Kennon, Frank Reed, Mark Stillings, Gerald Tipton; (a quorum was met)

**Board Members Absent:** Karen Bobe, David Bodenhamer, Susan Boggs, Bill Brett

**GSOBT Staff Members Present:** Laura Beebe, Kim Chapman, Joanie Flynn, Beth Gendler, David Greene, Sally Westendorf, Britney Clemons, Amy Peralta

**Visitors:** Greg Alexander (Coastal Alabama Business Chamber), Alex Lute (Sunset Properties)

**Call to Order**

Chairman Glen Kaiser called the meeting to order at 8:33 am in the conference room at the Orange Beach Welcome Center in Orange Beach, AL.

**Board Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes from August 2022 were presented. Mark Stillings made a motion to approve the August 23, 2022 minutes, seconded by Gerald Tipton. With no discussion, the motion passed. Bill Bennett abstained as he was not present for the August meeting.

The meeting minutes from September 2022 were presented. Gerald Tipton made a motion to approve the September 27, 2022 minutes, seconded by Robert Craft. After no discussion, the motion passed. Members absent from the September meeting abstained from the vote.

**Consent Agenda Items**

The following Consent Agenda Items were reviewed and discussed:

Beth Gendler reviewed the Destination Growth Indicators (DGI) report, with comparisons to both 2019 and 2021. 2022 data show trends for occupancy as slightly down compared to 2021. However, revenues were up, compared to 2021. Beth noted that retail sales passed one billion dollars in July 2022, while this happened one month later (in August) 2021. Beth reminded the board that reports will stop using the 2019 comparison once we are in 2023.

Joanie Flynn provided an overview of the Communications Report. Joanie pointed towards the growing interest in sports and meetings content on our site. Joanie reported purchasing Lee County Florida data (i.e., Sanibel and Fort Meyers areas), as well as working with ad partners to target the younger Millennial in Huntsville, AL with jobs in technology and sciences (who may not know we have a beach) in the North

Alabama market. As well, there are plans to stop the Work from Here leisure market campaign with normalization occurring. Joanie also reported that our Arrivalist data has been restored.

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Kim Chapman gave a brief overview of the H&I Report. Of note, there was a 6% increase in welcome center traffic compared to September of 2021. Kim reported that guests have been opting into receiving the vacation guide annually (over 19k so far).

Michelle Russ reviewed the Sales & Sports Report. She noted that there were fewer sporting events, but more room nights in September (e.g., the triathlon had over 100 new racers compared to last year). Beth noted that sports room nights are being pushed into shoulder seasons.

Beth Gendler noted that the high school volleyball teams from both Gulf Shores and Orange Beach are both heading to State tournaments, and both Gulf Shores and Orange Beach will be hosting the first round of the football playoffs.

David Greene provided an update from the Finance department. David reported being 1.9% ahead of budget for the month of September, which is 12% ahead of 2021. As of October 25, the organization was 18.3% ahead of budget. Note: 2022 budget is 85% of 2021 actuals.

Mark Stillings made a motion to approve the consent agenda items, seconded by Penny Groux. With no further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

David Greene reviewed details of the Farming Land Lease, including the recommendation of the executive committee to allow the land to be farmed. Robert Craft made a motion to approve the contents of the lease, with a second from Gerald Tipton. The motion passed unanimously.

Beth Gendler outlined the Facilities Committee's recommendation to move forward with the selection of Sports Facilities Companies to conduct the feasibility study. Beth explained that six proposals were reviewed, and two companies were interviewed. Penny Groux made a motion to approve the recommendation, with a second from Robert Craft. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Beth Gendler outlined details of the Gateway Initiative team and their request for an investment over the next five years. Beth, Penny Groux, and Bill Bennett provide brief summaries of their approval. Glen Kaiser and Gerald Tipton provided further comments of support. Guest, Greg Alexander, also weighed in that the 5-year commitment is reviewable each year.

Bill Bennett made a motion to approve an annual investment commitment of \$40,000, with a second from Penny Groux. With no opposition, the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion Items**

David Greene outlined details of the enhancement event grant for the Gulf State Park coastal Christmas Nights of Lights: which was approved by the executive committee.

David Greene briefly reviewed the executive committee's approval to allow farming to take place on the Count Road 8 land.

Beth Gendler reminded the board that the Board Retreat will take place at the Lodge at Gulf State Park on December 7. Beth asked board members to let her know if there are topics they would like covered during the retreat, and let them know that staff is already preparing an agenda.

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Beth Gendler introduced Britney Clemons (H&I) and Amy Peralta (Meeting Sales) as staff guests.

Greg Alexander, President and CEO of the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber, gave a short update on the success of Shrimp Festival and reminded the attendees about the upcoming Hollydays on Main (at the Wharf).

Robert Craft discussed the status of the Embassy Suites project: site works should begin before the end of the year. As well, Mayor Craft provided updates about a variety of large development projects, neighborhoods, marinas, bridges, etc. in the Gulf Shores area.

**Adjourned**

Chairman Kaiser adjourned the meeting at 9:44 am.

**Next Regular Meeting Date:**

**November 15, 2022**

**Location: OBWC**

**Upcoming Board Retreat Date:**

**December 7, 2022**

**Location: The Lodge at Gulf State Park  
Gulfview Ballroom I**