

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 7, 2008

The regular meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 7, 2008 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairwoman Julia Tucker, Committee members Burgis, Hollingsworth, Linville, Nelson, and Ward, as well as City Treasurer Suggs, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. Ms. Miller's absence was excused; there was a quorum to conduct business.

1. **Call to Order** and acknowledgement that the press and the public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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

MOTION: David Nelson moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 5, 2008 as submitted; Rick Linville seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

Since Treasurer Suggs had been temporarily delayed, Chairwoman Tucker moved ahead with the agenda.

5. **Old Business:**

Update on Brochure – Chairwoman Tucker asked Assistant Dziuban to get with her after the meeting to get that project started.

6. **New Business:**

B. Request from The Company Company for \$8,440 for presentation of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, June or July 2009 from Lisa Abernathy

Ms. Abernathy explained that The Company Company was a non-profit organization whose mission was to create community through the arts; she added that they strove to inspire and uplift people. She noted that they do not have a theatre of their own, but take the theatre to those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. She introduced William Schlitt who is the Producing Director of The Company Company. Mr. Schlitt stated that they had chosen to present *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* because it had had a great run on Broadway thirty (30) years ago, had experienced a revival in 1999 and had great inter-generational appeal. He remarked

that The Company Company not only had opportunities for professionals and for low country artists to develop, but also to hone their skills.

Chairwoman Tucker stated that she thought it was wonderful that they take the theatre to the community. She asked Jimmy Ward, the Committee's cultural representative to express his opinion on the project. Mr. Ward stated that he was a writer and a playwright who had had some projects presented locally. He added that he thought the presentation had been very good and that he was "all about theatre," but he wanted to hear the financial status of the Committee before making any decisions.

With that said, Chairwoman Tucker asked Treasurer Suggs to come forward and returned to the meeting's agenda.

4. Monthly Financial Report – Treasurer Suggs

Treasurer Suggs distributed copies of the April Financial Statement, the Revenue and Expense Projection for 2008 and State Accommodations Tax-Distribution of Funds Received Schedule. The Treasurer began by explaining that the City had received two (2) checks in March because of an error where a taxpayer had listed its location as unincorporated Charleston County, rather than the Isle of Palms. As a result the funds had been paid to Charleston County; as soon as the error was identified, Charleston County had sent a check to Isle of Palms. Assets as of April 30, 2008 totalled \$928,093 with revenues year-to-date of \$726,349.23. Treasurer Suggs reviewed the expenditures that have occurred since the last meeting. Mr. Ward asked the Treasurer what expenditures remained to be made in May and June; she replied that the budgeted transfers to other funds would be made, also the transfers for beach restoration and the replacement of the bulkhead. The cumulative balance anticipated for year end was in excess of \$692,000.

6. New Business

A. Review of FY 2008-2009 ATAX Budget

Treasurer Suggs reported that she had been conservative in projecting revenues based on receipts from the last four (4) quarters; other revenue for 2008-2009 would come from interest and the sale of City assets purchased with State Accommodations Tax funds and the return of the proceeds of those sales to the fund.

Funds transfers proposed for the coming budget year were one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be split evenly between on-going beach monitoring and a reserve for future beach restoration projects.

Treasurer Suggs informed the Committee that the Revenue Bond that would be financing the beach restoration was going to be repaid through Municipal Accommodations Taxes; therefore, certain expenses that had been paid by the Municipal Taxes in the past had been moved to State Accommodations Taxes, assuming that the expense met the requirements for State Accommodations Taxes. She also commented that, since there had been discussions that the Committee wanted to meet less frequently, she had budgeted for the City-sponsored events that the Committee has routinely approved.

Among the items moved from Municipal Accommodations Taxes were the following:

Tourism Promo Gen'l	\$ 7,300	ongoing website maintenance
Pub Wks-Maintenance & Contingency	7,500	parking lot maintenance
Contracted Services	84,000	trash removal in Bus Dist, year round
		beach cleanup, beach holes fill-in
Pub Wks-Maintenance & Contingency	13,675	40 cs pooper scoops, replacement of
		Poop scoop stations & beach trash barrels
	<u>\$112,475</u>	

The routinely approved City-sponsored projects that were put into the budget include the following:

Isle of Palms Beach Run, July 2008	\$ 5,500
Ghostly Tide Tales Movie, October 2008	3,500
Front Beach Tree Lighting, December 2008	5,000
Lowcountry Blue Bash, February 2009	9,550
Easter Egg Hunt, April 2009	2,000
Piccolo Spoleto Sand Sculpting, May 2009	2,500
Piccolo Spoleto Goes to the Beach, June 2009	<u>7,000</u>
	\$35,050

Chairwoman Tucker questioned the Treasurer about the pooper scoops and poop scoop stations because she remembered that the City had tried to cover them in the past with State Accommodations funds, but they were not allowed. Treasurer Suggs reported that the City had made a solid argument that these items should be allowed and the law has, subsequently, been changed to do just that.

David Nelson asked if the T-shirt promotion was garnering sufficient benefit to be continued; he was told that the City's employees seize the opportunity to provide information to visitors that they would not otherwise get, for example The Pelican Guide and the activity guide for the Recreation Center. Mr. Nelson was also told that there was a big demand for the shirts and that visitors who got them raved about the concept. Chairwoman Tucker suggested that this give-away also could provide an opportunity to the business community to provide materials to distribute to visitors and that she would make an effort to contact them. She also suggested a very brief feedback questionnaire for the recipients to complete.

Ms. Hollingsworth wanted to know if the e-mail addresses that visitors provided were being keyed into a database for e-mail blasts to go out informing them of upcoming events on Isle of Palms. Assistant Dziuban commented that she would inquire as to the status of this database and added that the idea they were proposing was an obvious next step in the development of the website.

MOTION: Mr. Ward moved to adopt the FY 2008-2009 budget as presented; Mr. Nelson seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Mr. Ward moved to approve \$8,440 for The Company Company to produce *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; Mr. Burgis seconded.

Mr. Ward remarked about the venue charge of \$1,500 identified on the budget, asked if she had looked into other possibilities on the island and suggested the Recreation Center as a viable alternative.

Chairwoman Tucker asked if there was any possibility of the play running two (2) nights rather than one (1). Mr. Ward asked if there was a way to postpone the production until the fall primarily due to the Piccolo Spoleto events already planned for May and June.

Mr. Nelson asked Ms. Abernathy if she could explain the apparent error in her budget; he calculated the expenses to be \$5,970, not \$11,940; if there were, in fact, an error, would The Company Company want to reduce the amount of its request? Ms. Abernathy agreed there was an error, but there was no discussion of changing the request since they were being asked to have two (2) showings.

Mr. Ward changed his motion to be up to \$8,440 for the production.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Miscellaneous

Chairwoman Tucker suggested to the Committee that they change the frequency of their meetings. She expressed her opinion that, with the routine events included in the budget, they would only be required to approve unplanned for events or items and could do so without monthly meetings. Following discussion of several possibilities, the Committee had come to an agreement; should an immediate need arise or the budget was to be discussed, the Committee would call a special meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Burgis moved to institute a quarterly meeting schedule with the beginning of the new fiscal year and that the meetings be the first

Wednesday of the first month of the quarter; Mr. Nelson seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairwoman Tucker charged the City staff with notifying the City Council and department heads of the change and to ensure that the dates for the coming year were posted to the City's website as quickly as possible. The 2008-2009 meetings will take place as follows:

July 2, 2008	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.	Council Chambers
October 1, 2008	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.	Council Chambers
January 7, 2009	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.	Council Chambers
April 1, 2009	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.	Council Chambers

8. Adjourn

MOTION: With no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Burgis moved to adjourn at 12:20 p.m.; Mr. Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland