

## ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 5, 2009

The quarterly meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 5, 2009 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. This meeting was originally scheduled for July 1, 2009, but was postponed to the first Wednesday in August. Attending the meeting were Committee members Burgis, Linville, Miller, Nelson and Chairman Ward, City Administrator Tucker, City Treasurer Suggs, and City Clerk Copeland. There was a quorum present to conduct business despite the excused absences of Committee members Ferencz and Hollingsworth.

1. Chairman Ward called the meeting to order and acknowledged 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 Meetings' Minutes

**MOTION: Mr. Burgis moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 1, 2009 and the Special Meeting of May 5, 2009 as submitted; Mr. Nelson seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### 3. Citizens' Comments

Paul Smith, Apex Broadcasting for WIOP

Mr. Smith informed the Committee that he is the General Sales Manager for Apex Broadcasting, which is a locally owned broadcasting group; their new radio station is WIOP at 95.9 on the FM dial. Mr. Smith noted that the City of Isle of Palms and the City of Charleston are the station's cities of license. He referenced a meeting between Mayor Cronin, Chris Johnson, the station's General Manager, and himself whereby ways to use the station to provide community service programming for the Isle of Palms relating issues that the City believes to be noteworthy to its citizenry. Mr. Smith said the station's management was looking for ways to get ideas out to the Lowcountry, for example, an "Our Town" with infomercials about the Isle of Palms, the history, events occurring on the island, maybe tag with local advertisers, hospitality-based items, promoting businesses on the island, etc. He explained that the station also streams on the internet enabling visitors to stay in touch with happenings on the island and keeping memories of their vacation at the Isle of Palms alive when in their homes many miles away. Mr. Smith was interested in getting ideas about how the City could make use of the station from the Committee.

Mr. Smith related that Apex Broadcasting is the largest locally owned broadcaster in Charleston and the only major broadcaster in both radio and television. Other stations under the Apex umbrella are Star 99.7, FM 95.9, 101.7 Chuck FM, B92 and WSPO on 1390 AM and 99.3 FM.

Chairman Ward thanked Mr. Smith for coming and stated that his short presentation had been most informative.

#### 4. Quarterly Financial Statement – Treasurer Suggs

Treasurer Suggs presented the unaudited financial data for the year ended June 30, 2009 for State Accommodations Taxes; because the figures are unaudited, there will likely be some changes, but nothing of significance is anticipated.

Treasurer Suggs' presentation began with the spreadsheet entitled "Distribution of Funds Received;" she noted that the City had received the fourth quarter payment from the state. With a full year's activity represented, the City's revenues were down three percent (3%) from FY 2008, which was better than anticipated in the current economy. The Treasurer commented that, since Mount Pleasant has moved into its new facility, the City of Isle of Palms is no longer going to participate; therefore, all moneys for tourism promotion will be paid to the Charleston Visitors Bureau.

Total receipts for the year, including interest, were \$988,480. The Treasurer noted that there has been a lot of activity since the Committee met last, for instance, considerable work has been done on the public restrooms on Front Beach – the work has been completed, and Director Kerr is pleased with the end product.

Several accounts were over-budget, and motions were required to authorize the additional expenditures. They are as follows:

**MOTION: Mr. Nelson moved to approve the over-budget expenditure in the budget for the Public Restrooms of \$773.20; Mr. Linville seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION: Ms. Miller moved to approve the over-budget expenditure in the budget for Piccolo Spoleto Sand Sculpting Contest in the amount of \$165.49; Mr. Linville seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION: Mr. Linville moved to approve the over budget expenditure for Police Department laptops in the amount of \$553.35; Mr. Nelson seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION: Mr. Nelson moved to approve the over budget expenditures for the Fire Department jet ski in the amount of \$247.78 and the thermal imaging camera in the amount of \$126.00; Mr. Linville seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION: Mr. Nelson moved to approve the over budget expenditure for pooper-scooper dispensers and supplies in the amount of \$1,490.46; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Treasurer Suggs stated that the City maps are now in City Hall; it was a joint effort by members of the City staff to make the maps as correct as possible. The maps were distributed to each member of the Committee; Mr. Ward commended the staff for their work.

Chairman Ward asked Treasurer Suggs to explain “unexpended projects;” she stated that it is a placeholder for money for projects that come before the Committee, during the year, to approve.

The final schedule for review was entitled “Revenue and Expense Projection for the Year Ending 6/30/09”. The Treasurer reported that the FY 09 Budgeted figures represent actual amounts wherever possible; the expenditures were approximately eighty-three thousand dollars (\$83,000) under budget. Total expenditures were six hundred sixteen thousand dollars (\$616,000); the result for FY 09 is a surplus of \$64,556. When the FY 09 surplus is added to the surplus from prior years, the carry forward balance is approximately nine hundred forty-nine thousand dollars (\$949,000).

Mr. Ward requested that there be two (2) motions to approve the June 30, 2009 financial statement; he wanted the Piccolo Spoleto production of “The Wizard of Oz” to be a separate motion because he had been a principal in the production.

**MOTION: Ms. Miller moved to approve the June 30, 2009 financial statement, with the exception of Piccolo Spoleto’s “The Wizard of Oz;” Mr. Linville seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION: Mr. Nelson moved to approve the June 30, 2009 financial statement for Piccolo Spoleto’s “The Wizard of Oz;” Ms. Miller seconded and the motion PASSED on a vote of 4 to 1 as Mr. Ward abstained.**

## **5. Old Business**

Report on 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the Marina – Carla Pope and Brian Berrigan

Ms. Pope, Operations Manager for Morgan Creek Grill, recalled that she and Mr. Berrigan had attended the May meeting to request funding for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and were approved for three thousand dollars (\$3,000). She expressed her opinion that the event had been a huge success, and she attributed much of that success to Brian Berrigan, Marina Manager, who orchestrated the participation of the marina businesses, outside businesses and numerous volunteers. At the request of Mayor Cronin, all proceeds from the dunking booth and the raffle were to be donated to MUSC’s Children’s Hospital; one thousand dollars (\$1,000) was raised for the hospital. Ms. Pope passed around the letter of appreciation from the hospital for the Committee members to read. The only revenues were from the dinners, the beer truck and the bar, plus a few t-shirts, which totaled six thousand eight hundred fifty dollars (\$6,850), including the ATAX funding. Expenses totaled five thousand eight hundred twelve dollars (\$5,812); therefore there was a profit of one thousand thirty-eight dollars (\$1,038). Ms. Pope estimated that between three hundred fifty and four hundred (350-400) people attended the celebration; she reminded everyone that there were many pictures on the City’s website. She stated that she and Mr. Berrigan were very proud of the community event, and they were dedicated to bring more event of this type to the Isle of Palms.

## 6. New Business

### Discussion of Processes to Increase Activity for Island Businesses

Mayor Cronin stated that he, Council Loftus and Chairman Ward had mulled over ideas about what could be done in the “dead of winter” to pull the community together for a time of enjoyment and appreciation of the community here on the Isle of Palms. He referenced the program – “Be a Tourist in Your Hometown” - that the City of Charleston runs each January that led them to ask what could be done on the island that is similar, possibly, for a weekend event. The Mayor suggested an event that presented an opportunity for residents to visit several eating/drinking establishments; simply to enjoy what we have, and to do so in, what is typically, a down period.

The next issue was to find a body to spearhead such an event that would stimulate the residents to get out on a winter day to enjoy the camaraderie of their island neighbors; the Mayor was asking the ATAX Committee to support this effort with their time and energy to put the event together. Mayor Cronin proposed using the City's facilities, such as allowing island residents with children to take them to the Recreation Center to be entertained while they, too, are being entertained elsewhere on the island. Obviously there would be a need for advertising to entice residents to participate, maybe, on the Sunday before the Super Bowl. Today, Mayor Cronin was trying to generate interest from the Committee to become active participants to make such the idea a reality.

Councilman Loftus stated that the event should encompass every aspect of the island; he thought that there could be shuttle buses moving around the island for the residents to get on and off. In addition, he noted that he wanted to see island organizations, like the Exchange Club, the VFW and the Neighborhood Association, involved; maybe the real estate companies would hold open houses at some of the island's premier rental homes. Councilman Loftus stated that the event should focus on the fact that the Isle of Palms is a great place to be.

Mr. Smith of Apex Broadcasting stated that the radio station definitely wanted to be involved.

Mr. Ward stated that the Committee was willing to help, and he thought it was a great idea. He reflected on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that involved some forty (40) people and a year's planning; therefore, he saw the need for someone to volunteer to chair and to motivate a committee to accomplish the goals that have been set forth.

## 7. Miscellaneous Business

**Next Meeting: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 7, 2009**

## 8. Adjourn

**MOTION: Ms. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:52 p.m.; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Marie Copeland, City Clerk