

JCBT

2.28.2022, 6:30 pm  
Jefferson Co. Courthouse, Commissioners Office

Present: Dave Bramer, Curtis Chatham, Trevor Crafton, Jim Bartlett, Ron Bateman, Victoria Perry.

Absent: Wendy Lawson

Public: Lucy Dattilo, Sarah Prasil, Debbie Kroger, Tami Hagemier, Nancy Crisp, Erin Kindle, Bob Demaree, JCCT

Meeting was called to order by Dave, opening with The Pledge of Allegiance.

Treasurers Report: Curtis reported Operations account \$1153.23, Money Market \$630,005.90, Investments \$185,986.39, noting that it will mature at the end of March. January Innkeepers tax \$38915.95, Curtis moved to approve the Treasurers Report as presented, Trevor 2nd the motion, all approved.

Curtis reported that the County Council approved JCBT budget, \$420,000.00 was the annual budget for JCBT based on the average of 5 years of innkeepers tax. Stating that JCBT would like to transfer \$600,000 out of the money market account and transfer to the Auditors Office to begin the claims process running through them to be compliant with the State Board of Accounts. Curtis stated that amount was chosen due to having to have a minimum of \$30,000.00 to keep that account open. Curtis continued stating the goal for the last couple of years was to try to eliminate the checkbook for JCBT, with the SBA this was apparent to get JCBT lined up with the Auditors Office, 1. Getting a budget, 2. County Council Approval, 3. Submitting the claims through the Auditors office, which is in line with other boards.

Jim Bartlett motioned to approve the transfer of \$600,000.00 to the Auditor, Trevor 2nd the motion, all approved, motion passed.

Directors Report: Lucy reported that VMI had their strategic planning meeting, went overboard responsibilities for a non-profit and built on 2021 goals, having the same or similar board members help with the consistency. Added the motor trail, 365 & motor group, tour management and possible relocation of the visitors center to be on main street, talking to Councilman Chatham on who beyond VMI might reside in same location. Lucy reported on staffing, if budget is approved, we would like to start searching for an Executive Director, as well as compiling documents for electronic filing as well as hard copies. Process of annual audit, cost increase of \$2286.00, works with HMI and other organizations. Visitor attendance 790 much better than last year, Chataqua has requested a separation from VMI, both parts of event will be worked out, will be sitting down to see what we can work out. Ribberfest is celebrating its 20th year in 2022, Girls Weekend, VMI has assisted in marketing with this event, Taste of Ireland, multiple partners involved, a Thursday event which is one of the "365" days to get them to stay longer, time and financial for each event to look at how VMI's time is spent. Tourism Alliance was the last one, consistently 7 groups represented, 18 were invited, last 3 mtgs were good, looking forward to their report.

Marketing Report: Visitors Guide is printed and online & down to our last box, tracking where they are going, over 600 views from the online version. 250 links have been added to that. Collaborating with the Lewis & Clark Trails, changing the name to the Ohio River Way, we have been referred to in their meetings, working with them with our surveyors. Will be attending the Tourism Conference in a couple of weeks, 4 entrees for awards, Nights, Covid Campaign. JC EI Report, Rockport 2019 44.8 million went down 4% year after, tourism has always been higher with food and beverage, this time it has been retail during the crisis. Secured the "music at the mansion" events for this year, Madison in Bloom will be back this year.

Other Business: Dave opened discussion on the contract with VMI, Curtis asked about the total \$400,000., we have brought in 420,000 in revenue, asked VMI is they have looked for new revenue streams, Lucy answered they are looking but have nothing left. Curtis asked if the biggest increase is the Executive Director position, Lucy stated they also hired an assistant mktg. person, and the biggest portion is salaries. Curtis stated that the board wanted a plan for if another crisis happened & with this budget, it would take almost all that is budgeted, he did note that the budget is conservative. Curtis brought up a discussion of possibility of JCBT having a director that would be a liaison between JCBT & VMI, what would that look like, working collaboratively with all the other groups, Lucy stated that for an outside entity to direct VMI, would have to restructure the whole of VMI. Lucy stated they have been looking at working with the other organizations to collaborate. Curtis discussed looking into other Tourism boards to see how that looks & stated if the Director came from JCBT it has the County as whole, instead of just VMI. Curtis added that he knows VMI is in need of a director, just wanting to think out of the box. Trevor asked if the sliding scale is part of the contract in case of another "Covid". Lucy noted that it was 3d., built into the contract. Curtis noted that the Chamber is looking for a director as well, it would be a good time to see how these entities could collaborate on that, Lucy stated that this hasn't been a topic but on how to collaborate on projects. Dave stated that this may not be the time for that discussion on a director, he stated that The Tourism Alliance will be coming out with their report in the next month, which may be a starting point. Ron & Jim both stated their support for an Executive Director for VMI. Ron asked if we tabled the contract what can we accomplish in two weeks? Jim stated that the only question is on the numbers and how to deal with that. Dave stated that it gives us some time to discuss the numbers and raised the question of the dollar amount of quarterly funding for other projects will then be used up with the contract, unless we go into the reserves, which Curtis noted has taken time to build up. Jim stated first point is biggest change is Executive Director, then the change in the bed tax which is a next year. Dave stated it is also the Marketing Assistant as well as the Executive Director which is close to \$100,000., suggesting we table this and schedule a work session in the next 2 weeks. Dave motioned to have a meeting on 3.14.22

Tourism Alliance: Curtis reported that the sports & rec. is in the organizational phase. Dave & Dan will be reporting on their final findings in March.

Partnerships & Proposals: Town of Hanover, Dave presented the form that they filled out, 1. Website development 2. tying events from the County & the Town of Hanover 3. Continuation of the website for collaboration & expand They have 1/2 of the project funded, Debbie Kroger presented, this would be a 3-year contract, stating the board & rec is the most expensive, it will be a link on the towns site, having a drop down for the County as well. Asked for a member from

VMI to be on this board to help develop, stating there are several Airbnb & bed & breakfast in the Town that no one knows about, adding they could do this over 3 years of a cost. Curtis asked how this impacts tourism? They stated that the general amount of \$100,000 - \$250,000. for a town this size bring, most of these are from sports & recreation. Tami Hagemier stated that this website will also collect data of emails & zip code Victoria stated that she would like to see data, Debbie responded that is what the new website will deliver. Estimated date of 15 weeks to start. Tami stated that this website with the portals & drop downs is a launching pad to what the JCBT would like to do with collaboration. Ron stated that he felt this is a way to help the County & would be for funding for a year. Trevor stated that he's already seen the progress the Town has already made & felt confident that the Town would be able to produce some data for the next year & would like to be on the front end of this progress. Trevor made a motion to approve \$20849.50 to the Town of Hanover contingent on them bringing data to us as well as VMI that they receive. Ron 2nd the motion, all favored, motion passed.

Jim presented a proposal from Ribberfest, Erin Kindle, Event Coordinator disturbed a budget packet, requesting \$80,000.00, 16% of overall budget she noted that this is the 20th year for Ribberfest. Sponsorships we are trying to double from last year. Jim stated that the bands have gone up this year as well as just the cost of goods. Erin stated the funds to be used as follows: 62% for the blues bash, 5% marketing, 33% 20th anniversary funds, bringing people in a couple of weeks before. Stated she is working with Sarah on the Economic Calculator. Ron asked if this is the first time that they have asked & Erin responded that she didn't plan on needing help, but pre covid weather & covid hurt. Curtis asked if they were going to do camping for revenue, she stated that they were working on that. Dave opened discussion to table this, attempt to get the Economic Impact before next meeting.

Election of Officers: Dave opened discussion with the slate of officers, Dave nominated Wendy as Secretary, Jim nominated Curtis as Treasurer, Curtis nominated Dave as President and Trevor as Vice-President, Jim motioned to approve the slate of officers as Dave as President, Trevor as Vice-President, Curtis as Treasurer, Wendy as Secretary, Victoria 2nd the motion, all favored, motion passed.

New Business: Curtis opened up discussion on new Visitors Center, met with Lucy & Sarah & toured a building on Main St., with the availability to house several of the tourism groups, Curtis was given a rate of \$2500. /month, 1st year would include utilities, lease would be 1 year & then revisit, small issue with a compliant bathroom. Downstairs would be available if growth happens, its a big space & parking lot in the rear. Curtis stated a purchase is a possibility. Lucy stated it costs approx. \$4000-\$5000 to maintain the current Visitors Center /yr., but no lease payments, Curtis stated that JCBT would be the one funding that, this will be done in stages, main priority is getting VMI on main street. Curtis stated he would like to have the realtor draw up a draft to see what this looks like, Ron stated in theory sounds like a "no brainer", to have all the entities in one place.

Curtis discussed innkeepers tax increase, dispersed data of the 78 counties on the DOR, 62 of 78 are at 5%, which is where Jefferson County is, ours is the 4th oldest date, not been increased since 1987, innkeepers tax is truly a tourist tax, if we raised 1%, it would be a \$100,000 increase/year. Curtis stated he talked to State Rep. Randy Frye to start the conversation. Nancy

Crisp stated that even though it is a 1% increase, its compounding for the lodging. Jim stated the obstacle he sees is the community seeing a tax increase which actually is not coming from the taxpayer, which we will have to get out to the media. Curtis stated the increase requires not only the county officers but the state reps, Dave stated he would look into the process.

By-Laws: Dave asked Board to look over for the next meeting.

Curtis motioned to adjourn, Trevor 2nd motion, all approved, motion passed

Wendy Lawson, Secretary