

River Parishes Tourist Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2011

Meeting Attendance

Present: Paul Aucoin, Dolores Florent, Angie Matherne, Judy Songy, Nicolle Veillon

Absent: Betty Haydel, Peter Jasper

Staff: Kimmie Carlos, Coy St. Pierre, Jay Tusa

Stakeholders/Guests: Kim Fontenot (San Francisco Plantation), Jesse Lambert (Houmas House), Norman Marmillion (Laura Plantation), Arthur and Cathy Matherne (Airboat Tours by Arthur), Rita Perrilloux (Our Lady of Grace Church), Wynne Waltman (Graham Group)

I. Call to order

Chairman Paul Aucoin asked that roll be taken; recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order.

Paul asked if anyone wished to make any public comments on any agenda items to identify themselves at this time. No public comments were made.

II. Approval of November Minutes

- Paul asked for a motion to approve the November minutes

A motion was made by Angie Matherne and seconded by Nicole Veillon to approve the November minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Monthly Financial Reports

- Current Assets for the month ending November 30, 2011 were \$159,661 in the checking account with \$500,000 in a CD for Total Current Assets of \$659,661
- Total Assets plus Fixed Assets brings a total of \$666,127

- Paul reviewed the Statement of Revenues & Expenses and noted that we are showing no income for the month due to him not getting the checks to the office on time
- Paul mentioned that the income was normal for the month
- Paul reviewed the Expenses under *Program Services*
- For one month ended we budgeted \$8,690.75 and spent \$49,077.22
- Jay explained that large difference was due to some advertising invoices hitting in the same month
- Paul explained that some invoices will not get paid in the exact month that they are budgeted therefore looking at the last column shows we are only over budget by \$266.00 for the year
- *Salaries & Benefits* for the year we budgeted \$87,816 and spent \$93,183
- Paul asked Jay what was the reason for the large variance
- Jay mentioned he thinks it may have been due to an extra pay period but would look into it
- Total *General & Administrative* was \$487.15 under budget for the year

A motion was made by Judy Songy and seconded by Dolores Florent to approve the November financials. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the charts for the three parishes showing the monthly income
- Paul reviewed the Hotel/Motel chart showing current year actual to budget and prior year actual
- Paul reviewed the General Ledger

A motion was made by Angie Matherne and seconded by Judy Songy to approve the General Ledger for November. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the bank statement ending November 30th
- There was 1 deposit totaling \$424.66
- Ending balance per bank was \$162,268.98 with the ending balance per book was \$159,660.94 with two outstanding checks

A motion was made by Judy Songy and seconded by Nicole Veillon to approve the bank statement for November. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the income for the month but noted that since it wasn't deposited until after the financials were prepared that they are for review purposes only and will be approved at the next meeting
- Paul reviewed the transaction listing for the month

A motion was made by Dolores Florent and seconded by Judy Songy to approve the transaction listing for November. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the invoices paid for the month

A motion was made by Angie Matherne and seconded by Dolores Florent to approve the invoices paid for November. The motion was unanimously approved.

Updated Budget

- Jay passed around the budget and explained that we try to update the budget every quarter or so
- Jay noted that the updated budget includes two separate line items for the BP Grant
- One line item is called *BP Revenue* which shows all the funds we received for all three parishes that will go into that line item
- Under *Program Services*, we created another line item called *BP Expenses* which shows all our expenses for the BP funds
- Paul asked if we can show what the funds are going to as opposed to lumping them all together
- Jay mentioned that he would have to talk to our CPA to see how we can have a subset from a line item
- Paul asked that instead of a BP budget if Jay could prepare a monthly BP financial report similar to our regular financials we receive from our CPA itemizing what we are spending the money on
- Paul mentioned that we always present the budget then vote on it at the next meeting
- Paul asked the board members to take home the budget to study it and next month will approve it
- Paul asked for a motion to go into recess

A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Judy Songy to go into recess. The motion was unanimously approved.

Break 10:20 - 10:30

A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Judy Songy to reconvene. The motion was unanimously approved.

Roll was once again taken; a quorum was recognized and the meeting was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Director's Report- Jay Tusa

Advertising & PR Update

- Wynne Waltman passed around a few group ads that are currently running
- Wynne mentioned that getting Facebook where it needs to be has been the focus the last couple of months
- Since starting the Sweepstakes our Facebook Fan-base has increase 267%
- Impressions have increased 122%
- Site Visits has increased 85%
- Unique visitors has increased 77%
- Additional advertising and Facebook posts helped secure unique visits to the site and additional fan base to continue the conversation
- Jay noted that when we started the contest we had 861 Likes and in two and a half months we now have 3,637 likes
- Jay added with that we are getting a lot of dialog with people participating and posting

Website – November

- Site Visits – 8,362
- Page Views – 31,981
- Unique visitors – 6,494
- Search Engine Paid Impressions – 426,260
- Click Thru Rate - .49%
- More than 37% of traffic came from Search Engines
- Top page viewed: Sweepstakes, Wedding –Wedding Venues
- Top referring site – Google, Facebook
- Brochure Requests – 122 (download savings of \$69.96)
- Top Visitation City – New Orleans, Houston, Atlanta, Baton Rouge

Facebook Update

- Jay mentioned he has a proposal for Sherry Constance with Constance Consulting to help us with our Facebook
- Jay explained that Sherry helped us with our Facebook during the contest by posting several times a day which stimulated a lot of interaction
- The proposal is for one unique post a day with her answering any questions related to her postings
- Sherry is proposing to do this for us on a monthly bases for \$200 per month
- The proposal is on a month to month basis with a 30 day notice of non renewal should we decide to go in another direction

- Paul asked those in attendance their thoughts on the amount of posts with regards to the contract price
- Jesse Lambert with Houmas House noted that every seminar and everything she's read about the proper frequency of posts all say 4 to 6 post per day
- Jay explained that Sherry will be doing more of the fun 'where is this' or what is this' posts opposed to telling people to go out and visit a plantation for a specific event which will still be our responsibility
- Jay mentioned that we can try it and if we feel we need more posts then we can evaluate it at that time
- Judy stated she would like to make a motion to try it and in 60 days evaluate it to see if we need more posts or not
- Jay made everyone aware that Sherry is doing work for other CVBs and has started her own company
- She is doing work for Bayou LaFourche and Tax Free Shopping
- Sherry has also accepted a job as the Assistant Director of St. Bernard Tourism
- Paul felt that Sherry working for another CVB would be a conflict of interest
- Angie disagreed and felt that we should all be working together
- Paul expressed that his concerns were more about loyalty to us over other CVBs but agreed to try it for a couple of months to see how it works out

A motion was made by Judy Songy and seconded by Angie Matherne to approve the hiring of Constance Consulting to help promote our Facebook page for a trial period of 60 days after which time it will be reevaluated. The motion was unanimously approved.

Community Center Report – Coy St. Pierre

- Coy reported that Memphis Beat is in the process of tearing down the set with an expected move out date of January 9, 2012
- For the month of November there were two soundstage inquiries, two private event inquiries and two location requests
- For the first half of December there were two private event inquiries
- Nalco Company will be holding their annual Christmas celebration on Friday, December 16th in the center's atrium
- Relay for Life will be using the parking lot for their event on March 31st
- Coy noted there were no ad placements for this reporting period

New Server

- Jay mentioned that we are in need of a new server since we are close to reaching our capacity on the current server

- Jay received a proposal from ACT Technologies which is about \$2,000 for the server and about \$1,200 for installation which comes to a total of about \$3,300 if we decide to go that route
- Jay mentioned that he has done some research on Cloud serving and with that we are looking at about \$500 - \$700 a year
- Jay made the recommendation to go with the Cloud sever based on no upfront costs and comparing what the physical server costs would equals about 6 years of the Cloud serving which may be out dated by then
- Jay mentioned that with the Cloud server we will be able to access it through apps using ipads, tablets, laptops and desktops
- Other people will also be able to access it such as Wynne or any of our board members if they need to retrieve any documents from the server
- Jay mentioned that the negatives would be if the company happens to go out of business then they would have all our data which is a concern
- Jay suggested purchasing a back up drive that would back up our data in case something should happen to the Cloud server
- Paul agreed that the Cloud server would be the best opinion and would like to have board approval for anyone requesting a pass code to access it
- Jay mentioned he thinks there is a way to grant access to individuals to certain data on the server instead of granting them access to the entire database

A motion was made by Judy Songy and seconded by Nicole Veillon for the purchase of a new sever in the price range of \$500 - \$700 per year subject to the board having to give approval to access the Cloud. The motion was unanimously approved.

Show Update – Kimmie Carlos

- **World Travel Market – London, England**
- Kimmie reported that we had a combined booth with the State and NOCVB
- There was a strong interest in the New Orleans area and for plantations
- Kimmie mentioned that everyone is excited about the Riverboats coming back especially with stops at the different areas
- **Southeast Tourism Society Fall Meeting – New Orleans, LA**
- **Toronto Sales Mission w/LOT – Toronto, Canada**
- Kimmie went to CAA which is similar to AAA
- Kimmie got a chance to do sales presentations to all their salespeople
- Kimmie pushes the fact that Air Canada still offers direct flights from Canada to New Orleans which is a big push from the Canadian market
- Kimmie mentioned that we plan on going back in September to do some more trade shows since it's a very strong market for us
- We also participated in their Gourmet Food and Wine show which they had a Louisiana Chef serving Crawfish Etouffee and we gave out our Zapp's chips

- Kimmie stated everyone was excited to see us and she received lots of great feedback with people saying they've either been to our area or they are planning on coming this year
- **National Tour Association – Las Vegas, NV**
- There was a huge Louisiana delegation that attended
- Kimmie had 25 appointments
- Kimmie explained that we get to share the state's leads as well as NOCVB's leads that apply to us

Upcoming Schedule for RPTC

- **December 23 & 26:** Christmas – Office Closed
- **December 30 & January 2:** New Year's – Office Closed
- **January 6-10:** American Bus Association (ABA) – Grapevine, TX
- Kimmie will be attending this show
- Kimmie mentioned that she has 30 requests to see her at this show
- **January 24 - 26:** Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit – Shreveport, LA

V. Chairman's Monthly Report- Paul Aucoin

General Comments

- Paul suggested to Jay it's time to set up a meeting with Chef John Folse again to see if we can partner with him on some things since he has a lot going on right now

RPTC Board Elections

- Paul stated that we have three officers that are on the board which are the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Secretary/Treasurer
- Paul Aucoin opened up the floor for nominations for Chairman of the Tourist Commission.
- Judy Songy nominated Paul Aucoin for Chairman
- Nicole Veillon seconded the nomination
- Paul Aucoin asked if there were any other nominations for Chairman
- With no other nominations for Chairman, Paul Aucoin asked for a motion to approve.
- The motion was unanimously approved.

- Judy Songy thanked Paul for all his time and effort he's put into the Commission and his outstanding job he's done
- Paul Aucoin accepted the nomination to be re-elected Chairman.
- Paul Aucoin opened up the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair
- Delores Florent nominated Judy Songy for Vice Chair
- Nicole Veillon seconded the nomination
- With no other nominations for Vice Chair, Paul Aucoin asked for a motion to approve.
- The motion was unanimously approved.
- Paul Aucoin congratulated Judy Songy as the Vice Chairman
- Paul Aucoin opened up the floor for nominations for Secretary/Treasurer
- Judy Songy nominated Nicole Veillon for Secretary/Treasurer
- Angie Matherne seconded the nomination
- With no other nominations for Secretary/Treasurer, Paul Aucoin asked for a motion to approve.
- The motion was unanimously approved.
- Paul Aucoin congratulated Nicole Veillon as the Secretary/Treasurer

Adoption of La Compliance Questionnaire for audit

- Paul mentioned we need to obtain board authorization to adopt the LA Compliance Questionnaire in order to complete our annual audit
- Jay explained the questionnaire asks questions on how we handle certain things such as policy and procedures
- Paul read through the questionnaire and asked if everyone was comfortable with the answers
- In regards to the question pertaining to maintain a record of fixed and movable assets, Paul mentioned that we adopted a resolution a couple of meetings ago to actually mark and track our movable assets
- Jay stated we talked about it but he didn't think we actually made a resolution to do this but he would go back and look at the records
- Paul asked Jay to put it back on the agenda if we didn't make a resolution to do this
- Jay noted it is something that he is currently working on with Pernell
- Paul explained that he needs authority from all the officers and board to sign the questionnaire
- The questionnaire needs to be signed by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer and Director
- Paul asked for a motion to authorize the adoption of the questionnaire

A motion was made by Dolores Florent and seconded by Angie Matherne to adopt the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for our annual audit. The motion was unanimously approved.

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A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Angie Matherne to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.