

River Parishes Tourist Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2011

Meeting Attendance

Present: Paul Aucoin, Delores Florent, Nancy Robert, Judy Songy,
Nicolle Veillon

Absent: Betty Haydel, Peter Jasper

Staff: Coy St. Pierre, Jay Tusa

Stakeholders/Guests: Rachael Burns (Holiday Inn Express), Pat Dupuy (St.
James Welcome Center), Jesse Lambert (Houmas House),
Debbie Ruelet (St. Joseph Plantation),

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 December Minutes

- Paul asked for a motion to approve the December minutes

A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Delores Florent to approve the December minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Monthly Financial Reports

- Total assets are \$656,000 with a \$500,000 CD leaves us with about \$150,000 in the bank

RPTC Mtg. Minutes

Jan 11, 2011/pg 2

- For our monthly support, we budgeted \$266,000 and our actual was \$279,000
- For *Expenses- Program Services*, we budgeted \$152,000 and \$142,000 was spent
- For *Salaries and Benefits* we budgeted \$98,000 and actual was \$96,000
- For *Total General & Administrative* we budgeted \$21,000 and spent \$19,000

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Nicole Veillon to approve the December financials. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Nicole Veillon to approve the hotel occupancy tax for December. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the invoices paid for the month
- Paul asked for a motion to approve the December invoices paid

A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Delores Florent to approve the invoices paid for December. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul reviewed the checking account statement
- Ending balance per the bank was \$152,976
- Actual balance due to outstanding checks per book is \$148,708

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Delores Florent to approve the checking account for December. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Nicole Veillon 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.

Opening Comments

- Paul asked for a moment of silence for those killed and injured in the tragedy in Tuscon
- Paul welcomed everyone to the January meeting and wished them a Happy and Prosperous New Year
- Paul reported that by law he is required to ask if anyone wants to make public comments on any items that need to be voted on do so at this time

IV. Director's Report- Jay Tusa

BP Grant

- Jay expects to hear back from the state on the parameters of the grant within the next week
- Jay mentioned that it appears they are still going to give the money to the Parishes and not the CVBs
- Jay stated we will be working with our local municipalities on those funds and doesn't expect that to be a problem

Visitor Guide

- Jay reported that the visitor guide has gone to the printer and we should have those by the end of the week or beginning of next week

Website

- Jay reviewed the ongoing website stats
- Total brand impressions were 312,129
- Direct visits to the site was 223
- Total visits was 2,563
- Unique visitors was 2,306
- Total pageviews was slightly down as was the pay per click impressions
- Pay per click through rate was about the same at 0.47% which is a good rate
- Website brochure requests has dropped off with 33 requests for the month
- Jay pointed out that our facebook has jumped up on the list for top referring sites because we've be promoting facebook more for the past couple of months building up our fan base which is now up to 660

- Jay noted that Baton Rouge CVB recently held a contest on their website using an app called 'Wild Fire' and their facebook numbers went from about 4,000 to 8,000
- Jay mentioned he would like to do a contest in the Spring using that app to bolster our facebook numbers
- Wynne Waltman with Graham Group said she would help us out with the contest using the facebook app
- Jay mentioned that he is considering making a recommendation to the board to change our website support to Graham Group
- Jay is feels with Graham Group handling the rest of our work would make more sense and be more cost effective to handle the web as well

Upcoming Schedule for RPTC

- January 8-12: American Bus Association (ABA) – Philadelphia, PA
- January 17: Martin Luther King Holiday – Office Closed
- January 25-27: LTPA Travel & Tourism Summit – Baton Rouge, LA
- Jay asked if any board member are interested in going to Summit to please let him know so he can register them
- January 31- February 2: Tennessee Motor Coach Association – Tunica, MS
- February 10-12: DC Mardi Gras – Washington, D.C.
- March 7-8: Mardi Gras Holiday – Office Closed
- Jay noted that March 8 is our regularly scheduled meeting therefore he asked if they board preferred to reschedule it for another day or postpone it until the following month
- Paul felt it should be held the following week to give the staff time to prepare
- Delores Florent asked if it would be a problem to have the meeting the following month
- Nancy Robert mentioned that she used to have her board meetings every month but now has them every other month to give the staff more time to prepare
- Jay noted that our by-laws states we need to have a meeting as least quarterly therefore it would be up to the board to decide how often we have our meetings
- Nancy also felt that by perhaps having the meeting every other month, we would have greater stakeholder attendance
- Paul expressed his opposition at having a board meeting every other month
- Paul felt it would take too much time to review two months of financials
- Paul also felt that we needed to be here on a monthly basis for our attractions whether they want to attend or not
- Paul's personal opinion is that he sits on nine different boards and he's found that those that don't have monthly meetings are disjointed, unconnected and difficult to get a quorum

- Paul put the question to a vote if we should have a meeting on March 15 or no meeting at all
- Delores Florent asked Paul if he felt there was enough of a discussion before putting it to a vote
- Paul mentioned that he was going to ask for a discussion like he always does before taking a poll
- Paul noted that the question is going to be “Do you want to have a meeting on March 15 in place of the Mardi Gras meeting or no meeting at all?”
- Paul asked if there were any questions or any discussions
- With no questions or discussions, Paul asked all those in favor of having the meeting deferred from March 8 to March 15 to raise their hand
- The motioned passed with the meeting to be held on March 15
- Paul told Nancy he will remain open to the suggestion she made about having a meeting every other month and will continue the discussion
- Paul suggested putting it on the agenda next month to discuss further

V. Chairman’s Monthly Report- Paul Aucoin

- Paul reported that we received our annual audit and it’s crystal clean as usual and couldn’t ask for a better audit
- Paul complimented the staff and board for the way we conduct our business
- Paul mentioned that what we usually do with the audit is take it home and study it and then approve or adopt it at our next meeting

Closing Comments

- Nancy announced that Destrehan Plantation held it’s opening of the Slave Revolt Exhibit on Saturday and had great front page publicity in the paper for two days
- Nancy noted they have more leads on publicity on both a national and statewide level to promote the Slave Revolt events
- Delores Florent mentioned that St. James Parish is holding a Martin Luther King celebration on January 17 at St. James High School at noon
- Jay mentioned that we will be participating in the Hospitality Suite at DC Mardi Gras with the other parishes from the surrounding areas that include Ascension Parish, the River Parishes, South Central Planning and the Port of South Louisiana
- Our cost to participate will be \$1,200 and we will also be distributing our potato chips in the Hospitality Suite
- Both Judy and Jay will be attending to represent the Tourist Commission
- Jesse Lambert asked if the Tourist Commission was planning a dinner at Summit

- Jay mentioned we aren't doing anything official but plan to get together with some of our stakeholders for an informal dinner one night

VI. Executive Session

- Paul announced that the board will go into a short executive session where no votes will be taken

A motion was made by Nicole Veillon and seconded by Judy Songy to enter into Executive Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Judy Songy to return to Regular Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul noted that no votes were taken
- Paul asked if there was a motion to come before the board regarding the health, dental and vision plan for Tourist Commission employees

A motion was made by Judy Songy and seconded by Delores Florent to accept the recommendation that the Tourist Commission pay 85% of the premium for the employee's Health Insurance, with the employee contributing 15% and for the dependents, the Tourist Commission shall pay 75% of the premium and the employee contribution be 25%. Upon receipt of the proposal from Blue Cross, should there be a variation of no more than 5% the board authorizes Jay to accept that proposal, should it be more than 5% then the board will be polled. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Paul noted that should this be a successful bid by Blue Cross, the Tourist Commission will then drop the Gilsbar's program that we are in with St. James Parish
- Paul mentioned that we sent in a refundable deposit and asked for a motion to ratify the sending of that refundable deposit

A motion was made by Nancy Robert and seconded by Judy Songy to ratify the sending of the refundable deposit to Blue Cross. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.