

## McCurtain County Tourism Authority Minutes

Tuesday March 21, 2023 - 1:00 PM

### Meeting held at Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce Board Room

Chairman Aron Maib called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

**Members present:** Aron Maib, Vic Clay, Teresa Mullins, Tommy Julian, Craig Young, Jerry Don Smith, and Debbie Elliot. **Absent Board Members:** None. Executive Director Charity O'Donnell was also present. Guests present were Dave Smulyan, John Williams, Robert Beck, Vickie Patterson, TC Haggard, Howard Haggard, Janet Cress, Shellye Copeland and Skip Copeland.

**Mural Grant:** Vickie Patterson from the City of Broken Bow discussed the proposal for a mural downtown, she asked for \$5,000. The design had not yet been determined. Tommy Julian made the motion to table this grant until they could see the design chosen. Vic Clay seconded the motion, Jerry Don Smith abstained since he is on the city council. Motion passed 6-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes; Jerry Don Smith, abstained; and Vic Clay, yes.

**Winter Wonderland Special Projects Grant:** Vickie Patterson presented the proposal asking for \$50,000 for lights to put up for Christmas to draw people to our area. She stated that she planned to spend \$150,000 and that she had applied for one other grant which she hopes to get for this project. She said she hopes to grow the lights each year and host events around it. Craig Young made the motion to approve the Winter Wonderland Special Project Grant as proposed. Vic Clay seconded the motion. Jerry Don Smith abstained. Motion passed 6-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes; Jerry Don Smith, abstained; and Vic Clay, yes.

Vickie Patterson left after her proposals.

**Minutes:** Tommy Julian made the motion to approve the December and January minutes as presented. Teresa Mullins seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 7-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; and Vic Clay, yes.

**Financial Report:** Vic Clay, seconded by Tommy Julian, made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented. Motion passed unanimously 7-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes; Jerry Don Smith, yes; and Vic Clay, yes.

**Purchase Orders:** Purchase Order amounts were presented and reviewed. Craig Young, seconded by Debbie Elliot, made a motion to approve the purchase orders as presented. Motion passed unanimously 7-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes, Jerry Don Smith, yes; and Vic Clay, yes.

**Old Business:**

**Trash Contract:** Aron Maib reported he had hoped they could be here to open the lines of communications. He had spoken to Anthony and Engineer at the ODOT office in Antlers about the trash problem and he understands our concerns and might be willing to help. He also stated Ashely from their office had planned to attend today, however something came up this morning and he couldn't make it. Both did say they are interested in a partnership. He stated that they also earmark 10% of their budget for trash pickup on highways. He state that they are not making the impact they would like. Aron continued to share that they use county inmate labor and they are spread very thin. One county provides inmates through a program, and they use them for three different counties. They are interested in a partnership and tackling this issue for the betterment of all. They have the same concerns, but who is going to do it is the bigger issue. John Williams stated he had spoken to PJ from Solid Waste and there is not much they can do because they must have a different type of insurance that the county likely couldn't afford. John stated they didn't have any plans to help and was not sure if they could legally. They are looking for ways they can contribute. Maybe hiring a PR person to promote litter awareness programs at school. Another person in the room stated they already have a program like this. He mentioned that he knew Mark Jennings had also reached out to ODOT as well. He stated that county had been using county labor however they can only pick up on county roads not highways because of the insurance policy they have. Vic Clay stated he had spoken to Tim Gatz, the Executive Director for ODOT, and he showed interested. Vic stated he also spoke to Jarrad Campbell recently about this and they are checking with legal to see if the Little River Conservation can take this on. Aron stated there are some existing statewide contracts set up for ODOT for trash pickup. It was discussed that ODOT might be able to redo them in a partnership form. It was also discussed that there would have to be a high degree of accountability and impact in order for this to be possible. MCTA has earmarked 10% of their budget for a trash program. The biggest problem is liability insurance, followed by finding someone to oversee it, then getting workers to implement it. It was suggested that the city governments might

could take it on. Guest Skip Copeland asked why we are not utilizing an existing trust through Solid Waste to do exactly what is needing to be done? Shellye also added that there is a funded education program for trash through OSU extension and Solid Waste. He went on to ask why is the tourism authority is looking at overseeing this when we have a trust in place that should be doing this very thing and is collecting tax dollars to do this? Skip went on to say that they need to be looking at the insurance and overseeing this. Skip and Shellye stated that funding should be there for insurance through the Solid Waste Trust. If everyone partnering needs to happened, then all need to partner not just some. Aron reminded them that we are not looking to oversee this, we will just help fund it and get it going. Guest Janet Cress and Teresa Mullins both mentioned that it will take several employees working everyday to make an impact. Skip described the history and background of the Solid Waste Trust Authority being started and issues in the early years. He reminded the board that they have a good budget to help with this. This existing entity should be involved in this discussion. John Williams stated he would get with everyone for a county wide community leader meeting with ODOT tentatively for Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and get back with everyone.

***Advertising Update:*** Matt Farley with ICG reported that creative and strategy stage and shooting summer content the end of April. He mentioned that ICG would be presenting the proposed advertising plan at the May meeting for next fiscal year. He stated that we are down 1% for the year. Comparing numbers to a record high the year before. He stated we cannot control power outages and burn bans however we can control things like inflation and changing travel patterns. He spoke about content strategies, like Teddy Owens, Park Ranger Pam, and Jane G. cooking show at cabin luxury kitchens. He mentioned ongoing projects like native branded ads, print ads, digital ads, etc. Social media number one driver for all things, FB is performing well as is Instagram. Our YouTube Channel is very successful – with content being the number one driver and Big Foot video being the most popular. Fishing reels also do very well. Looking into April, we will have a influencers from Texas Tatsey Griffin tv show OKC and Tulsa. McCurtain County won seven ADDY AWARDS the most ever won. Every entry for McCurtain County won an ADDY AWARD this year. Vic asked that Matt bring results on dollars spent for the secondary market, outside of DFW, to the year end meeting in May. We currently advertise in Dallas, OKC, Tulsa, Shreveport, Ft Worth, and Houston, he stated we cut Little Rock, AR as they were not

impactful. He also mentioned local impact stories the two done so far about Paul Stuart and Brad Pennington are doing amazing. Three different types of shoots - big budget with actors and such, content shoots which is Teddy Owens, Myth, Legends, and Ghost Stories, and local impact type stuff, social shoots everyone for all the social media content. Matt reported we have about \$15,000 left unallocated. He needs to know how to best spend that, maybe Park Ranger Pam do a trash message or something else.

John Williams left the meeting at this point.

***Unscheduled New Business:*** Aron mentioned that we need a larger room for May meeting. Then Aron mentioned he had a conflict with that date. A motion was made by Debbie Elliot to move the annual meeting to May 25<sup>th</sup> at 10am at the Forest Heritage Center meeting room. Tommy Julian seconded; the motion passed unanimously 7-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes, Jerry Don Smith, yes; and Vic Clay, yes.

Guest Dave Smulyan reported that effective January 1<sup>st</sup> state law requires companies like VRBO and EVOLVE, they are not just collecting the tax but to pay it. Dave mentioned that there was some confusion on it. VRBO isn't doing it correctly. Stating they collected it but didn't pay it. He mentioned that that would affect revenues as they trying to get this all worked out. AIRBNB is doing it differently as well. The new statute is causing some confusion. Everyone thanked him for the information.

***Adjourn:*** Vic Clay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Teresa Mullins seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 7-0. Teresa Mullens, yes; Debbie Elliot, yes; Aron Maib, yes; Craig Young, yes, Jerry Don Smith, yes; and Vic Clay, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 2:13pm.

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Aron Maib, Chairperson