

Garnett Tourism Committee
Minutes
May 3, 2017

The Garnett Tourism Committee met in the Commission Room at Garnett City Hall with the following members present: Tom Emerson Jr., Chairman, Susan Caron, Laurel Ladewig, Robert Risch (arriving later), Nicole Stevenson, Paula Wallace and Travis Wilson, members. Also attending: Joyce Martin, City Manager, Susan Wettstein, Community Development Director, Desiree Donovan, Administrative Assistant/Chamber Director, and Anderson County Fair Board Members: Jess Rockers, President; Justin Zook, Vice President, Cody Davis, Debbie Davis and Ruth Pracht.

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 5:28 p.m.

Positive Tourism Observations

Travis stated the new dentist office was a great looking addition to the highway area. Joyce reported that Fat Tony's Barbecue will open May 17th.

Members of the Anderson County Fair entered the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Tom thanked Joyce for her assistance in helping obtain a matching grant The Chamber Players Community Theatre recently received from the Goppert Foundation in the amount of \$10,000. The funds will be used for heating and air-conditioning at the theatre.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Travis Wilson, seconded by Susan Caron to approve the minutes of April 12, 2017 as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Joyce presented the Transient Guest Tax Fund Report for April showing a balance of uncommitted funds to be \$8,945.77. This is after subtracting expenses for printer ink cartridges, E-Blast (Constant Contact renewal) and the down payment on fireworks for Libertyfest. Joyce also shared with the Committee the Transient Guest Tax Revenues from 2013 to present. The May disbursement (not included in the April TGT Report) shows one of the lowest receipts since 2013. Susan Wettstein reported that she and Desiree Donovan have visited with the motels and they were not really saying why but said that January, February and March were really slow this year. However, they are saying May is looking to be a very busy month with the upcoming cattle sale, reunions and other events.

Old Business

The Committee considered the Transient Guest Tax Applications submitted by the Anderson County Fair at the April 5, 2017 tourism meeting. Tom opened the discussion by explaining to the committee that both Joyce and Tom had met with Jess Rockers after the last Tourism Advisory Committee meeting to see if they could come to a different conclusion than what was voted on at the last meeting. Jess was asked to provide a revised application. Tom said that because of those discussions this committee, as a courtesy, should listen to what the Fair Board has to say. Tom asked if staff had received a revised Non-Marketing Transient Guest Tax Application from the Fair. Jess responded that he did not make any revisions. Jess also stated he was not a true supporter of the money they are requesting to be coming from this fund but rather it should come from the city's general fund. Susan Caron asked it if was true that the carnival had reservations or if they were iffy about coming to Garnett and if that is why they are increasing their guarantee? Jess responded that during the time of the Anderson County Fair there are many other fairs going on making it a competitive market to get a carnival. Debbie Davis stated that people have apathy; that they want a carnival but they don't want to support it. Justin Zook asked what do we do if we no longer have a carnival. We brought the carnival back because everyone complained. Tom said he has done a lot of online research on fairs across the country and in this digital age all fairs are facing tough times when it comes to attracting people. He shared with the Fair

Board members how the Tourism Committee pondered their decision when they have recommended for the last 3 years that the deposit for the carnival be funded even though the applications say over and over again that they are losing money. Tom asked, "Do we keep recommending you receive \$2,500 so you can pay \$4,000 out of pocket for the balance due to the carnival?" Tom stated that by the absence of a revised non-marketing application there is no reason to entertain a vote on something that has not changed.

Tom opened discussion on the revised marketing plan prepared by Ruth Pracht on behalf of the Anderson County Fair. Tom explained to the Fair Board how the Transient Guest Tax Application works, including the component that requires the applicant to show promotion advertising to be 30 percent local and 70 percent outside. It is important that the receipts for reimbursement follow this in order to truly be reimbursed. Susan Wettstein clarified that the policies in the grant application, including the 30/70 rule was implemented in this grant program at the direction of the City Commission.

Discussion was held on the grant program and its funding. Susan Wettstein shared a spreadsheet of the current and anticipated requests with both the Committee and Fair Board members. Including the Fair's recent request of a combined \$6,500, the Lake Garnett Grand Prix Revival's request of \$2,700, and 3 more anticipated requests from the Library Homes Tour, Celebrate the Book and Greeley Smokeoff, the total requests for 2017 could total approximately \$27,792.80. The amount budgeted for Special Event Requests for 2017 is \$26,000. Joyce stated the budget can be amended, if necessary. The Tourism Board expressed concern on the amounts yet to be considered given the fact that there is only \$8,945.77 in uncommitted funds at this time and the May remittance from the state totaled \$3,207.95 which is the lowest amount received since 2013.

Debbie explained that the fair should be looked at differently than other events. The fair goes on for several days where most of the other events are just one (1) day. Tom responded that it is not for this committee to compare one event to another because you cannot compare them like apples to apples. While one event may go on for a few days, another may be one day but bring in more visitors than a multiple day event. Another may bring in a different audience. The focus of this committee is to look at the event itself and compare it to itself and what it has done and what it is doing to progress, but not to give precedence to one event over another.

Jess announced that the fair would be adding a bull riding event to their schedule. However, it will not be held during the fair. Debbie stated that it is being sponsored by the Fair Board.

Robert Risch entered the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

In looking over the description of the advertising line items, the Committee discussed, line by line, what would benefit the fair if cuts are made to this application. A motion was made by Nicole Stevenson to recommend approval of the following: Facebook Advertising - \$750, 92.9 The Bull - \$450, KKOW Pittsburg - \$450, KOFO Radio - \$300, KIKS Radio - \$500, Ottawa Herald/Shopper - \$350; Total: \$2,800. Travis Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Before going on to the next agenda item Susan Wettstein asked if there would be a call to vote on the non-market request on the carnival deposit. Tom responded that there was nothing new brought before this committee and therefore it will go to the City Commission. Tom reminded the Fair Board that this committee only makes recommendations after thoroughly reviewing the application. The City Commission makes the final decision; whether that be to follow the recommendation of this committee or to approve something different.

The Fair Board left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

New Business

New Transient Guest Tax Requests:

The Committee considered the Marketing Transient Guest Tax Application submitted by the Lake Garnett Grand Prix Revival. The request is to fund advertising of the 3-day event to be held October 14-16, 2017. In diligent review of the request and line items within this application there was discussion about eliminating items not necessarily considered as advertising items, such as poster frames and t-shirts. A motion was made by Tom Emerson to recommend approval of the following: Fed Ex Kinkos Posters and Promo Cards - \$800; Vista Print magnets - \$200; Anderson County Review - \$100, Advocate - \$100, Ottawa Herald - \$100; Total: \$1,300. Nicole Stevenson second the motion. This motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was held briefly on the possibility at some point to seek guidance on capping the amount of a TGT request by an entity per year. This comes about because of the diminishing reserve balances and concerns over future receipts to be received the next two (2) quarters. In addition there is always the possibility that more organizations will request funding which could mean less available dollars per request.

Information was shared on the Kansas Visitor Guide listings. Susan Wettstein said that Desiree has sent letters out to businesses and attractions to invite their participation. She said, in the past, first time participants can get a 50% break on the cost of their listing. TGT funds pay the difference, as well as city owned facilities and attractions, which totals less than \$1,000. A motion was made by Tom Emerson and seconded by Robert Risch to approve this offering as has been done in the past. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Susan Wettstein provided her report to the committee by email and is attached to the original copy of these minutes.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Tom Emerson and seconded by Robert Risch to adjourn. Chairman Tom Emerson, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Susan Wettstein.