

**Garnett Tourism Committee
Minutes
August 7, 2017**

The Garnett Tourism Committee met on August 7, 2017, in the Commission Room at Garnett City Hall with the following members present: Tom Emerson Jr., Chairman, Susan Caron, Laurel Ladewig, Nicole Stevenson and Paula Wallace. Also attending: Susan Wettstein, Community Development Director and Desiree Donovan, Chamber Director. Absent: Travis Wilson and Robert Risch, members.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Positive Tourism Observations:

Susan Caron stated that the parks look great and that we are very lucky to have all of the amenities that we have in Garnett.

Tom mentioned that ticket sales for the Chamber Players Community Theatre's presentation of *Love, Loss and What I Wore* are selling very quickly. He stated that it looks like the opening night fundraiser at ACHS might sell out. Susan questioned the status of the new facility. Tom replied that the theatre is still planning to build a new theatre in the next few years.

Laurel stated that the rain might have affected participation at the Anderson County Fair but she did not notice a big decline in attendees. Nicole agreed and stated that the Optimist Club booth remained very busy the entire time.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Susan Caron, seconded by Laurel Ladewig to approve the minutes of July 5, 2017 as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Financials:

Susan presented the Transient Guest Tax Report for July with the beginning balance of \$23,627.64. She mentioned that Libertyfest donations were ran through the Transient Guest Tax Fund account as revenue and then the fireworks expense was paid out of this fund. The remaining carry-over for 2018's event will be continually tracked on this report. A Transient Guest Tax disbursement was received in July totally \$4,166.29. This is less than anticipated. After revenue receipts and expenditures the balance of TGT funds as of 7/31/2017 is \$25,937.87. Funding commitments total \$17,600.77, leaving a balance of uncommitted funds in the amount of \$8,337.10.

Susan shared the 2017 Transient Guest Tax Report with the Committee. If the TGT requests brought forth this evening are approved the to-date total of funds awarded to events would be \$23,547 for 2017. The amount budgeted for special event requests for 2017 is \$26,000. Susan

suggested that the committee might want to consider placing a cap on the amount that can be requested through the TGT application process. Susan also mentioned that we will receive one more disbursement during this year from the State in November. She went on to say that the Committee would not want to commit funds exceeding the \$26,000 budgeted amount. The \$8,337.10 uncommitted balance is all the money that is currently available for tourism operations. Tom questioned if there are any anticipated special events requests to come in before the end of the year. Susan replied "Not that she is aware".

Susan also wanted the board to be aware that we have \$3,665.87 to be carried over for 2018 Libertyfest, not \$4,345 as stated last month. This amount is corrected from what was originally reported because the City purchased \$700.00 in additional fireworks and then an additional donation received. Tom asked if since there was a carry-over balance for next year if the TGT fund could get reimbursed back for the \$2,400 it gave for the deposit on the fireworks? Susan said that would be up to the City Commission but if those funds were subtracted from the carry-over then most likely an application would be submitted for those funds for next year and the county could want their \$1,000 returned as well. She said if left alone she sees no reason for the City to ask for TGT or county funding for next year's fireworks, but to allow the community to support the event through their generosity as was evident by many civic organizations and individuals this year.

Old Business:

The After Event Reports submitted by applicants were emailed out with the agenda prior to this meeting.

BPW Women's Fair – In review of the report provided, Susan stated they felt their social media (Facebook) marketing did well for them this year. A check for \$586.35 has been submitted to BPW for this event.

BPW Square Fair - Reimbursement was in the amount of 1,293.45. Susan noted that in their After Event Report they tell us they had more vendors this year than they have in the past three years and organizers believe the increase is due to the success of their advertising as outlined in their application.

Recommendation of Tabled TGT Request: *Celebrate the Book* – This topic was tabled from last month in order for staff to ask some questions. Susan emailed Andrea Sobba and her reply was presented to the Committee. Tom went over the information that was provided from the Friends of the Library that explained the details of their event. Tom mentioned that answers provided in the email were exactly what the Committee was looking and this really helped justify funding this request. Susan read the letter from Jim Johnson requesting \$150.00 for this event which mentioned that the Anderson County Commissioners agreed to donate the same amount if the City will. Nicole mentioned that the letter is requesting \$150 for a tabloid but a tabloid was not mentioned in the application. Susan stated that the email response provided by

Andrea mentions the tabloid but she agreed that the original application did not. Susan thinks Jim's letter referenced the application in itself, not the tabloid. Nicole stated that she doesn't believe the costumes are going to bring tourists to Garnett. The Committee agreed.

Non-Marketing Request - A motion was made by Nicole Stevenson to recommend the City Commission deny the funding of the \$325 for the Non-Marketing portion of the *Celebrate the Book*. Paula Wallace seconded the motion. Discussion included the same reasons as this same request was denied in 2015; that the funds to support rental of costumes and mileage, door prizes and hospitality for speakers would not play a significant role in enticing visitors. Upon voting the motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Request - Tom mentioned his appreciation in the answer received by email outlining the plan to reach out to other communities. Nicole Stevenson made a motion to recommend to the City Commission that they approve the request for funding of \$827 through the Transient Guest Tax Marketing Grant to advertise the *Celebrate the Book* event as written in their application. Laurel Ladewig seconded said motion. This motion passed unanimously.

Susan asked for a recommendation vote on the \$150 donation that Jim Johnson requested on behalf of *Celebrate the Book* for the tabloid advertising. The consensus of the Committee was that the \$827 is an adequate response to the County's requested match for their \$150 donation. No further action was taken.

Request from the Fair Board - Susan brought before the Committee that Debbie Davis, representing the Anderson County Fair, contacted her and asked if the approved TGT funds for Facebook advertising of the fair could be used towards advertising the new bull riding event the Fair Board is hosting in September since they still have not used up the entire \$750? Susan commented that this is a fair event and the Facebook advertising will be utilized to encourage visitors and by doing so will develop the brand recognition for both the fair and Garnett. The committee concurred with giving their approval on this request.

Staff Reports:

Staff reports were provided to the Committee by email prior to this meeting.

Susan stated that one of the two articles she released to the newspapers as a part of the Marketing Action Plan made it to print. She will be releasing another article soon regarding the Transient Guest Tax process.

Susan also mentioned that our website had 32,038 hits in July. This was the busiest the website has been since the record-breaking month of May with 32,734 website visitors.

Tom asked if the changes to the City's budget would affect the Tourism Committee's Fund. Susan stated that she does not think it would affect the Transient Guest Tax Fund. Her salary,

however, would be reflected in the Community Development Fund in some way that is yet to be determined.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Nicole Stevenson, seconded by Paula Wallace to adjourn. Chairman Tom Emerson, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Desiree Donovan.