

VCB Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village, St. Augustine, Florida
January 6, 2010 – 1:30 p.m.

Present: Charles Cox, Kathy Fleming, John Fraser, Tina Puckett, Irving Kass, Mark Schwantner, Virginia Whetstone, David Mariotti, St. Augustine Vice-Mayor Errol Jones, St. Augustine Beach Vice-Mayor Andrea Samuels, County Commissioner Cyndi Stephenson.

Not present: Bob O'Neill

Staff Present: Richard Goldman, Barbara Golden, Lori Driscoll, Evelyn Vazquez, Jay Humphreys,

Others: Paul Williamson, Phil McDaniels, John Johnson, Dana Ste. Claire, Jamie Alvarez.

Meeting called to order by Charles Cox at 1:40 p.m.

Roll Call: Barbara Golden called roll.

Charles Cox welcomed all members and ex-officios to the board.

Approval of Minutes: Mark Schwantner made a motion to approve as presented the minutes from the Board of Director's meeting held on December 2, 2009. Motion was seconded by Irving Kass. **Approved unanimously.**

Treasurer's Report: Mark Schwantner reported that the VCB December balance was \$67,675 and had received \$24,806 in revenue and had incurred \$3409 in expenses. Total monthly activity for the VCB was \$21,372.

He further reported that total St. Johns County Bed Tax collections for the month of October 2009 were reported to be \$293,167.98.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Kathy Fleming made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by David Mariotti. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Committee Report:

New Partners

Charles Cox presented partners for approval included Photography by Jackie Hird; Endless Summer Realty (vacation rentals), Surfside Six (private vacation rental), and King & Bear Golf Course. John Fraser made a motion to accept the current applicants as partners of the Visitors and Convention Bureau. The motion was seconded by Kathy Fleming. **The Motion passed unanimously.**

VCB Contract with St. Johns County

Chairman Cox updated the Board on the status of the new VCB contract. He informed the Board that after presenting the new VCB contract to the TDC there have been changes by the TDC, the County legal department and the VCB legal council. The changes mostly were regarding reporting mechanisms and appropriate St. Johns County Ordinance compliance. The Board was provided with the latest version of the contract and asked to submit comments or questions to Richard or Charles prior to the January 11 TDC meeting when the contract will be submitted for final approval and move on to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval. Cindy Stevenson informed the Board that contract can get onto the County Commission agenda quickly once TDC agrees to a recommendation for approval. A discussion about new billing and reimbursement procedures between the VCB and CAT I was held. Richard will monitor the process for issues regarding cash flow.

Director's Report:

Richard Goldman reported on the website dashboard. The report indicates that visitor visitation to the website is down and bounce rate is up. Issues regarding the website viewership and bounce rate will be reviewed with Miles Media to optimize the effectiveness of the website.

In addition to the VCB website activity, Goldman reviewed data from the STR report, which compares St. Johns County accommodations Rates, Revenue and efficiency with the previous month and year and with competitive Florida destinations. Compared to other Florida destinations, St. Johns County is averaging in the middle of the entire set.

All other VCB department reports were briefly reviewed, including an explanation by Jay Humphreys about how the VCB Communications Department pitches stories and news releases to appropriate media.

Advertising

Prior to the Y Partnership contract effective dates, the VCB is extending the Chisano agreement to execute an advertising campaign for the January/March 2010 time period. It was discussed that when the Y Partnership agreement goes into effect, they will be prepared with a time appropriate campaign.

A motion was made by John Fraser to accept the Chisano advertising proposal, with some minor placement changes in the amount of \$100,000 for the January through March period. The Motion was seconded by Kathy Fleming.

Further discussion included clarification on the time-period that Chisano will be representing the VCB and when the Y Partnership will continue. It was determined that the exact date can not be named until the final contract for Y Partnership is in place, but that Chisano will be asked to continue on month-to-month in the interim so that there is no lapse in advertising. **The Motion passed unanimously.**

Other Business

450th Commemoration

Chairman Cox introduced Dana Ste. Claire to provide the Board with an update on the City of St. Augustine's 450th Commemoration Celebration.

Mr. Ste. Claire informed the Board that the US Congress passed law 111-11 into effect on March 30, 2009 to form the Federal Commission for the 450th Commemoration. The Congressional committee has 14 members, 5 recommended by congressional office, 3 by Florida's Governor and 3 by St. Augustine Commission, one by the Mayor of St. Augustine, One by the Chancellor at Flagler College and one by the National Park Service.

The commission will begin in Spring of 2010. In addition to the Federal Commission, the City of St. Augustine has formed a local and regional committee that is developing a 3 year plan that will take effect in 2013 through 2015 for local events and activities that will be held in conjunction with historic dates including the 500th anniversary of the landing of Ponce de Leon in Florida, ending with the 450th commemoration of the founding of St. Augustine.

Mr. Ste. Claire stressed the importance of the commission to create a platform for the commemoration of the city's 450 years of continuous unbroken occupation and to be the foundation for developing sustainable tourism infrastructure that will last 50 years into the future.

Ste. Claire informed the Board that the impact of the events around the 450th will be measured by parking and hotel occupancy.

Charles Cox stated that the Board and VCB staff will stay involved in programs surrounding the 450th planning.

Category II Updates

Phil McDaniel, St. Johns Cultural Council, informed the Board that in November 2009 the TDC Category II funding panel had requested \$15 thousand in funding to hire a consultant to assist the Cat II funding panel with developing a plan to effectively market events and to better partner with the VCB so that all funds and programs work effectively.

Richard Goldman presented the Board with the VCB 2010 Travel Planner. He informed the Board that partners had paid approximately \$44,000 in advertising funds toward the Travel Planner, offsetting the costs of printing.

Goldman also informed the Board that through a partnership with the PGA Tour the VCB is developing the www.VisitPonteVedra.com website.

Virginia Whetstone and Charles Cox thanked the VCB staff for listening and taking input from the board in the content and design of the Travel Planner.

St. Augustine Vice-Mayor Errol Jones informed the Board that St. Augustine was named one of the 10 Best Places to be during the Holidays by AAA, and that St. Augustine has selected the 27 Club, a group of people that have been selected to be a part of the opening of the rebuilt Bridge of Lions.

He also informed the Board that the City's Parking Garage will become a multi-model facility. In addition to the service of sightseeing trains and trolleys, Council on Aging and Sunshine Bus Service, Greyhound Bus will be serviced at the Garage effectively within the week.

Andrea Samuels reported that since the approval of extended hours of alcohol sales in the City of St. Augustine Beach things are going smoothly.

The next VCB Board of Director's meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2010 in Ponte Vedra. Location yet to be determined.

Mark Schwantner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Irving Kass. **The motion was approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara Golden