

# ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 20, 2024  
 SUBJECT: Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton  
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Coastal Conservation Association for Accommodations Tax grant dollars to support the 2024 Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton event.

**Total Budget:** \$77,895

**Requested Amount:** \$10,000

**Percentage of Request^:** 12.84%

^Includes up to 100% for Advertising & Promotion plus up to 50% of remaining expenses

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)	Total Budget for Category	Recommended ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$10,000	\$10,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	18,000	
Public Facilities		*
Municipality and County Services		*
Tourist Transportation		*
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	49,895	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$77,895</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

\*Reimbursement will be based on the estimated percentage of tourists provided for

#### **Budgeted Expenses:**

##### Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$10,000

- Print and digital advertising, radio, TV spots, email blasts and social media

##### Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total budget \$18,000

- Rentals other than facility

##### Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$49,895

- Auctioneer, event staff, beverages, food/caterer, raffle/auction items and administrative costs.

**Table Rating (Scores 0-5 with 5 satisfying the qualifications best, exception Advertising 0-15)**

Amount Recommended	Advertising (15)	Festival / Event (5)	Bluffton Event (5)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$10,000	8	4	5	1	2	5	25	

**Advertising:** Of the requested funds, 100% is anticipated to be spent on marketing the event. Where advertising will take place is not identified in the application.

**Festival/Event:** The banquet is scheduled to take place the weekend of 9/20/2024 - 9/22/2024.

**Bluffton Event:** The CCA Banquet and Auction will be held in “the heart of the Bluffton Historic District”.

**Tourism Draw %:** Approximately 5% of attendees were from out of town during the 2023 event.

**Benefit to Tourism:** The Saturday evening banquet will be promoted as an opportunity to plan a weekend getaway in Bluffton where visitors can patron local restaurants, shops, and galleries and take advantage of activities such as My River boat excursions or one of the ECO tours.

**Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need):** Amount requested is approximately 13% of the total budget. Other anticipated revenue streams include sponsorships and proceeds from raffles as well as live and silent auction items.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2024	\$10,000	13%	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$8,971.75	Final Report Submitted

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

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The Committee recommends funding \$10,000 for advertising and promotion expenses.