

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: May 20, 2025
 SUBJECT: Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra: 2025 Bluffton Concerts
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising and facilities for their 2025 Bluffton Concerts.

Total Budget, per application: \$98,427
Requested Amount: \$48,781
Percentage of Request^: 49.56%

^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, per budget form		ATAC Recommends ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$18,021		\$18,021
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	29,339		29,339
Public Facilities	1,422		1,421
Municipality and County Services	-	*	
Tourist Transportation	-	*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	49,646		
Total	\$98,427		\$48,781

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$18,021

- Print and broadcast media (in coordination with the Historic Arts & Seafood Festival marketing for the October concert) as well as an aggressive social media campaign.

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total budget \$29,339

- Includes venue, tent, stage, HVAC, sound and lighting equipment rentals.

Public Facilities:

Total budget \$1,422

- Port-o-Lets rental

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$49,646

- Guest artist and orchestra musician expenses, production labor and security, music library and general/administrative expenses

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
\$48,781	8	5	5	2	4	3	27	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, approximately 37% is related to advertising and promotion. Advertising is planned for Local Life magazine, The Bluffton Sun, The Hilton Head Sun, TV ads on WSAV, WTOC and WHHI, underwriting spots on South Carolina ETV (SC Public Radio), season brochures and rack cards distributed at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and all SC interstate welcome centers and rest areas, monthly rack cards additionally distributed to area hotels, vacation rental offices, restaurants, retail spaces, email blasts, social media posts, event listings on the HHSO and Arts & Seafood web sites, and online calendars including the HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, HHI Town Website, Office of Cultural Affairs and Local Life's online "The Scene".

Festival/Event: The HHSO will perform two separate concerts in Bluffton; one in October during the Arts & Seafood Festival and one in November.

Bluffton Event: The October Outdoor Pops Concert will be held at Martin Family Park; in November, the Holiday Pops Concert will be held at the St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church Parish Life Center.

Tourism Draw %: HHSO collaborates with the Arts & Seafood Festival to hold the October concert during the 9-day event; 20% of the anticipated 1,100 attendees are tourists. The Holiday Pops Concert is held at a time when out-of-town guests are visiting and attend with family and friends who are local residents.

Benefit to Tourism: The October show enhances the Arts & Seafood Festival by offering a free show to attendees while the November performance provides an event for out-of-town guests, some of whom may stay in Bluffton hotels, that are here for the holiday season.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 50% of HHSO's total projected events budget of \$98,427. Other sources of income include sponsorships, donations, ticket sales, and contributions from HHSO funds.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2024	\$43,632	49%	\$43,632	\$43,632	\$39,894	2024 Bluffton Concerts
2023	\$48,628	54%	\$48,628	\$48,628	\$40,497	2023 Bluffton Concerts
2022	\$38,374	45%	\$38,374	\$38,374	\$33,499	2022 Bluffton Concerts
2022	\$5,000	28%	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	Holiday Pops Concert

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$48,781 for 2025 Bluffton Concerts.