

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: November 18, 2025
 SUBJECT: Hilton Head Choral Society: Vienna Boys Choir Concerts in Bluffton
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Manager

Summarized below is the application from the Hilton Head Choral Society for Accommodations Tax grant dollars to support the Vienna Boys Choir Concerts to be held in Bluffton in 2026.

Total Budget, per application: \$58,210
Requested Amount: \$10,000
Percentage of Request^: 17%

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

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)	Budget per Category (based on Budget Form)		Budget per Category (based on Budget Form), corrected as needed
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$15,000		\$15,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	5,000		2,400**
Public Facilities		*	
Municipality and County Services	800	*	800
Tourist Transportation		*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	37,410		40,010
Total	\$58,210		\$58,210

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary, based on submitted Line-Item Budget Form:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$15,000

- National Newspaper, Local Magazines, Regional Magazines & TV ads as well as social media, emails, postcards and posters.

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total budget \$5,000**

- Rentals of tables/chairs and sound & audio equipment (\$900)
- Cleaning fee charged by event venue (\$1,500)
- **Church Staff & Stage Crew (\$2,600 - moved to "Other/Ineligible" category total in chart above)

Municipality and County Services:

Total budget \$800

- Security not provided by Bluffton Police Department

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$37,410

- Programs, performance props, fee for Vienna Boys Choir

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

Amount Requested	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	11	5	5	3	4	5	33	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, 100% could be spent on marketing the event, but it is unclear if that is the intent. Advertising is planned for Garden and Gun Magazine (digitally) and in local vehicles The Bluffton Sun/The Hilton Head Sun, Local Life Magazine, CH2/CB2 Magazine and TV ads on WTOG and WHHI. Social media posts, rack cards, posters, program ads at local and regional performing arts performances and venues and web calendar postings will also be utilized.

Festival/Event: Two concerts are scheduled to take place, one each on the evenings of February 23 and 24, 2026.

Bluffton Event: Both performances will take place at Lowcountry Community Church in Bluffton.

Tourism Draw %: These concerts have never taken place in Bluffton before so tourism draw is hard to guesstimate. However, when the Vienna Boys Choir performed on HHI in 2018, a 1,000 seat venue was filled and the estimated tourism was 45%.

Benefit to Tourism: Both concerts are anticipated to end around 9:00 p.m. Therefore, it's anticipated that folks from out of town will stay the night afterwards.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): Amount requested is approximately 17% of the total budget. Ticket sales make up the majority of the anticipated revenue. The Choral Society has also requested \$5,000 from Beaufort County, but awards have not yet been made from that grant cycle.

Previous Funding Amounts

Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Lapsed	Comments
n/a							

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$10,000 for the Vienna Boys Choir Concerts.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Entity: Hilton Head Choral Society

Project: Vienna Boys Choir Concerts

Project Type: Event/Festival

Scoring Category	Points Possible	Points Awarded
ADVERTISING	15	
Part 1: Five (5) points possible. Based on how much of the requested funds go toward advertising.		
0% of funds go toward advertising	0 points	
1% - 20% of funds go toward advertising	1 point	
21% - 40% of funds go toward advertising	2 points	
41% - 60% of funds go toward advertising	3 points	
61% - 80% of funds go toward advertising	4 points	
81% - 100% of funds go toward advertising	5 points	
Part 2: Ten (10) points possible. Based on where the advertising is placed.		
None of the funds go toward advertising	0 points	
Local newspapers/periodicals and electronic advertising (ex. Island Packet, The Bluffton Sun)	2 points	
Local guides/periodicals specifically geared toward tourists with a shelf life of more than 30 days	4 points	
Larger regional publications and electronic marketing within 100 miles (ex. Charleston or Savannah news outlets)	6 points	
Newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing to large, metropolitan areas outside of 100 miles away (ex. Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington, D.C., Chicago)	8 points	
Nationally distributed newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing (ex. USA Today, NY Times, Southern Living Magazine)	10 points	
TOURIST FACILITIES	15	
Higher point value given based on anticipated ratio of tourists to locals		
FESTIVAL/EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to requests for festivals or events		
Length of event/festival should be considered. Is it an all-day event versus a two-hour event? Multi-day event?		
BLUFFTON EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to events held within the town limits of Bluffton and/or spanning multiple locations		
TOURISM DRAW	5	
0% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected information	0 points	
1% - 20% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	1 point	
21% - 40% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	2 points	
41% - 60% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	3 points	
61% - 80% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	4 points	
81% - 100% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	5 points	
BENEFIT TO TOURISM (LOCAL ECONOMY)	5	
Higher point value given to events that encourage overnight stays and/or have local business participation		
SELF SUFFIECIENCY	5	
100% of budget from ATAX request	0 points	
80% - 99% of budget from ATAX request	1 point	
60% - 79% of budget from ATAX request	2 points	
40% - 59% of budget from ATAX request	3 points	
20% - 39% of budget from ATAX request	4 points	
1% - 19% of budget from ATAX request	5 points	
MISCELLANEOUS	10	
Only use if applicant does not qualify as a festival/event		
Group Average Point Total (out of a possible 40 points)		0
Group Average Percentage		