

# ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: May 21, 2024  
 SUBJECT: BlacQuity SC: 2024 Roots and Rivers Festival  
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from BlacQuity SC for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising, facilities, security and transportation for their 2024 Roots and Rivers Festival.

**Total Budget:** \$67,150

**Requested Amount:** \$25,000

**Percentage of Request^:** 37.23%

^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 ATAF Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$42,500		\$25,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	3,000		
Public Facilities	1,800	*	
Municipality and County Services	850	*	
Tourist Transportation	1,200	*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	17,800		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$67,150</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>

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

#### Budgeted Expenses:

##### Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget \$42,500

- Includes print, radio, and digital advertising as well as social media, banners, signs, posters and flyers

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

Total budget \$3,000

- Includes rentals of venue, stage, tents and dumpster

##### Public Facilities:

Total budget \$1,800

- Port-o-Lets rental

##### Municipal and County Services:

Total budget \$850

- Bluffton Police Department security

##### Tourist Transportation:

Total budget \$1,200

- Shuttle services for attendees

##### Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total budget \$17,800

- Entertainment, administrative costs, insurance, permits, videography and photography

**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
\$25,000	10	4	4	3	3	4	28	

Advertising: Of the requested funds, all \$25,000 could be spent on advertising, but the application does not make it clear if that is the intention; the specific media vehicles that will be used is not defined.

Festival/Event: The event is a one-day festival featuring food and entertainment.

Bluffton Event: The location of the 2024 event was not identified in the application; in 2023, the event was held at Oyster Factory Park.

Tourism Draw %: In 2023, the inaugural event, the estimated tourism attendance was 49%.

Benefit to Tourism: The influx of visitors boosts local businesses and promotes Bluffton as a destination for cultural tourism.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 37% of BlacQuity's total projected events budget of \$67,150 for 2024. A revenue budget was not included with the application to identify other sources of income for the event.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2024	\$38,186	57%	\$21,836	\$21,836	\$0.00	Amounts consist of both grant awards combined. Final report submitted; working on final reimbursement request/amount

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

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The Committee recommends funding \$25,000 for eligible expenses.