

TOWN COUNCIL



STAFF REPORT

Finance & Administration Department

MEETING DATE:	June 09, 2026
PROJECT:	Consideration of Approval of Resolution for the FY2027 Budget and Marketing Plan Presented by the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce in Accordance with Contract 2022-35 as the Town of Bluffton Designated Marketing Organization
PROJECT MANAGER:	Natalie Majorkiewicz, CGFO, CGFM, Director of Finance & Administration

REQUEST:

Town Council to authorize the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to continue to serve as the Town of Bluffton's Designated Marketing Organization (DMO) for fiscal year 2027 and approve the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's (ATAC) recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

In accordance with the grant process, the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) held a meeting on May 19, 2026, where the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce presented the FY2026 budget and marketing plan.

☐ Designated Marketing Organization Budget and Marketing Plan for FY2027

- As part of contract 2022-35 that began on July 1, 2022, with an amendment for a two-year renewal ending June 30, 2027, the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce proposed a fiscal year 2027 budget of \$340,000 for the Town of Bluffton.
- S.C. Code of Laws Sec. 6-4-10-(3) requires the Town's DMO to manage and direct 30% of the balance of State Accommodations Tax funds and submit a budget for approval before the beginning of each fiscal year.
- Per Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Sec. 24-26(b), "the Town may set aside an amount not to exceed eight percent (8%) of Local Accommodations Tax revenue for the Designated Marketing Organization." There are no Local Accommodations Tax funds budgeted for the DMO in FY2027.
- FY2027 will be the final year of a two-year term extension of the contract.

Below is a comparison between the FY2026 and FY2027 budgets:

Bluffton Marketing Strategies and Programs	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Budget	% Increase/ (Decrease)
Digital Promotions/SEM	\$ 25,992	\$ 39,665	53%
Website Maintenance	19,494	17,000	(13%)
Website Hosting	1,170	2,720	132%
Social Marketing & Content Strategy	19,494	19,266	(1%)
Paid Social	27,844	28,332	2%
SEO	11,696	11,333	(3%)
Public Relations	-	8,500	100%
Bluffton Vacation Planner/Fulfillment	81,225	50,998	(37%)
Regional Vacation Planner/Fulfillment	16,245	11,333	(30%)
Group Tour	-	3,513	100%
Photography/Videography	6,498	-	(100%)
Research & Planning	12,996	11,333	(13%)
Operations & Management	142,350	136,007	(100%)
Total:	\$ 365,004	\$ 340,000	(7%)

The committee voted to recommend the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce's Town of Bluffton DMO budget and marketing plan for FY2027.

NEXT STEPS:

Upon approval by Town Council, the Town Manager will authorize the resolution for FY2027.

SUMMARY:

The resolution will be for one year beginning on July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026 and in accordance with the amendment to contract 2022-35.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution Approving FY2027 Budget and Marketing Plan
2. DMO Contract 2022-35 Amendment # 1 between Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and Town of Bluffton
3. Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce: FY2027 Budget and Marketing Plan
4. Recommended Motion