

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Finance & Administration Department



MEETING DATE:	September 12, 2023
PROJECT:	Consideration of Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Funding Recommendations for Quarter Ending June 30, 2023 (Fiscal Impact – \$609,359.65)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Natalie Majorkiewicz, CGFO, Director of Finance & Administration

REQUEST:

Town Staff requests Town Council to consider the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's (ATAC) recommendations for grant awards as presented below:

Requesting Organizations	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Campbell Chapel Community Development: Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel	\$ 200,000	\$ 130,873.65
Bluffton Boys & Girls Club: 2023 Bike Bluffton	21,650	21,650.00
Arts & Seafood Festival: 2023 Arts & Seafood Festival	80,000	80,000.00
Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton	10,000	10,000.00
Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center: Exterior/Deconstruction/Stabilization	350,000	350,000.00
BlacQuity SC: Roots & River Festival	10,836	10,836.00
Congregation Beth Yam: Town of Bluffton Hanukkah Celebration	6,000	Up to 6,000.00
Total for the Quarter	\$ 678,486	\$ 609,359.65

BACKGROUND:

In accordance with the grant process, the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) held a meeting on August 15, 2023 to review the quarterly applications. There were seven (7) applications to review and make recommendations of funding to Town Council.

Funds Currently Available for Distribution:

When comparing the State Accommodations Tax collections for the quarter ending June 2023 to the same quarter of last year, the revenues are down \$32,613.45 or approximately 6.3%.

Total estimated State Accommodations Tax funds currently available for distribution are \$432,295 as outlined in the following chart:

State ATAX	
Remaining from Previous Qtr.	\$ 21,900
4 th Quarter Revenue	484,835
First \$25k to General Fund*	N/A
5% to General Fund	(24,242)
30% to DMO	(145,450)
Lapsed Grants	95,252
Total State ATAX Funds Remaining for Distribution	\$ 432,295

* First \$25k taken in 1st Quarter of Fiscal Year and Not Applicable (N/A) to the remaining quarters.

Funds Requested for Distribution:

❑ **Campbell Chapel Community Development requested \$200,000 in support of the Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel Project with ATAC recommending \$130,873.65.**

- Project costs are broken into five (5) phases and based on a proposed budget created by the project architect, James O. McGhee, and Landmark Preservation LLC for the restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel to its 1874 condition totaling \$1,548,692.75.
- Request is for Phase I (\$189,503.77) & a portion of Phase II (\$10,496.23) of the project.
- Eligible “tourism-related expenditures” include:
 - “Facilities for civic and cultural events” is budgeted at \$261,747.30 for the first to phases.
- Due to application requirements 50% is eligible for funding.

The committee voted 5-0 with Mitchell recusing to recommend a total award of \$130,873.65 presented in the chart below:

Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel	Total Budget (Phases 1 & 2)	Recommended ATAX Grant (50% of project budget)
Facilities for Civic & Cultural Event:	\$ 261,747.30	\$ 130,873.65
Total	\$ 261,747.30	\$ 130,873.65

❑ **Bluffton Boys & Girls Club is requesting \$21,650 to support advertising and promotion of tourism for 2023 Bike Bluffton.**

- The event is scheduled for Sunday, November 5, 2023.
- 2022 Bike Bluffton registered 310 riders with 40% or 125 being tourists.
- Eligible “tourism-related expenditures” include:
 - “Advertising and promotion of tourism” is budgeted at \$23,150 and \$21,650 is being requested in support.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend a total award of \$21,650 presented in the chart below:

Bike Bluffton - 2023	Total Budget		Recommended ATAX Grant (73% of project budget)
Advertising and Promotion of Tourism:	\$ 23,150		\$ 21,650
Project Expenses	6,500		N/A
Total	\$ 29,650		\$ 21,650

N/A – Not Applicable

❑ **Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival Inc. requests \$80,000 to support advertising and promotion, municipal and county services, public facilities, and tourist transportation service expenses for the 2023 Arts & Seafood Festival.**

- This year’s event takes place October 14-22, 2023
- This year’s request is \$25,000 or 14% less than last year’s annual request of \$175,000.
- Total visitors for the 2022 festival was approximately 42%.
- Eligible “tourism-related expenditures” include:
 - “Advertising and promotion of tourism” is budgeted at \$60,000.
 - “Municipality services” is budgeted at \$15,000 for security and fire protection.
 - “Public facilities” is budgeted at \$30,000 for rentals, trash, and additional restrooms.
 - “Tourist Transportation” is budgeted at 5,000 for LRTA shuttle expenses.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend a total award of \$80,000 presented in the chart below:

Historic Arts & Seafood Festival - 2023	Total Budget		Recommended ATAX Grant (approx. 39% of project budget)
Advertising and Promotion of Tourism:	\$ 60,000		\$ 60,000
Municipality & County Services:	15,000	*	6,300
Public Facilities:	30,000	*	11,600
Tourist Transportation:	5,000	*	2,100
Project Expenses:	94,650		N/A
Total	\$ 204,650		\$ 80,000

* Based on percentage directly related to tourist attendance

N/A – Not Applicable

❑ **Coastal Conservation Association requests \$10,000 to support advertising and promotion of tourism for Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton.**

- This event is scheduled to be held September 16, 2023 at Martin Family Park.
- This is the organization's initial application.
- Eligible "tourism-related expenditures" include:
 - "Advertising and promotion of tourism" \$10,000 recommended.

The committee voted 4-0 with Parker and Britt recusing to recommend a total award of \$10,000 presented in the chart below:

Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton	Total Budget	Recommended ATAX Grant (approx. 13% of project budget)
Advertising and Promotion of Tourism:	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Project Expenses:	69,965	N/A
Total	\$ 79,965	\$ 10,000

N/A – Not Applicable

❑ **Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center requests \$350,000 to support the exterior deconstruction and stabilization of the Deer Tongue Building.**

- Once complete, the center will have exhibits and offer educational opportunities.
- Eligible "tourism-related expenditures" include:
 - "Facilities for civic and cultural events" \$350,000 recommended.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend a total award of \$350,000 presented in the chart below:

Exterior/Deconstruction/Stabilization	Total Budget	Recommended ATAX Grant (approx. 42% of project budget)
Facilities for Civic & Cultural Events:	\$ 831,573	\$ 350,000
Total	\$ 831,573	\$ 350,000

❑ **BlacQuity SC requests \$10,836 in additional support for advertising and promotion of tourism and facilities for civic and cultural events expenses for the Roots & River Festival project.**

- This is an amended request from BlacQuity for an event to be held on September 9, 2023 at Oyster Factory Park.
- Due to the change in scope and budget, ATAC recommended BlacQuity submit an amended application by the upcoming June 30, 2023 quarterly deadline to request any additional allowable expenses.
- Eligible "tourism-related expenditures" include:
 - "Advertising and promotion of tourism" \$8,720 is recommended.
 - "Facilities for civic & cultural events" \$2,116 is recommended rentals, trash and additional security.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend an additional award of \$10,836 as presented in the chart below:

Roots & River Festival	Total Budget	Recommended ATAX Grant
Advertising and Promotion of Tourism:	\$ 24,970	\$ 8,720
Facilities for Civic & Cultural Events:	3,216	2,116
Project Expenses:	10,000	N/A
Total	\$38,186	\$10,836

N/A – Not Applicable

❑ Congregation Beth Yam requests \$6,000 to support the Hanukkah Celebration held within the Town of Bluffton.

- The event is scheduled for December 9, 2023.
- This is an initial application for the organization.
- Eligible “tourism-related expenditures” total \$1,028 and include:
 - “Advertising and promotion of tourism” is budgeted at \$450.
 - “Facilities for civic and cultural events” is budgeted at \$578 for rentals.
- The committee recommended budgeting for security that is not in the budget presented.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend a total award of up to \$6,000 in tourism-related eligible expenses as presented in the chart below:

Town of Bluffton Hanukkah Celebration	Total Budget		Recommended ATAX Grant
Advertising and Promotion of Tourism:	\$ 450		\$ 450
Facilities for Civic & Cultural Events:	578		578
Municipality Services:	TBD	*	TBD
Project Expenses:	5,200		N/A
Total	\$ 6,228		Eligible up to \$6,000

N/A – Not Applicable

NEXT STEPS:

Town Staff will notify organizations of award amount and requirements.

SUMMARY:

Below are the applications received for quarter ending March 31, 2023 and ATAC's recommendation for each:

Requesting Organization	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Campbell Chapel Community Development: Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel	\$ 200,000	\$ 130,873.65
Bluffton Boys & Girls Club: 2023 Bike Bluffton	21,650	21,650.00
Arts & Seafood Festival: 2023 Arts & Seafood Festival	80,000	80,000.00
Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton	10,000	10,000.00
Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center: Exterior/Deconstruction/Stabilization	350,000	350,000.00
BlacQuity SC: Roots & River Festival	10,836	10,836.00
Congregation Beth Yam: Town of Bluffton Hanukkah Celebration	6,000	Up to 6,000.00
Total for the Quarter	\$ 678,486	\$ 609,359.65

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation
2. ATAC draft meeting minutes from August 15, 2023
3. Campbell Chapel Community Development: Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel Grant Application
4. Campbell Chapel Community Development: Restoration of the Historic Campbell Chapel ATAC Staff Report
5. Bluffton Boys & Girls Club: 2023 Bike Bluffton Grant Application
6. Bluffton Boys & Girls Club: 2023 Bike Bluffton ATAC Staff Report
7. Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival: 2023 Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival Grant Application
8. Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival: 2023 Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival ATAC Staff Report
9. Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton Grant Application
10. Coastal Conservation Association: Celebrating Conservation Weekend in Bluffton ATAC Staff Report
11. Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center: Exterior/Deconstruction/Stabilization Grant Application
12. Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center: Exterior/Deconstruction/Stabilization ATAC Staff Report
13. BlacQuity SC: Roots & River Festival Grant Application
14. BlacQuity SC: Roots & River Festival ATAC Staff Report
15. Congregation Beth Yam: Town of Bluffton Hanukkah Celebration Grant Application
16. Congregation Beth Yam: Town of Bluffton Hanukkah Celebration ATAC Staff Report
17. ATAC Scoring Table Rating Matrix
18. Previously Funded Grant Listing
19. Recommended Motions