

# ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: November 19, 2024  
 SUBJECT: May River Theatre, Inc.: Advertising & Royalty Funding for 2025 Season  
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from May River Theatre, Inc. for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising/marketing and royalties for the theatre's 2025 performance season.

**Total Budget: \$135,536**

**Requested Amount: \$42,826**

**Percentage of Request^: 31.62%**

^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		ATAC Recommended
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$26,085		\$23,592
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	22,934		19,234
Public Facilities	-		
Municipality and County Services	-	*	
Tourist Transportation	-	*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	86,517		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$135,536</b>		<b>\$42,826</b>

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

#### Budgeted Expenses Summary:

##### Advertising & Promotion:

Total budget: \$26,085

- Encompasses the promotion of five (5) main shows and four (4) supporting events
- Includes graphic design of advertisements and publication in Local Life, Pink and CH2 Magazines and The Bluffton Sun as well as creation of posters and rack cards.

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

Total Budget: \$22,934

- Royalty payments, which vary per production, for main shows The Full Monty, Sheila's Island, Spring Awakening, Baskerville and Reefer Madness as well as the supporting events, which include A Series of One Acts, a one act musical, a holiday show and the Rocky Horror Shadow Cast.

##### Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total Budget: \$86,517

- Personnel and production expenses including costumes, props, lighting, audio, concessions, food for cast members, etc.

**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
\$42,826	8	5	5	3	4	4	29	

Advertising: Approximately half of the requested funds will be spent on advertising the Theatre's 2025 Performance Season; most of the ads will be run locally with some regional reach.

Festival/Event: Each of the plays will have six (6) performances and the musicals will be extended to nine (9) performances each.

Bluffton Event: Productions take place in the auditorium located in Bluffton Town Hall.

Tourism Draw %: Review of ticketing site data shows that over 45% of patrons are from outside of Bluffton.

Benefit to Tourism: Attendees are from throughout Beaufort, Jasper and Chatham Counties as well as vacationers who made the theatre a destination, which leads to increased traffic at Bluffton shops, restaurants, and galleries.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): Requesting approximately 32% of the total budget. Additional revenue is anticipated from ticket, merchandise and concession sales, donations, sponsorships and registration fees.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2024	\$39,801	40.31%	\$39,801	\$39,801	\$22,687.62	2024 Season not yet complete
2023	\$34,790	32.5%	\$38,715	\$38,715	\$36,105.30	Final Report Submitted
2022	\$11,481	27%	\$ 11,481	\$11,481	\$6,262.25	Expenses incurred through December 2022
2022	\$22,195	100%	\$21,615.50	\$21,615.50	\$6,143.17	Expenses incurred through December 2022

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

---

The Committee recommends funding \$42,826 for eligible expenses.