

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: November 19, 2024
 SUBJECT: Society of Bluffton Artists: Partial CY2025 Expenses
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Society of Bluffton Artists (SOBA) for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising and promotion for the organization's 2025 expenses from January 1 - August 31, 2025.

Total Budget: \$233,195

Requested Amount: \$27,000

Percentage of Request^: 11.58%

^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	\$27,000		\$27,000
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	-		
Public Facilities	-		
Municipality and County Services	-	*	
Tourist Transportation	-	*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	206,195		
Total	\$233,195		\$27,000

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

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total Budget: \$27,000

- Includes local advertising in The Bluffton Sun, Bluffton Today, Local Life Magazine, Explore Bluffton, Bluffton Guide, LowCountry Weekly, and VisitBluffton.org as well as social media ads, spots on radio and WHHI-TV, flyers and posters

Other/Ineligible Project Expenses:

Total Budget: \$206,195

- Includes cost of goods sold, operating expenses, insurance, rent, and utilities

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

Amount Recommended	Advertising (15)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Misc. (10)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$27,000	10	3	4	4	8	29	

Advertising: This request is 100% related to advertising and promotion. Most of the advertising will be done in local publications/media, digitally and through the hanging of posters locally and distribution of flyers.

Tourism Draw %: Approximately 65% of gallery visitors are from out of the area.

Benefit to Tourism: SOBA has been a Bluffton presence for 30 years, and in that time has sponsored or participated in local festivals, art walks and events that Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society schedules.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 11.5% of SOBA's projected budget of \$233,195, which covers January through August 2024. Other sources of income include membership dues, art sales, the art school, sponsorships and donations.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
2024	\$20,000	8%	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$7,055.35	Expenses January - July 2024 to date
2023	\$15,000	50%	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$14,402.49	
2022	\$16,063	50%	\$16,063	\$16,063	\$15,178.16	
2021	\$20,000	60%	\$18,200	\$18,200	\$18,200	

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$27,000 for eligible expenses.