

Milroy, Shannon

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Friday, December 29, 2023 4:30 PM
To: ATax Communications
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Accommodations Tax Grant Application

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Accommodations Tax Grant Application

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

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Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions [Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions](#)

Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions I have read and acknowledged the Town of Bluffton, SC Accommodations Tax Grant Application Instructions.

(Section Break)

Application Date 12/29/2023

Full Legal Organization Name : OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS SOCIETY

Project Name BLUFFTON AS A DESTINATION

Total Project Costs \$46,350.00

Total ATAX Funds Requested \$28,500.00

Percent of Total Budget 61 %

Address PO Box 354

Street Address Line 2 *Field not completed.*

City BLUFFTON

State	SC
Zip Code	29910
Applicant must be designated as a non-profit entity to receive ATAX funds. Please include a copy of your organization's non-profit status, such as your IRS Designation Letter.	OTBM NON PROFIT.pdf
Please upload a copy of your current Town of Bluffton Business License, which is required of all applicants.	BUSINESS LICENSE otbm.pdf

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Organization Primary Point of Contact

First Name	MARY
Last Name	O'NEILL
Title	SECRETARY/TREASURER
Phone Number	8438156278
E-mail Address	maryaoneill6@aol.com

(Section Break)

Organization Secondary Point of Contact

First Name	MICHAEL
Last Name	GONZALEZ
Title	PRESIDENT
Phone Number	843-298-4097
E-mail Address	michael@eraevergreen.com

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

Project Description:	OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS SOCIETY WAS FORMED NINETEEN YEARS AGO "TO ESTABLISH OLD TOWN BLUFFTON AS A DESTINATION FOR TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS BY HIGHLIGHTING ITS UNIQUE
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HISTORIC, CULTURAL, DINING AND SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES."THIS REQUEST IS FOR OUR MARKETING CAMPAIGN PROMOTING OLD TOWN BLUFFTON AS A GREAT DESTINATION FOR VISITORS THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF OLD TOWN BLUFFTON AS A HISTORIC RIVERFRONT COMMUNITY OFFERING AN ECLECTIC BLEND OF ARTS, HISTORY, CULTURE AND NATURAL BEAUTY ALONG WITH ART-CENTRIC EVENTS, SUCH AS THE ART WALKS, SPRING FLING ART WEEKEND, ETC. THE WHOLE PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE TOURISM TO BLUFFTON THROUGH THE GENERATION OF REGIONAL PUBLICITY INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PRINT ADVERTISING, RADIO, DIGITAL, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITE AND MAPS.

All advertising/marketing paid for with Town of Bluffton Accommodations Tax dollars must incorporate the branding shown here: **Town of Bluffton Brand Standards. The use of the Town's logo must meet the design standards outlined at the aforementioned link and be approved by the Town. Designs may be submitted electronically using this **link**. Please allow five (5) business days for approval.**

Impact on or Benefit to
Tourism:

OUR ADVERTISING PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN BRINGING NEW VISITORS TO OUR AREA. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHAMBER WE STRIVE TO BRING TOURISTS TO BLUFFTON. WE BELIEVE THAT BROADENING OUR MARKET WITH ADVERTISING WILL ENCOURAGE THE CONCEPT OF "MAKING BLUFFTON A DESTINATION PLACE" AND THAT LOCAL SHOPS, GALLERIES, HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS WILL PROFIT. AS THE SUCCESS OF THE OLD TOWN DISTRICT CONTINUES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS AND THEIR CONSIDERABLE EXPENDITURES, IT ALSO ATTRACTS POTENTIAL NEW BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS TO THE AREA. THE QUAINTESS OF THE OLD TOWN DISTRICT HOOKS THE TOURIST TO POTENTIALLY BECOME A RESIDENT AND/OR NEW BUSINESS OWNER.OUR ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION OF ART AND CULTURAL EVENTS HAVE GONE A LONG WAY TO HELP PUT OLD TOWN BLUFFTON ON THE MAP AS A SEPARATE ENTITY FROM HHI AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. EVERYTHING WE DO IS DESIGNED TO BRAND OLD TOWN AS A FIRST CLASS, SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCE, WORTHY OF EVERY LOWCOUNTRY TOURIST'S PLANS, TRULY THE

HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY AND NOW A STATE DESIGNATED CULTURAL DISTRICT. THE UNBELIEVABLE GROWTH WE ARE WITNESSING IS A TRUE TESTIMONY TO OUR SUCCESS.

“Tourist” means a person who does not reside within the corporate limits of the Town or within a Town zip code that takes a trip into the corporate limits of the Town for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.

“Travel” and “Tourism” mean the action and activities of people taking trips outside their home communities for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.

(Section Break)

Project/Event Start & End Date: 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Multi-Year Project/Event? Yes

Permits Required, if any: NO

Additional Comments: *Field not completed.*

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Project/Event Line Item Budget [OTBM Budget 2024.doc](#)

Most Recent Fiscal Year Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Accounting Statement [OTBM PROFIT AND LOSS 2023.doc](#)

Financial Guarantee [EXHIBIT 4 minutes OTBM 2023.docx](#)

Applicant must provide a copy of official minutes wherein the sponsoring organization approves the project and commits the organization to financial responsibility for carrying it out to the stage of completion.

(Section Break)

Please list all contributions made to the project/event by the sponsoring organization. This shall include both monetary and in-kind goods and/or services, as applicable.

Contribution	MEMBERSHIP DUES
Amount/Value	\$21,000
Contribution	WEB ADS
Amount/Value	\$9,600

(Section Break)

Have you requested,
received or been awarded
funding from other sources
or organizations (including
additional ATAX funds from
other local entities) for this
project/event?

No

If yes, please list all sources and amounts:

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

PRIOR RECIPIENT'S REPORT

If your organization has received ATAX funding from the Town of Bluffton in previous years, you must complete the below information. Only the information for the most recent round of funding is required.

If you have not received ATAX funding from the Town of Bluffton, please answer "No" and skip this section, and sign and submit your application.

Has your organization
previously received ATAX
funds from the Town of
Bluffton?

Yes

Project/Event Name : BLUFFTON AS A DESTINATION

Year 2023

Amount Awarded 14,000.00

Was project completed? Yes

How were the funds used?	PROMOTION/ADVERTISING OF OLD TOWN BLUFFTON AND EVENTS IN OLD TOWN.
What impact did this project/event have on the community or benefit tourism? Describe how the tourism data was measured.	<p>The impact on the community is great. Merchants are showing a marked increase in tourist traffic throughout their stores, restaurants and galleries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our maps are now distributed at most state welcome centers (2100 per printing), regional hotels and at the Savannah-Hilton Head Airport (1000 per month). • Our Special Events have attracted over 1000 - 2000 people each time, many of whom are visitors to our area; 53 visitors/47 residents ratio. Results show more than 30 different states and Canada represented. The Art Walks alone are a huge success and have attracted 500 to 1000 visitors per gallery walk. Of these over 45% - 50% are from outside of Bluffton/Hilton Head area (All shops and galleries keep records). • The previously held Spring Fling Weekend proved to be very successful and the zip code collection in all shops and galleries throughout the weekend gave stats of 50% visitors. We hope to continue to increase the number as the event grows. • Our local merchants have reported increased sales due mostly to the tremendous increase in foot traffic this year AND ESPECIALLY FROM TOURISTS. • The Heyward House stats collected from their guest registry also substantiates tourist increases.
(Section Break)	
Please provide the project/event budgets for the previous two (2) years.	OTBM Budget 2022.doc
Additional Comments	<i>Field not completed.</i>

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ACCOMMODATIONS TAX GRANT APPLICATION

All applicants will be required to come before the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) and answer any and all questions when scheduled to do so.

Any organization awarded funds for advertising/marketing must incorporate the Bluffton Heart of the Lowcountry brand logo in all promotional materials and advertising.

The South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) defines a “public body” as any organization or corporation supported in whole or in part by

public funds or expending public funds. If awarded, your organization's acceptance of public funds from the Town of Bluffton may cause your organization to come within the meaning of "public body" as defined by the Freedom of Information Act. S.C. Code Ann. §30-4-10, et seq. (Supp. 2002). Accordingly, this is to advise that by accepting public funds, your organization may be subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

By submitting this application, the organization certifies that it has read and understands the paragraphs above. The organization additionally certifies that it does not discriminate in any manner on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion, or language and that all funds that may be received by the applicant organization from the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina will be solely used for the purposes set forth in this application and will comply with all laws and statutes, including the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding Allocations of Accommodations Tax Revenues.

By typing your name below, you are signing this application electronically. You agree that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this application.

Signature	Mary O'Neill
Signatory's Title or Position	Secretary/Treasurer

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. BOX 2555
CINCINNATI OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **MAY 20 2006**

DIVISION OF DOMESTIC MERCHANDISE
SOCIETY
PO BOX 2434
CINCINNATI OH 45201

Employer Identification Number:
01-094044

EIN:

1053101081048

Contact Person:

MARY MUTHERT

104 31313

Contact Telephone Number:

18111 420 8511

Accounting Period Ending:

December 31

Form 990 Required

Effective Date of Exemption:

November 11, 2005

Contributor Acknowledging:

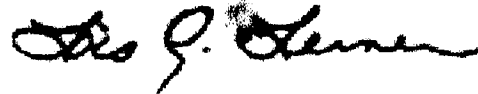
PR

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax-exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Please see enclosed information for Organizations Exempt Under Sections Other Than 501(c)(6) for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Sincerely,



Lois J. Lerner

Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Adverse

Enclosure: Information for Organizations Exempt Under Sections Other Than 501(c)(6)

Letter 940 (03/02)

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

May 31, 2023

DATE ISSUED

April 30, 2024

EXPIRES

LIC-05-23-050319

LICENSE NUMBER

9865

BUSINESS ID

Michael J. O'Neill Ent Inc.

COMPANY NAME

The Complete Home

DBA NAME

Other Home Furnishings Stores

BUSINESS TYPE

HOME FURNISHINGS

DESCRIPTION/CONDITIONS

41 CALHOUN ST B

BLUFFTON SC 29910-

BUSINESS LOCATION

365 Red Cedar Street 503

Bluffton SC 29910-

MAILING LOCATION

OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS – 2024 BUDGET**EXHIBIT 2****Income****GRANT MONIES**

ATAX GRANT -

\$28,500.00**REVENUE**MEMBERSHIP DUES REVENUE
70 MEMBERS @\$300.00**\$21,000.00**

WEB ADS (8 PER MONTH @\$200.00 EACH FOR 6 MONTHS)

\$9,600.00**Total INCOME****\$59,100.00****Expenses****ADVERTISING (PRINT & DIGITAL)**4 MAJOR EVENTS
(SEE EVENT SCHEDULE)**\$16,000.00**

GENERAL

\$6,350.00TOURIST MAPS (3 PRINTINGS @\$2000 EACH)
GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR MAP 3 @\$200**\$6000.00****\$900.00****RADIO****\$1500.00****SOCIAL MEDIA****\$6000.00****Total ADVERTISING****\$36,750.00****MISCELLANEOUS FOR EVENTS****\$3000.00****INSURANCE****\$2000.00****PROFESSIONAL FEES (ACCOUNTING – TAX RETURN)****\$1600.00****WEB HOSTING & UPDATING****\$3000.00****Total EXPENSES****\$ 46,350.00**

OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS 2023 P & L**EXHIBIT 3****Income****GRANT MONIES**

ATAX GRANT (Reimbursed To Date)	\$3786.50
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REVENUE

MEMBERSHIP DUES (To date)	\$15,450.00
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INTEREST	\$7.02
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Total INCOME	\$19,243.52
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Expenses**ADVERTISING (PRINT & DIGITAL)**

MAJOR EVENTS	\$10,075.75
Artwalks and Spring Fling Weekend	

VACATION PLANNER	\$1820.00
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TOURIST MAPS	\$0.00
(Not paid to date)	

SOCIAL MEDIA	\$900.00
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Total ADVERTISING	\$12,795.75
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NEW WEBSITE	\$2500.00
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PROFESSIONAL FEES (ACCOUNTING – TAX RETURN)	\$1500.00
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WEB HOSTING	\$312.99
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Total EXPENSES	\$17,108.74
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EXHIBIT 4

Minutes from the Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society Board of Directors Meeting

December 20, 2023

Present: Michael Gonzales, Mary O'Neill, Lauren Bazemore, Nick Healy, Lynn Ruocco, Lauren Terret, Georgia Holhaus

Absent: Leslie Trenta

Call to Order

President Michael called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Treasurer's Report

Mary gave financial report. She presented a revised 2024 Budget and ATAX submission.

Board approved budget and ATAX.

Marketing Report

Lauren reported difficulties with Tim Wood and future plans.

Winter Artwalk is set for February 15, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS 2022 BUDGET**EXHIBIT 6****Income****GRANT MONIES**

ATAX GRANT -

\$16,000.00**REVENUE**MEMBERSHIP DUES REVENUE
50 MEMBERS @\$250.00**\$12,500.00**

WEBSITE ADS @100.00 EA FOR 4 PER MONTH

\$4800.00**Total REVENUE FROM OTBM****\$17,300.00****Total INCOME****\$33,300.00****Expenses****ADVERTISING (PRINT & DIGITAL)**4 MAJOR EVENTS
(SEE EVENT SCHEDULE)**\$12,000.00**

GENERAL

\$6,000.00TOURIST MAPS (3 PRINTINGS @\$2000 EACH)
GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR MAP 3 @\$300
VIDEO PRODUCTION
SOCIAL MEDIA PAID ADS**\$6000.00****\$900.00****\$1000.00****\$1000.00****Total ADVERTISING****\$26,900.00**

GENERAL MEETING (TBD @\$50.00 EACH)

TBD

INSURANCE

\$2000.00

PROFESSIONAL FEES (ACCOUNTING – TAX RETURN)

\$2000.00

WEB HOSTING

\$1800.00**Total EXPENSES****\$32,700.00**

OLD TOWN BLUFFTON MERCHANTS – 2023 BUDGET**EXHIBIT 5****Income****GRANT MONIES**

ATAX GRANT -	\$14,000.00
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REVENUE

MEMBERSHIP DUES REVENUE	\$12,500.00
50 MEMBERS @\$250.00	

WEB ADS	\$2000.00
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Total INCOME	\$28,500.00
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Expenses**ADVERTISING (PRINT & DIGITAL)**

4 MAJOR EVENTS	\$10,000.00
(SEE EVENT SCHEDULE)	

GENERAL	\$6,000.00
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TOURIST MAPS (3 PRINTINGS @\$2000 EACH)	\$6000.00
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GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR MAP 3 @\$200	\$600.00
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Total ADVERTISING	\$22,600.00
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INSURANCE	\$2000.00
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PROFESSIONAL FEES (ACCOUNTING – TAX RETURN)	\$1600.00
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WEB HOSTING & UPDATING	\$1300.00
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Total EXPENSES	\$ 27,500.00
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