



# VisitColumbusGA

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023

**Commissioners Present;** Lauren Becker, Chair; Jamie Waters, Vice Chair; Miles Greathouse, Secretary/Treasurer, Amy Bryan, Sherricka Day, Dan Gilbert, Pace Halter, Peter Jones, Mayor Skip Henderson

**Commissioners Absent:** Mamie Pound

**Special Invitees:** Norm Easterbrook, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts; Merri Sherman, Columbus Sports Council

**Staff Present:** Peter Bowden, Kim Gonzalez, Shelby Guest, Joel Slocumb and Ashley Weitena

**Call to Order ..... Lauren Becker**

- The February 2023 meeting was called to order by Lauren Becker at 3:30 pm.

**Approval of Minutes & Financials ..... Miles Greathouse**

- Miles Greathouse presented the consent agenda -- minutes for the January 2023 meeting, as well as financials for January 2023. He asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, a motion was made by Pace Halter to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Sherricka Day. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.
- Mr. Greathouse then turned the meeting over to Peter Bowden to present the Fiscal 2024 budget. Mr. Bowden explained that the hotel/motel tax has performed better than expected during the current fiscal year-to-date and recommended a 7% increase for the upcoming year. He also pointed to the use of remaining American Rescue Funds. Mr. Bowden then reviewed the budget highlighting specific line items impacted by the additional revenue and/or savings from the prior year. There was discussion some on trade show materials and the need to make certain any display designs make an impact. A motion was made by Jamie Waters to approve the FY 2024 budget, seconded by Pace Halter. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

**Chair’s Report ..... Lauren Becker**

- Ms. Becker then turned the meeting over to Peter Bowden to review and discuss the proposal of a Funding Request Policy. This policy was originally presented at the January 2023 meeting.

A calculation example has been added to the Funding Request Policy to better demonstrate how funding would be calculated and considered. There was discussion on how smaller events might be considered for funding approval, how the Policy could be modified at a later date to better meet need and various situations. A motion was made by Pace Halter to approve the Funding Request Policy, seconded by Peter Jones. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

- Mr. Bowden informed the Board that action has been taken on the Social Media Policy passed at the January 2023 meeting. He explained that VisitColumbusGA had started posting organic posts again after several weeks on hiatus. Staff observed that once the social media work resumed the on-line “news” organization, called the Muscogee Muckraker, also resumed its activity on VisitColumbus’ social media platforms of which its contents/comments violated the policy criteria. Mr. Bowden went on to explain that staff followed the policy and attempted to reach the individuals at Muscogee Muckraker requesting a meeting and/or phone call to resolve any issues but has not received a response. There being no response after several attempts the organization was removed from the platforms according to the policy. .
- Ms. Becker informed the Board that in an 18<sup>th</sup> month period, Mamie Pound had missed 13 meetings; five of which were unexcused absences. She reminded the Board of the importance of their role and attendance and that the local ordinance sets forth attendance requirements; three unexcused absences in a 12-month period can result in the board seat being declared vacant. Ms. Becker also explained that the Executive Committee had discussed the situation and was recommending that the Board consider the seat vacant due to the absences. There was brief discussion followed by a motion made to declare the seat vacant by Sherricka Day, seconded by Amy Bryan. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

**President’s Report.....Peter Bowden**

- Mr. Bowden introduced Joel Slocumb, who reported on film. Mr. Slocumb reviewed activities for the past several months to include:
  - 2022 Film Activity
    - 16 Film Projects
      - 2- Series- Very Vera, Art in America – Streaming now Amazon Prime
      - 1- Video
      - 3- Documentaries – Jim Jones People Temple
      - 4- Shorts
      - 2- Commercials- Chevy Trucks
      - 2- Independent- Fifty aka Cash Out
    - 2023 Film Project Updates
      - Kent State
      - Cake Town
    - Marketing Columbus 2022/2023
      - Georgia Entertainment News Event
      - Location Scout Site Visit
      - Quarterly Film Commission Meeting
      - Sundance

**Other Business.....Group**

- Dan Gilbert mentioned the positive financial impact for the city when there is an event held in Columbus, GA.
- Peter Jones spoke about the upcoming Ranger competition being held at the Columbus Civic Center. He reiterated the comments made by Mr. Gilbert about the positive financial impact being made because of these sorts of events.

**Adjournment.....Lauren Becker**

With no further business, Ms. Becker adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.