STAFF REPORT
Hillsborough Tourism Board
February 5, 2024

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Tourism Program Manager, Shannan Campbell

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Grant Scoring Guide for FY25

Attachments:

1. Updated draft Scoring guide for FY25

Background:

In 2015 the Tourism Board moved from having only one method of funding (grants) to having three methods of funding (grants, contracts, special projects/partnerships) in order to fund different kind of projects/programs/and operations that supported the overall tourism program. The Tourism Board identified that it was asked, from what are now contract partners, for roughly the same amounts of money year over year for the same projects/programs/operations year over year. The board identified that it wanted a structured traditional competitive grant program for new/innovative ideas to start new events or projects as well as a way to be nimble and fund smaller asks that pop up through the year (special projects/partnerships). They also determined that asking the historic sites and the Alliance to apply for a competitive grant program every year was not the most effective and that these relationships should transition to contracts for tourism services.

The Tourism Board has been perfecting all three of these funding processes over the years to see what works, what doesn't, and what kind of questions and reporting should be provided in order to ensure that the tourism funds are being spent effectively to grow tourism in town.

Summary, key points, and questions:

- A lot of feedback was received on how to make the scoring guide easier for those applying for grants to understand what the Tourism Board is looking for in their ideas/projects/events and also what the Tourism Board should be using to guide their scoring of grants. Key changes included: narrowing scores from 1-8 to 1-5, weighing scoring areas such as 'tourism impact' heavier than areas such as 'general information and description' and simplifying the language under each score giving an outline of what is 'excellent' vs. 'insufficient'.

Staff recommendation and comments:

None. Staff is open to hearing any additional feedback/changes needed and making them before grants open.