

**Town of Swansboro**  
**Swansboro Tourism Development Authority**  
**April 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Chairman Randy Swanson, Michael Diehl, Preston Patterson, Linda Thornley, Jack Harnatkiewicz and Commissioner Joseph Brown.

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**Call to Order**

Chair Randy Swanson called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Ms. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Diehl, the February 22, 2024, special meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**Business**

*Financial Report-(3rd QTR. FY 23-24)*

Finance Director Sonia Johnson reviewed there was a beginning fund balance of \$192,509 and total revenues for the quarter as of March 31, 2024, amounting to \$89,875.83. Expenditures totaled \$68,988, leaving a cash balance of \$213,196.31 and an available fund balance of \$230,150.31. Board members inquired about the status of the \$30,000 appropriated for visitor center renovations, which remains unused, and a balance of roughly \$1,500 from a prior \$4,000 allocation to the Swansboro Historical Association. When these funds were to be fully utilized was not known.

*Marketing & Advertising Status Update/Discussion*

Chair Swanson reviewed that Ann Marie Bass of Front Row Communications, LLC was unable to attend to review her report provided in the packet. If there were any questions or directions from the board, those details would be emailed to Ms. Marie after the meeting.

The board praised Anne Marie's work as the marketing contractor. They noted she stayed within budget, updated airport ads, kept a photo and video collection, and helped Parks and Recreation with promotions. They then discussed her contract renewal. The board mentioned that she was the lowest bidder two years ago, with other bids being much higher. While they appreciated her work, they talked about whether to renew her contract or ask for new bids. Anne Marie had asked for a small budget increase for next year and would attend the budget talks to explain her work and plans. The board agreed that the contract renewal or rebidding should align with the future budget planning process and committed to revisiting the topic at future meetings.

*Grant Funding Request - Swansboro Military Affairs Committee (MAC)-Swansboro Military Appreciation Day (MAD)*

Vice Chair Linda Thorney recused herself from voting because she was chairperson on the Military Affairs Committee and would also be providing informational details as needed.

Cassie Madison, the Social Media Manager and Treasurer for the Swansboro Military Affairs Committee, reviewed the funding request in the amount of \$2,000 for the Military Appreciation Day event, which will take place in June at Hammocks Beach State Park. The event was for military personnel, veterans, and their families from nearby bases like Camp Lejeune and the Marine Corps Air Stations. Ms. Madison shared about the success of previous events, with over 5,000 attendees and thousands of meals served. She explained that the event was run by volunteers, with no commercial interests, and provided support, information, and appreciation to military families.

In response to inquiries from the board Ms. Madison or Linda Thornley clarified the following:

- 2024's event had around 5,000 people, and they are planning to track attendance better this year by having people sign up at an information booth which would also promote Swansboro by handing out local maps and visitor guides.
- There would be new activities like nature walks and boat tours.
- They are working on a solution to parking.
- The grant money will be used for marketing the event.

On a motion by Mr. Harnatkiewicz, seconded by Mr. Diehl, the funding request for Swansboro Military Affairs Committee (MAC)-Swansboro Military Appreciation Day (MAD) in the amount of \$2000 was approved unanimously. 5:0 – Ms. Thornley recused herself from voting.

#### *Meeting Schedule Discussion*

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that consideration to change the time for Swansboro Tourism Development Authority meetings to 6:00 pm was suggested by the mayor during a previous Board of Commissioners meeting. The reason behind the suggestion was to align with other advisory boards that meet in the evening and to reduce confusion about meeting times.

Members noted that 2:30 pm worked well with their schedules, particularly for those with a business, as evenings were busier.

After hearing from all members, there was a consensus to keep the meeting time at 2:30 pm on Thursdays, as it had been for many years.

*Audit Contract-Gregory T. Redman, CPA*

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority (STDA) was required to have an annual audit performed. Gregory T. Redman, CPA had provided a proposed contract to prepare financial statements and perform the FY 23/24 audit at a rate of \$3,000.

On a motion by Ms. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Diehl, the Audit Contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA, for the period July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, was unanimously approved.

*Proposed FY 24/25 Budget*

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that the FY 2024/2025 Proposed Budget was prepared in accordance with N.C.G.S. Chapter 159, the North Carolina Local Government Budget Fiscal Control Act. As required, all funds within the budget are balanced, and all revenues and expenditures are identified for FY 2024-2025. The Budget for FY 2024/2025 is balanced with \$14,417 of fund balance.

Mrs. Johnson reviewed that the budget was developed based on Anne Marie with Front Row Communications recommendations and included key allocations for digital advertising with Curtis Media Group. Front Row Communication's budget was flexible and could be modified based on board feedback or future needs. Revenue projections were adjusted modestly, increasing from \$106,000 last year to \$110,000, based on current collection trends. Downtown Merchant contributions of \$4,000, collected at \$200 per month from downtown businesses, were discussed, with clarification provided on how the funds are tracked and allocated by Debbie Harnatkiewicz with Bake Bottle and Brew. The payments remain consistent but are adjusted if the number of merchants changes and any unused funds would roll over to the following fiscal year.

*Set date to hold a public hearing/adoption*

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that per N.C.G.S. 159-12(b), before adopting the budget ordinance, the board shall hold a public hearing at which time any persons who wish to be heard on the budget may appear and requested the board to consider a date.

With consensus from the board, the public hearing would be scheduled for May 9, 2024, at 2:30 pm.

**Board Comments**

No Board comments were offered.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Diehl, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.