

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Tourism Development Authority
May 9, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes

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

Call to Order

Chair Randy Swanson called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm.

New Business

FY 2023-2024 Year End Projections/Potential Budget Amendment

An event had been proposed for possible funding that would result in a budget amendment if approved.

Linda Thornley reviewed details of the I-95 National Tourism Day event, explaining that last year Swansboro sent two representatives, Mary Pat Smey and Kelly Brown to Fayetteville to promote the town. The event allows different towns to distribute tourism materials at highway welcome centers. Given the success of their participation, they volunteered to attend again this year, and the event expanded to two locations.

The cost for covering their mileage and meal expenses was estimated at approximately \$300. It was noted that they had not submitted mileage costs for the previous year. The board confirmed that contingency funds were available, and on a motion by Mr. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Thornley, the National Tourism Day Event participation and necessary budget amendment was unanimously approved.

Marketing/Advertising Service Contract Consideration with Front Row Communications

Anne Marie Bass with Front Row Communication reviewed the Marketing/Advertising Service Contract along with reviewing past efforts and future plans. Key initiatives included updating business guides, improving the website, and expanding digital advertising. The proposed budget focuses on a mix of print and digital ads, including state-wide magazines, local tourism promotions, and social media campaigns to boost visibility.

Board members debated the effectiveness of various ads, particularly at airports and in print. Some questioned their impact, while others saw value in branding.

On a motion by Ms. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Harnatkiewicz, the Letter of Agreement dated July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, was unanimously approved.

Public Hearing

FY 2024/2025 Annual Budget Presentation

Finance Director Johnson reviewed that the FY 2024/2025 budget had been prepared in accordance with N.C.G.S. Chapter 159, the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, and had been provided to the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority Board on April 11, 2024. As required, all funds within the budget were balanced, and all revenues and expenditures were identified for FY 2024/2025.

The board reviewed budget allocations, focusing on marketing efforts like social media, geofencing, and website investments. They debated the necessity of increasing the budget, considering unused contingencies from the previous year. A key discussion centered on partnering with Curtis Media Group for their expertise in social mirroring and geofencing, though some members suggested seeking additional bids for comparison.

The public hearing was opened at 3:35 pm then closed as no comments were made.

On a motion by Ms. Thornley, seconded by Mr. Diehl, the FY 2024/2025 Budget Ordinance was approved unanimously with the condition that at least one other company be consulted for digital marketing.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Thornley seconded by Mr. Patterson, the meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.