

## TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TDC)

The Indian River County (IRC) Tourist Development Council (TDC) met at **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17, 2020**, in the County Administration Building, Building A, Commission Chambers, 1801 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting; review the agenda and the Minutes on the IRC website – <http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/TDC/2019.htm>.

Present were: **Chairperson Susan Adams**, **Damien Gilliams**, City of Sebastian Representative; **Jennifer Bates**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Keith Kite**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Steve Hayes**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative, **Karen Mechling**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative, **Amanda Smalley**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative, **Will Collins**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative and **Laura Moss**, City of Vero Beach Representative.

Others Present were: **Jason Brown**, County Administrator; **Dylan Reingold**, County Attorney, **Kristin Daniels**, Management & Budget Director, **Britney Melchiori**, Sebastian River Chamber of Commerce; and **Kirk Funnell** and **Jessica Arenas**, Indian River Chamber of Commerce; **Ruth Stanbridge**, Indian River County Historical Society; **Rick Hatcher**, **Richard Green** and **Ryan Strickland**, Treasure Coast Sports Commission; **Jerusha Stewart**, Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival; **Heather Stapleton**, Heritage Center, **Alicia Quinn**, Cultural Council; **Christy Lenz**, Capt Christy's Casual Cruisin, and **Kimberly Moirano**, Recording Secretary.

### Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at which time it was determined there was a quorum present, and led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Adams thanked everyone for the seating arrangements to observe social distancing.

### Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Chairperson Adams called for agenda item additions or deletions. There were none.

**ON MOTION BY Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Smalley, the Council unanimously (9-0) approved the Agenda as presented.**

### Approval of the Minutes of December 18, 2019

**ON MOTION BY Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Bates, the Council unanimously (9-0) approved the December 18, 2019 Minutes.**

### Authorized Uses of Tourist Tax Revenue Per Florida Statute 125.0104(5)(a)s Update – Dylan Reingold, County Attorney

Mr. Reingold, County Attorney explained there are four pennies that we have for the Tourist Development Tax here in Indian River County. 1.5 of those pennies go to beach funding, 1 penny goes to the Jackie Robinson Training Complex which leaves the additional 1.5 pennies which can be used for various different things. They can be used to acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, and remodel things relating to sports stadiums, sports arenas, auditoriums and coliseums. They may also go for beach improvements and maintenance. The key one for today is to promote and advertise tourism in the State of Florida, nationally and internationally. However, if tax revenues are expanded for an activity, service, venue or event it must have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourism evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists. The money may also be used to fund convention bureaus, tourist bureaus and tourist information centers. It may also be used to acquire, construct or make repairs relating to museums, zoos, fishing piers and nature centers. TDC's role was to focus on the pennies not already

allocated for the Jackie Robinson Historic Training Center and for the beach but focused on promotion of tourism in Indian River County.

**Tourist Tax Revenues Update** – Kristin Daniels, Director, Management & Budget

Ms. Kristin Daniels, Director, Management & Budget presented a PowerPoint presentation of the Tourist Tax Revenue Update through April, 2020, and also a Budget Overview for the upcoming fiscal year, a copy is on file in the Commission Office. She explained the County first started seeing the negative effects of COVID-19 around mid-March. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the Governor suspended all short-term vacation rental activity. The Stay-At-Home Order was put into effect in April. Restaurants were closed and limited activities impacted tourism. April numbers are down \$198,899 or 76.27 percent decrease over the prior year.

Overall numbers to date are down \$259,620 or 12.73 percent. They are down \$108,204 or 5.3 percent when compared to budget. Staff budgets conservatively to take into account any fluctuations that occur.

Ms. Daniels explained that they had reached out to all of the TDC Agencies and asked if they would suspend any unnecessary funding in the current fiscal year in order to save dollars. Ms. Daniels thanked TDC's partners for their full cooperation.

Ms. Daniels showed a chart of the revenues by month and explained the colors on the chart. As reflected on the chart, March had a huge drop by 40 percent. April had a drop of 73 percent which is when we started to see the decrease in overall revenues. Due to the lack of time in reporting we will see the revenues for May about the first week of July. The revenues versus budget they tend to budget more conservatively so we're not seeing as great of an impact on our budget and we are down 5.73 percent for the year on our budgeted revenues. Our actual revenues have exceeded the budgeted revenues in every month prior to the COVID 19 impact so that will definitely help in offsetting our revenue decrease that we will see by the end of the fiscal year.

Tourist tax revenues have increased year over year since 2008-2009. We saw that trend slow down in 2018-2019 so we had about ten years of increases with last year's numbers decreasing.

Ms. Daniels explained the budget for next year. Staff has budgeted a ten percent decrease in the collection of tourist tax for next year. Obviously, this will have a direct impact on what was awarded to the Agencies. There was a \$99,705 decrease. That decrease in revenue to date is 12.73 percent and down 5.73 percent when compared to the budget. The 2019-2020 budget compared the 2020-2021 request. They had multiple agencies that were down and many came in flat. Cultural Council requested an increase. Ms. Daniels explained that we had a new request this year for the Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival but overall there is a \$130,143 decrease from the budget although it is still unfortunately over what we have to award in revenues for the upcoming fiscal year.

Ms. Daniels indicated that the Chambers' requests came in with decreased requests especially the Sebastian River Chamber. The Chambers are eligible for up to 70 percent. They are below that allowable expense at 66.35 percent so again that allows the other agencies to make up that difference there.

Mr. Kite questioned whether the tourism tax revenue reserves are proportionately divided by the penny and a half. Ms. Daniels explained that the amount that's allocated every year in the revenues is dependent on where the expenses come in. She explained that if you have agencies that don't spend their entire budget, that money stays in this fund and it is available for use. That is why we have the fund balance reserves for times like these. The reserve balance starting with the fiscal year October 1<sup>st</sup> is estimated at less than they should be because they had to do an inter fund transfer to fund the Jackie Robinson Training Facility but they are reverting that back to the fund so once that budget amendment is done it will be around the One Million Dollar amount. We have protected revenues of \$898,000 for that fiscal year which is a 10 percent decrease. Ms. Daniels explained that articles say that tourism is picking back up and people are ready. There is pent up demand out there and so staff has forecasted a ten percent decrease in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Brown explained that amount is ten percent below the current year budget which is more of a decrease from last year's actuals. He explained that we can lean on that fund balance a little bit. We have the luxury of maybe

not hitting our revenue budget. Mr. Brown explained that if we don't meet those projections, we do have some reserves that they would use in that instance.

Ms. Daniels noted we outperformed the budget every month up to this point in the year which does accumulate over time. At the present time, we are only down less than six percent from the budget.

Mr. Brown explained that amount is ten percent down from the budget but it's more like 20 percent down from what we had last fiscal year.

Mr. Kite explained that the problem is the rate which has now been destroyed. If we get back to the occupancy they had the last two or three years or even 60-70 percent, we're still going to be 30 to 40 percent less in their revenue because of the rate. In other words, even though occupancy may be 60 to 80 percent, their rate is down 40 to 60 percent. He felt that it's going to take at least \$300,000 to \$400,000 of reserves possibly in the fiscal year that we're looking at. Mr. Kite complimented the Chambers in their Zoom meetings they've had on rapidly changing marketing to drive-time markets, expanding in South Florida.

Ms. Adams indicated that in years past after hurricanes we have known we had that cushion there if we needed it and we can use it strategically but we have to be very careful how it's allocated. While it seems, like, a big number it can go very quickly if we're not utilizing it strategically. Ms. Adams indicated that when we look at this year's budget and knowing that the requests are more than what the Board has, we need to take a strategic look at what's being asked and what's going to be our best investment moving forward knowing what we're in for in the next year and how that is going to impact those dollars coming in to replenish.

Mr. Kite noted that this is an unforeseen item that does have an ending at some point. The pent up demand will be there much more rapidly and he is totally on board with that but as far as the revenue figure, even if we get occupancy back, we're not getting rates back until end of 2020-2021.

Mr. Collins noted that we are not through this year yet and his numbers are not very good. Mr. Collins asked whether Ms. Daniels thought we will be using reserves to get through the rest of this fiscal year. He understood we're still close to budget but he felt that we're going to end probably at least 20 percent down.

Ms. Daniels explained that it's hard because we don't have any May numbers yet. Staff has asked our TDC Agencies to reduce their spending. They're not travelling. They're not having the events that they used to have so we will see a reduction in the expenses. So if the expenses are down, that will help offset the loss of revenues as well. Those funds will stay in the fund balance at the end of the year.

Ms. Moss questioned what percentage the expenses are down that will be carried over. Ms. Daniels indicated we do not have that amount since we have many months left of the fiscal year. Mr. Brown indicated in a normal year we have expended dollars from budget. The projection that the Budget Office has so far is for the remainder of our fiscal year. Through September is a budget actual variance, a decrease of about \$800,000. That's all four cents so we're talking about a \$300,00 negative variance and that is based on an 85 percent drop for May so that reduction is still a pretty weak May and then ramping up in the following months for June, July and August which is more like a 40 percent decrease in numbers for those months. So, that would be \$300,000 on a year-to-date basis. We would expect a significant fundraiser expenditure also to offset that \$300,000 increase.

Mr. Collins questioned whether the Board had the right to make decisions on if the Council uses reserves and what we do currently. Mr. Brown indicated that the Council could make a recommendation but the Board of County Commissioners is the final authority. Ms. Adams explained that the Council makes budgetary recommendations to the Commission and then the Commission approves or denies their requests. Mr. Collins suggested that it would be worthwhile for the Council to discuss the next few months what to do with the rest of this fiscal year. Whether it is just everybody pinches pennies and we keep as much in our pockets as we can or if we try to provide what we can now. We've had some of the conversations with Indian River County, you know, how we're kind of in an unique circumstance in that we have less regulations. Mr. Collins felt some of the traffic we're getting on the weekends is people trying to get out of these bigger cities and as it all starts to open up a little bit more that kind of goes away. He is not as optimistic about the next 12 months. He is worried about the next few months. There is still a lot of fake money out there. There's a lot of just restless people. We're inching closer to the elections.

Ms. Daniels explained the portion of the monthly report that goes out every month for Fund 119 which is just for the TDC Agencies. To date, we have brought in \$640,502. Total expenditures are \$379,598. Right now, we have income of \$223,903. Those numbers are based on reimbursements so there's a lag time there for the Agencies to submit their requests so those expenditures will rise. Ms. Daniels couldn't say how much exactly each agency is going to leave on the table which will help offset the decrease in revenue. Again, it's a decrease from the budget not a decrease from actuals last year so there is even more room when you compare to where we ended last year with our actuals because we did the budget last year as well. Ms. Daniels indicated there will probably be a decrease but again Ms. Daniels just doesn't know sitting here today what the Agency reduction is going to be. Mr. Kite explained from what they are seeing that it's going to be more like 20 to 25 percent. Ms. Daniels explained that would be from their actuals from last year. Mr. Collins indicated he understood the math. He was speaking more about what the philosophy is going to be. Do we want to be more assertive now as opposed to later. Ms. Adams indicated she does not have the answer for that. She looks at the budget that's been approved. Mr. Collins felt that for this year we're okay. Regardless of how the rest of the year goes. Mr. Kite expressed that he felt marketing is doing everything they can from what he sees to get the word out to the right markets for the rest of this year. Ms. Daniels indicated that was a delicate balance too. We want to continue the advertising and the marketing without having a decrease of 50 percent to the Agencies for next year. Mr. Kite indicated it's very well documented across all the industries that drive time leisure is going to be the Number 1 recovery segment. It will not be large group business or a thousand kids at the baseball field.

Mr. Brown added the actual revenues for last year were a little under \$1.2 million, \$1,179,000. The current budget is just under One Million. So, we basically have an 18 percent cushion so the 10 percent down that we're projecting is really almost 25 plus percent down from the 2018-2019 numbers. Ms. Daniels indicated that this is consistent with what you say the rates are. Mr. Brown indicated he wasn't standing there saying we're going to make that number because there's just so much uncertainty. He had heard the dynamic that people might want to come to a place like Indian River County in these times rather than going to Orlando or Miami. Ms. Daniels indicated that the first three weeks the Sandridge Golf Course was opened they far exceeded their last year's numbers. Ms. Moss explained that she felt that the drive time leisure is very well taken and that we should keep that in mind. Ms. Moss has seen evidence of it. She had reported it at the Vero Beach City Council Meeting. She said to the Council that she wasn't sure if it was good news or bad news but that they had a parking problem again. Ms. Moss requested for clarification whether Ms. Daniels directly advised the different agencies to reduce their spending. Ms. Daniels indicated that yes that they had sent out an email. They received a few responses back and plans to actually cut funds from their current request and not spend their entire allotment. Ms. Moss asked whether in their responses whether they indicated the percentage or dollar amount by which they would cut their spending. Ms. Daniels explained that one did. Ms. Moss requested which agency it was and what the percentage was. Ms. Daniels indicated that it was the Historical Society that was no longer able to do their in-person short videos because they generally interview the elderly population that is more immune compromised right now so with COVID-19 they did submit a reduction of about \$13,000 which is significant on their budget. Ms. Bates questioned whether the other agencies that had said they would reduce but hadn't submitted anything in writing, how is that followed up so that the Board can see how the budget numbers are going to look. Ms. Daniels indicated that she could ask them for their actual numbers.

Mr. Kite explained that even looking at the Sports Commission at \$63,000 through your current dollars, there's probably \$100,000 in expense savings or more if they don't get any events.

Mr. Gilliams asked whether the Board had heard from the Sebastian Chamber. Ms. Daniels explained that they had reduced their request for the upcoming year. They have gone through some staffing changes there. She believed they needed more time to wrap their hands around where they are.

### **Description of Tourist Development Grant Rating Sheets**

Chairperson Adams explained the Tourist Development Grant Rating Sheets. Typically, the Board ranks the agencies pretty standard based on the packet presentation, primary impact on tourism which is the largest category and then effective and efficient use of the dollars. Ms. Adams explained that the presentations will be made and then the Board would fill out the Rating Sheets for each Agency. Ms. Daniels, requested that the Granting Rating Sheets be turned in at the end of the presentations for her to calculate the ratings based on everyone's input and then she would give numbers for each Agency.

Mr. Kite summarized from the long discussion that the Board made the decision that we're going to be using about \$100,000 more in reserves for this current year that we're in. Ms. Adams indicated that as we went into today's discussion and based on what the Board had done in the past, the Board really needed to be looking at the requests where they have come in in the past, where they are today, what's been expended, what's likely to be expended and where the Board needed to focus the Board's very limited dollars.

Chairperson Adams explained that as we went into today's discussion, based on what the Board had done in the past, the Board needed to really be looking at the requests where they had come in in the past, where they were today, what had been expended, what was likely to be expended and where we needed to focus our very limited dollars going into next year so the Board is effectively marketing the community so that they can try to maximize. Ms. Adams' fear is that the continued use of reserve money in what we're looking at is going to get us right back to where we fought so hard to get out of that hole.

Chairperson Adams explained that traditionally the Chambers will present at the Board's next meeting in September since they are eligible for the 70 percent. They had come in with slightly under the 70 percent. Ms. Adams thanked them for that and allowing the Board to be able to use the money for other Agencies. Ms. Adams explained to the new members of the Board that we allow the presenters to start their presentation. Then we have the opportunity to ask questions of the Applicant and then we do our rankings and move onto the next Agency.

### **Presentations:**

#### **1. Cultural Council of Indian River County – Alicia Quinn, Acting Chairman of the Board**

Ms. Quinn provided an overview of the tourism efforts undertaken by the Cultural Council toward tourism. A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Ms. Quinn, which is on file at the Board of County Commission office. The Cultural Council has rejuvenated, upgraded, cleaned up and reinvented their website. They feel that it is much clearer, crisper and definitely more user friendly. They are finding that they have excellent results with that. The total users consists of 30 percent Indian River County users, 39 percent from counties outside of Indian River County but in Florida, 31 percent for those outside Florida and 1 percent of those outside of the U.S. One percent outside of the USA is really only reflected from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup> when the Cultural Council started their new recordkeeping and tracking. The other results are the total uses on the website from October 1<sup>st</sup> of last year to May 8<sup>th</sup> of this year. The number of users have increased.

Ms. Quinn explained that if we focused on four of the reports they are quite significant in terms of the number of different viewers that they had. On the average, these viewers are looking at three pages per session. The Cultural Council has only looked at this for ten weeks. They have seen hits from Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France and Germany with France being the largest. Every week on Wednesday in the *Press Journal*, they have a Cultural Council ad that's a half page ad that goes out to the *News Weekly*. The *News Weekly* is a great opportunity for the Cultural Council because it is sent to residents who do not subscribe to the paper. It gets out to a wide circulation in the community. For the Cultural Council, this is frequently the way that they are introduced to tourists in a town. They discover the Cultural Council through this weekly article where they see that the Cultural Council is promoting the arts in the county and that's how they know about the Cultural Council and get in touch with them. Through that connection they then are able to provide them more services.

The Cultural Council Concierge Service and their Information Center are both ways in which tourists access the Cultural Council and use them. The Cultural Council assists tourists with tickets to cultural events, recommendations and answers to any questions that they might have about Vero Beach and all of the surrounding areas and information on cultural events and organizations including local residents and lodgings. They have a wealth of pamphlets and brochures from all the different organizations available in their office for people to pick up at their convenience. They have found that their phone contacts are the most utilized by the tourists. They average five to eight calls daily in season. For visitors that are in town or those that are planning on coming into town on a future date. Walk-ins average at least four groups of two to six persons daily during the season. Email contacts are sporadic four or five times a week. During season they see approximately 1,400 individuals representing themselves or small groups that come in to get information.

The Cultural Guide is a very highly regarded annual calendar that they publish that is available every October and it covers all the cultural and arts events in the county from October to October. The Cultural Guide that was produced starting this year will not just be a hard copy guide. They are also going to be producing a digital guide that is a flipbook that will be on their website and their social media pages making it viewable anywhere in the world.

The Cultural Council's goal is to get the funding to establish a collaborative with five different cultural arts organizations in the Northeast which will share their website and online Arts and Cultural Guide. They will be targeting areas that are well known for cultural activities.

Ms. Adams questioned whether the increase was to be reinstated to previous levels. Ms. Quinn indicated because of the reduction in funding last year, they had to terminate their social media program and coverage for five months. They had to cut a number of advertising campaigns they had planned that they were able to implement and cut back on their weekly broadcasting. They would like to reinstate those programs having a full robust social media presence especially with their online guide.

Ms. Adams questioned regarding staff. Ms. Quinn indicated that the organization right now is run by the Board and they have a part-time office person.

## **2. Indian River County Historical Society – Ruth Stanbridge**

Ms. Stanbridge, President of the Indian River County Historical Society. She said she does not have a PowerPoint presentation due to COVID. Ms. Stanbridge indicated that once the Budget Office sent out their notice about being very conservative, they decided that maybe that was their new norm. They pretty well closed down their interviews. It was very difficult to be able to interview their older folks about the history of the county. They asked the County to amend the Budget to take care of a new website so that was graciously given to them so she has been producing a website that will be ready for the new normal and they hope to move forward with their markers and their videos in this coming budget year. So, TDC has always supported the Historical Society as they built up the inventory of infrastructure of their historical environmental resources. They have quite a list of them that now hopefully are proven to be very valuable. As they have been talking, folks do not want to move too far from their home. Fortunately, they have the resources both in the Historical and in the environmental resources that will draw them to their community. That's why they thought the website upgrading and adding all these new things to it would be so valuable.

Ms. Stanbridge explained they have a video on the Women Suffrage. This is a centennial year because women were able to vote in Fellsmere in 1915, 5 years before anyone else did. Unfortunately, they can't showcase that until they're all able to come together. The project is on hold but they hope to bring it forward this coming year. With this upcoming budget, they requested to have more of their documentaries produced which has been received very well. They will be working with Fellsmere, the City of Sebastian and also the Historical Society in Sebastian and the Heritage Center on some videos on the citrus, cow hunters, the fishing village and the Rails to Trails which hasn't received an awful lot of publicity because people don't know what it is. So, they hope to do a video to show the old railroad grade from Sebastian to Fellsmere that is now a bicycle and walking path. They feel that the Chambers and the tourist partners could use it in their advertisement.

Ms. Stanbridge indicated that they are asking for the same amount of money \$32,000 as they asked last year. She is very happy to tell the Board from their budget this year, they will be able to turn back \$2,000 to help everyone as they get through this abnormal year.

Ms. Adams extended her appreciation for cutting their budget back this year and holding the budget steady going into next year. Ms. Adams questioned how many videos that the Historical Society had been able to produce. Ms. Stanbridge indicated that the Historical Society had about 12 that are already running in the Chamber in the lobby. They have the new videos which they hope to be coming soon as they move out into the county. They also have two historical markers that have to be put up. The reason they haven't is because they are unable to have a gathering. They had one at the Old Winter Beach Bridge which is at the end of Jungle Trail and they have another one at the Wabasso Bridge which will be named for A.B. Michael who was the dean of citrus. The Legislature has changed the name of the Wabasso Bridge to the A.B. Michael Bridge and they wanted to have a big celebration and a big event but are unable to. So, they will have a marker placed at some point in time in the future up at that bridge.

Ms. Moss complimented Ms. Stanbridge on the Jungle Trail video. She indicated that she had already forwarded the video out of the county for advertising. Ms. Adams noted that Ms. Stanbridge used multiple agencies that she corroborated with to make things happen. She wanted to encourage all the agencies to work with each other to help expand those dollars and stretch them across different applications.

Ms. Stanbridge explained that she was looking very forward to working with the Sebastian Historical Society as they did the Cow Hunters because that was in North County and West County. They have to hurry because the time frame gets kind of scary.

Mr. Hayes asked Ms. Stanbridge if she had had the opportunity to find out where and how far abroad the videos are going. Ms. Stanbridge indicated that they do not track them. Mr. Hayes indicated it might be worth their while to try and track them because he had done a video for his business and within a week he had 50,000 views from Spain.

Mr. Collins praised Ms. Stanbridge on updating their materials. He indicated that he felt they had done a good job of putting the markers up. He said it's nice to see physical implementation of all this stuff. He thought it was worth noting that the Historical Society does this with a very limited budget, a lot of personal work from Ms. Stanbridge and a lot of other volunteers. Ms. Stanbridge stated that it is only volunteers. They have no paid employees. In the grand scheme of what the Board contributes to other groups and what the actual numbers are, the Historical Group does a lot with not too much money. Mr. Gilliams thanked Ms. Stanbridge and said that in the Sebastian area they do a fabulous job. Ms. Bates thanked Ms. Stanbridge. She indicated it was admirable of her with only a \$20,000 budget and even with that she stepped up to be able to cut some areas which was a very tough thing to do. She indicated that their videos are amazing.

### **3. Treasure Coast Sports Commission – Richard Hatcher**

Mr. Hatcher, Executive Director with Treasure Coast Sports Commission, thanked everyone on the TDC Board that had reached out with prayers for his recent health scare. Mr. Hatcher indicated they were excited to be able to do their presentation again. A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Mr. Hatcher, which is on file at the Board of County Commission office. Mr. Hatcher indicated that the video that they have produced is one that lives on their website that talks and shares globally about what the Treasure Coast Sports Commission is and they play the video whenever they go to their sports tourism industry shows.

Treasure Coast Sports Commission as mentioned in the video is the recognized sports tourism marketing organization for the Treasure Coast. It includes Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Treasure Coast Sports Commission is part of the Florida Sports Foundation as well as Sports ETA. They were formed in 1999 and last year they celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Part of their mission statement is to strengthen the quality of life and economic well-being for the Treasure Coast Region through recruiting, retaining and supporting sporting events that come to the area. Mr. Hatcher stated that they market and promote our region outside of the area and they look to bring tourists here so they get a chance to experience everything within Indian River County and the Treasure Coast Region. Treasure Coast Sports Commission are 1 of 29 Sports Commissions in the State of Florida and one of over 685 Sports Commissions that are part of Sports ETA which is their National Association. They are excited to be represented and looked upon on the Southeastern Coast here in Florida. They have competitors up and down both coasts and in the Panhandle but they still like what the Treasure Coast draws because they are the drivable market that a lot of people that as they fly into Orlando, they can visit us can visit.

Mr. Hatcher recapped their successes as they began the 2019-2020 year in quarter one, they had eight grant-funded events that actualized with over 2,100 room nights. They put the burden of responsibility of each one of their current directors that they must ask their teams to track their room nights through their teams, where they stayed as well as the parents. Just in quarter one, the estimated number impact was 1.5 million dollars and again a budget to grant to support these events is \$25,000. Mr. Hatcher indicated the largest event they did during the first quarter was the Special Olympics State Championships which has been in Sebastian for the last 11 years and they have continued to work with the Indian River County Park System to be the co-host. The night before the event, there is a celebration event at the IG Center. The competition is the next day at the North County Aquatics Center.

Looking into quarter two, beginning in January, they had 15 grant funding events that had actualized in over 7,000 room nights. A large portion of that is working with the Jackie Robinson Training Center for their spring training facilities. They also play host and work with the Jackie Robinson Training Center to be the host for the one of two umpire training schools that are in the United States. Knowing what they know now, those employees are unemployed. Maybe they'll come back and renew their certificates and everything but there is a loss of almost two million dollars in economic impact and again the grant dollars that was spent. As they hit March 15<sup>th</sup>, everyone's normal changed. With events being put on hold, events being canceled, they had to come up with a recovery plan. They reached out to their event partners and their community venue partners. They wanted to see what venues were going to be available, how they were going to work and if they could reschedule the event. Also at that time they got a letter which all of their agencies did about applying for and submitting Applications for the PPP Program. They applied and were granted the PPP Program. They will then give back to Indian River County what they had saved. They did weekly ZOOM reports with their state partners, learning best practices because the world had stopped hosting events not just here on the Treasure Coast but over the country. No one hosted anything. They engaged in weekly seminars with their national industry partners. They worked with the venue operators because as they started getting messages back from their event partners, they found that if they could at least push it to the Fall, they were willing to do that but you have to have the venues available to do that. They were able to reschedule a lot of events that were mid-March through the end of June to September, October, November and December. They were able to minimize their canceled events over this period. They were able to pick up new events that when they went to reschedule at other destinations, those venues were not available. Their industry partners throughout the state started calling around asking the availability of resources. They all shared events when they knew they couldn't host them.

Since they had no events to report on their social media page, they started recognizing their partners that work with them. They did this through Partner Spotlight. They got this idea from looking and watching what the St. Lucie Mets were also doing with their partners at their complex. Part of their Payroll Protection Application was through PNC Bank. When they went to them, they said that they were completely full already with their submissions. So, they reached out to a local bank here in Vero Bank with Marine Bank & Trust. They were able to get them the Application in and get them approved. They were very thankful for working locally with a bank that understands what it's like working with non-profits. By cancelling the 13 events that meant 9,500 room nights were canceled and it resulted in over Six Million Dollars of economic impact. Out of the 13 events, they were not able to reschedule 8 of these events and that led to a savings of \$30,000 over the events they could not reschedule. Mr. Hatcher reminded everybody that they do not hold onto these dollars. These dollars stay in Indian River County. These dollars are not given to them until they submit post-event applications to the Budgeting Office and then they then send the checks out to their events so with the events being canceled, that was an immediate \$30,000 savings.

In mid-March, they suspended all of their marketing play that they had. They had just gone into production with a group called "Multi View" that highlighted five opportunities for them to market and promote once a month in their sports industry newsletter, Sports ETA. They were able to reschedule five events that were coming up for later in the year. Again, you're looking at a 1,000 room nights and a 1.3 Million Dollar impact we will see before the end of the year. Maybe not this fiscal year but we know it's coming before the end of December.

In July, they had two events that were scheduled. Both lacrosse events were going to take place in South County but one event had to be canceled. Major League Baseball could not do anything right now which means nothing can go on at the Jackie Robinson Facility. They had conversations with Michelle and Jeff Biddle weekly about seeing when they thought they might be able to bring some events in. They've cancelled their big event for July with the Hank Aaron Invitational and that is their biggest event for the summer. Again, that is part of the savings that as they looked at this, they hope to take this money that we're not spending now and be able to push it to events that are going to be moving into the next fiscal year starting in October. In talking about the next fiscal year ending in September with the events starting in October, they have 40 events that's on the schedule right now, over 6,000 room nights they project for this. These events are over their regular scheduled events plus these 5 new events that they were able to reschedule with the area. So, they're excited that they worked with their event partners. They were able to work with their venue operators to find openings within their schedule to host these events. The 14 events that they have scheduled through the end of December is almost one third of their events for the whole year. They were excited because they had been working with a group for the last three years of trying to get them to come to the Indian River County. Several years ago, the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce did a show with Major League Fishing. The Fishers Event will be hosting their national championship at Stick Marsh even though it's supposed to be a secret.



They qualified for this championship so they will be here December 3<sup>rd</sup> through December 5<sup>th</sup>. They will come here and stay at our properties.

Mr. Hatcher explained the objectives for 2020-2021 to insure the health and safety of athletes and spectators. They've worked with their venue operators on signage. That is the new normal when you go to the venues, social spacing. The dugouts on the baseball fields are sometimes unable to be used because of proximity. Now, again listening to Governor DeSantis he's a big supporter of sports. You can see what he's done and been able to work with the NBA playing in Orlando, the WNBA that's playing in Bradenton, MLS is playing in Orlando. If we can get Major League Baseball to come together, we could at least maybe have two to three weeks of spring training back here before they might start their season up in August. They are working on this and again it's all going to be social distancing. It's no secret that when families travel, they travel and they stay together. They take care of themselves when they go to the venues. So, they want to make sure that confidence stays strong. Develop new opportunities with their current event owners. They have hosted the Sunshine State Games Fall Lacrosse Championships for the last six years in working with their local Indian River Lacrosse Association. Through that event, they had one team that came in that was part of the Triple Crown group. They brought them four new events. Three of these new events took place before COVID with the Masters as well as the soccer. They hope to be able to make an announcement that's going to mean over 10,000 room nights for our region in October. Implement, return to play their best practices.

Treasure Coast Sports Commission is always looking to find new ways to build new facilities. If we do not keep up with what our neighbors are doing north, west and south of us, they will quickly become that ghost town of hosting events. They need to stay in there when talking about facility development and at least be at the table with those discussions. The Treasure Coast Sports Commission hosts the Sports Tourism Summit every year in October. They have not announced a date yet. They are waiting to see when they can do it but this is where they bring in their industry partners around the state and the country to come speak. They're always excited. They've been doing that now for five years. Grant supported through the different sports. You can see just a taste of what they're talking about, of course, baseball, softball, and the practical ones. Pocahontas Park has gone through a whole new development down there with hosting pickleball. They were the first really group to embrace it. This past December at Traditions in Port St. Lucie they did the World Pickleball Opening. It had over 350 competitors. You cannot say enough about the Jackie Robinson Training Complex and what it means to our region. Every year up until this year, they have over 120 high schools and colleges that come and compete that stay here in our hotels in Indian River County. Having that cut short they lost five weeks of that. Again, utilizing the venues that we have typically to North County Aquatic Center. Highlighted venues again everybody knows where these are but these are the venues that we've enjoyed working with. They have great relationships with them. In talking about the IG Center, that is the Pickleball indoor facility of choice. Anytime you walk through there, you hear click, click, click which is about five days a week. They stay very busy with that.

Over the five year recap, the Treasure Coast Sports Commission in 18-19 had 28 events on their calendar. Two cancellations because of hurricanes but you can see where it was. Again, you started seeing that little slide down from the previous year in actualized room nights. Over 49,000 room nights that are trackable actualized room nights for our region. Almost 25,000 room nights are here in Indian River County so almost 50 percent of the actualized room nights they stay here in Indian River County.

The Treasure Coast Sports Commission had not asked for any increases as everyone had seen. They're hoping to stay even in level because of what they do. Mr. Hatcher reminded everybody that they work to bring visitors to this County so they can experience everything else.

Ms. Adams questioned Mr. Hatcher whether he assumed that all the rescheduled events were going to happen and are going to continue to be booked through this coming year. They have finalized venue contracts with five of the events. They had 13 events that were impacted by COVID, 5 of them have already rescheduled. They have a couple more trying to find open dates in their tournament schedule so they can come back but that's on top of what we anticipate a very strong 2020-21. Everybody across the state they know is coming. We've heard about the economic impact of what it means but there is something about sports that's a social impact. People are waiting, chomping at the bit to get out to travel whether it is folks coming from Melbourne down, Ft. Lauderdale up or whatever it is. In talking to the hoteliers that have all their visitors come up from Miami and Fort Lauderdale, they just want to get away. We are a drivable destination.

Ms. Moss questioned where the majority of the travelers came from. Mr. Hatcher indicated that probably 60 percent came from within the State of Florida and probably 40 percent outside the state. They work with the Florida Sports Foundation and they also get grant dollars from them and that is strictly out-of-state participants. They do on the average ten events a year through them and working with them in tracking out-of-state numbers. Thus being a regional sports commission, one of two in the State of Florida, the other one being the Greater Orlando Sports Commission, they track these room nights and if St. Lucie County contributes \$215,000, Martin County contributes \$190,000 and then another \$20,000 to bid for the Babe Ruth Softball World Series, they all partner together. Whenever rooms are tracked and if it's an event, like, what they call a cross-over event, the State High School Softball events that's no longer here anymore. They had teams that stayed down in St. Lucie County. Indian River County does not carry the full burden of the event. They take the percentage of room nights that are tracked in St. Lucie County or Martin County and that's pulled from their grant dollars even though the event might be taking place here so they utilize wherever the room nights come from, they pull grant dollars from those counties.

Mr. Kite agreed with Mr. Hatcher that this is where the dollars can be good. It's a huge demand factor of cancelled events. They had 11 weddings, 3 of them rescheduled. The others have been canceled or they have been made smaller. The opportunity is huge in sports particularly for our distancing locales and the venues that they have available.

Mr. Gilliams questioned Mr. Hatcher who their competitor is on the Space Coast. Mr. Hatcher indicated it was Space Coast Sports Commission or either the CDB. They have changed their name three different times. They have been picked to host the AU National Championships. Mr. Hatcher indicated that they do not monitor their rooms. They are strictly Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie County. Even if we have an event that would go up there and stay in their hotels, they do not track those room nights because it's not bed tax that's collected for Indian River County. Mr. Gilliams noticed that their awards and grants in the Fiscal Year 19-20 from \$73,000 up to \$145,000. He wanted to know if there was any explanation for that. Mr. Hatcher indicated that all of their grant dollars they stay within. They get grant dollars from each one of their three counties and they're specifically spent just strictly as grant dollars.

From the Treasure Coast Sports Commission talking to their partners in Panama City, families are travelling and they're all coming and having extended stays. With no school being in session, no spring sports being evolved, these kids are finding ways to get involved and so they've seen more and more family members.

Ms. Bates asked Mr. Hatcher that if we were to pull back your \$210,000 to the average, say to \$190,000 how would that potentially impact next year's physical budget in the event that you may receive more of an increase than we have seen in years. In the event that you have allocated the moneys for a particular event and then you have three more that come on the horizon, the Commissioners and the Budget Director have been good at about being able to allocate, pulling those funds to get them because they have had those reserves and money is not used to the fullest in the categories just trying to rationalize and see would that be a huge impact as detriment to next year trying to be conservative with the money now. Once the Sports Commissioner started and they knew that they were going to have events that were going to be canceled, they quickly tried to reschedule and in some cases they had to reschedule twice but they thought maybe okay, if they're happening in March, maybe they can get them back on line in June not really impacting. But then June quickly turned in the first available and it's probably going to be July. Then you start then plugging in what works for availability of that venue. That means new events, bigger numbers for these events just like this group that he talked about Perfect Gang Baseball, they need in October 60 full-size baseball fields. That encompasses all the spring training sites in Palm Beach County, Lawnwood in Fort Pierce, Lakewood and utilizing ours as well. They are minders of these dollars. They're not just giving out dollars and when events do not qualify with their room nights, they do not just get a check. Kevin who works with all of the Treasure Coast Sports Commission's event owners he knows about these post event report reports. We then submit them to Mike Zito for his approval before it gets moved on. So, they are minders of the dollars so they could work with whatever the Boar can get them. They know they work very closely with the Indian River County Tourism Office. Their goal is to bring people to town. It is not to give them things to do while they're here. That's what these other agencies do. Their goal is to put people in hotel rooms and in restaurants and what they do that's left up to everybody else.

Ms. Mechling commented that she's listened to Mr. Hatcher for several years. She praised Mr. Hatcher on his great presentation. She questioned whether she was correct that in some of the bids that they've done to get groups here it's more than just one year. Some of the groups are locked in to coming. Mr. Hatcher indicated that there is a percentage and probably the best one about that was FHSA State Softball and of course they moved that again to

Claremont but when that does come back over for bid that was a three-year bid then with a two-year option to continue to host and that's why they had a three, a two and a three.

#### 4. Vero Heritage – Heather Stapleton

Ms. Heather Stapleton is the Executive Director of Vero Heritage. A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Ms. Stapleton, which is on file at the Board of County Commission office. She provided that before COVID, 76 percent of all leisure travelers were participating in cultural or heritage activities such as visiting museums, visiting historic buildings and monuments. Of those travelers, 60 percent spent more on average than other leisure travelers. They are on the National Historical Register. They run the Indian River Citrus Museum which is a micro museum so it's an interesting combination. They also know that Americans support politicians and governments that approve to support museums. It's consistently high no matter what your political affiliation is and those identified as liberal percent are 97 percent supportive of Governments that support museums. Of those identified as moderate, it's 95 percent. Of those identified as conservative, it's 93 percent so you can see that museums across the board are well liked by Americans. Moreover, many times like in *Bloomberg* and *Money Magazine* they have found that quirky museums are often big draws to areas and people will frequently come to the Indian River Citrus Museum.

Unfortunately a very stark pair of reports from UNESCO and International Council of Museums suggested that the closure of as many as one in eight small museums are closing worldwide and you only have to look to Brevard County to see that this has already happened.

Ms. Stapleton stated that their museum is in a particularly intense moment of adaptation in the cultural field as they literally fight for survival while simultaneously envisioning and immediately creating this new way of serving and engaging our community. People cannot come into the Heritage Center, like, they did once before. People cannot come into the Indian River Citrus Museum right now, like, they did once before and so what has been amazing in a certainly weird unplanned way is that the TDC dollars that they've already received have been massively helpful for them in trying to figure out how to keep the community engaged with what they do.

They launched their stories from the Grove Project and it has done okay on YouTube. It has done really well on their website and on Facebook. There are a series of seven different videos that they've produced. Current TDC dollars are funding this project and it has been amazing. There have been numerous calls from all of the state that they've been getting about these videos. They've had 9,130 views on these seven videos as of the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. In addition to this, because this was getting so much interest, they did something much more informal which didn't really cost TDC anything. They also launched their Indian River Citrus Museum Minutes that currently consist of four videos which are snippets of topics that they would cover in the museum and they're doing as well as these but they too already have well, over 1,500 hits on those four videos. The videos have been getting really good feedback and really great viewership.

As for advertising the videos, eventually they will put this little QR Code into better use. They haven't even launched it yet and it's already had over 79 uses on a QR Code that they haven't even launched which is amazing and those are actually unique viewers.

Previous TDC dollars funded their website upgrade which had they not had that, they wouldn't even be able to host all of their videos on there as it is. It been a great way to build upon the investment already made in their organization. It also enabled them to launch their new giving page so they have this amazing new gifting platform now that just since mid-February has already raised \$15,000 in donations which is huge for them. It also allowed them to synchronize that giving page with their donor data base and their donor communication system. None of that would have been possible had they not received last fiscal year's TDC dollars. Some of the short videos that they produced got the attention of a Japanese film making crew and they made a short documentary about a piece of cupboard that featured golfing and grapefruit and they thought this cardboard artist found this piece of cardboard in the Tokyo market and questioned what do dolphins and grapefruits have to do with another and saw some of their videos, made their way into Indian River County. Made the film, visited the museum, and visited all kinds of places all over Indian River County. They found the place where the cardboard originated. The video was supposed to have premiered by Southwest Film Festival and technically it still did although in a much different format then they were hoping for. Once it made its premiere, it had 1,650 views. The whole video is about Indian River County and the Citrus Museum. They were also recently featured in a two episode arc of a Floridian podcast called "Wait Five

Minutes” where they detailed the history of Indian River Citrus. They launched their Instagram in December. They have almost 600 followers. People from all over the state have contacted them on Instagram. They have used some TDC dollars in print although they are kind of getting a little bit away from that just because the online stuff is working so well. To a lesser extent the radio as well especially recently with IDA Garden. They have been putting out their own PPE.

Annual visitation numbers from 2014 to 2019 was 5,000 guests that came into the Indian River Citrus Museum. The calendar year will be markedly different. There were absolutely no guests in April, way down in March, no Hibiscus Festival, way down in May and they continue to be down. Because of the spots they’ve been doing on the radio they actually had a family from Jupiter make a private reservation with the Heritage Center. Rather than keep inconvenient hours, they’re now taking private reservations. Even including March’s numbers, they were still up quite a bit because they had an amazing October. The Centennial Celebration helped with that. Of the seasonal visitors, they have had 14 countries, 43 states and visitors from 30 counties outside of Indian River County. Events and rentals, like, everybody are not doing so great right now. Normally, they have from October to February they had a little over 5,000 guests come in for events and rentals with 3,800 of those from being outside of Indian River County. The way they facilitated that is with some really unique events that exist nowhere else. They hosted Night at the Indian River Citrus Museum, their local response to Black Friday was Orange Friday. They had mimosas and all kinds of baked goodies. They also celebrated National Grapefruit Month in February. Unfortunately, their signature event, the Pioneer Dinner, which was supposed to have happened in July won’t be able to happen this July. It probably will happen next July. They had people coming from all over the country as far away as Colorado to attend the event for the Young Family. They will still honor them but it won’t likely be this calendar year. Their bridal show which also attracts people from the Tri-County Region will likely be canceled as well. They do have collaborative events as well and they had already had 60 different non-profits utilizing the Heritage Center and the way they’re able to offer those discounted rates to other non-profits is because they’re so successful normally under other circumstances. The Hibiscus Festival had to be cancelled. They’re hopeful that the Soup Bowl at the Samaritan Center. Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival has already made multiple temporary holds on their facilities so they are hopeful that that will get to take place this year. They have already lost over \$40,000 and keep in mind that her annual budget is not even \$200,000. They’re struggling. This is a real moment for them. Luckily with TDC dollars from this current fiscal year as well as the past, they’ve really been able to quickly reinvent themselves to try and help make up for that. Ms. Stapleton thanked the Board for everything that has happened prior to her even being in this business. It also enabled them to get a Florida Humanities Emergency Grant recently so that was a \$7,500 emergency grant. They also got the PPP so that’s helpful as well. But they are struggling and so cutting a mere \$4,000 from her request was tough. This program is almost a little over ten percent of her whole budget but they did make the cut.

They are still in their current funding year. They still plan on doing their Vero Heritage Citrus Label Tour. Ms. Stapleton requested Ms. Moss to push the City to help them with that. She explained that people love the fold packeting labels which are no longer created. Citrus is such a huge part of what Vero Heritage has been and still even what they do. The Indian River Citrus District is still recognized worldwide. Indian River Citrus can only come from the Indian River District and that is very meaningful to people. People from all over the country have stories about having received Indian River Citrus at Thanksgiving and Christmas and in their stockings and they do for band fundraisers. These labels were only made for about 60 years and not only did they obviously promote the citrus itself but they also advertise Florida. There’s beautiful pictures of the Indian River Lagoon, beaches and palm trees. They’re extremely artistic and you just don’t find the same level with most of the cardboard boxes which are used today so people still get very excited about these. They treat them as collectors’ items. Polk and Manatee Counties have already done these cardboard signs. The TDC dollars of this current fiscal year that have not yet spent will be creating more of these signs. One will be at the Railroad Museum, one will be at the Citrus Museum, one will be at the Chamber and an additional one or more if they can get private funding will also be in the Cultural Arts Village. That is the initial installation. The plan is, of course, to go countywide and they already have some private landowners, like Schacht Groves who are willing to put the money forward to fund signs in somewhat public places. She felt that right now, people will really appreciate being able to drive around and see all of those. There has been a resurgence in the interest of the Mental Health Association turtle tracks. So, this is still happening. It’s just the videos have become so successful so quickly that they focused on that for the first two quarters and they got a little distracted with this whole COVID business so they are returning to this project in full force. They are going to do a short documentary with the Indian River Historical Society about citrus labels. They have a successful model from Polk County to look at. They are not just signs. They really are not only part of their culture but they’re also considered arts in public

places projects. They don't necessarily have to adhere to sign ordinances. They're not really considered signs. It really is considered art.

Ms. Stapleton thanked everyone on the board who has helped them get to this point. The TDC dollars have made huge impacts on the museum and on the Heritage Center. There is no way with their limited budget that they ever could have even envisioned a project like this. They can't expand the museum itself but instead they can expand the reach and it doesn't have to just be part of Pocahontas Park area. It really can be all of the Indian River County.

Ms. Adams thanked Ms. Stapleton for having decreased their budget. With such a small budget proportionately and it's a much harder thing to do. She stated she was clear to hear that the citrus label project is still in the works. Ms. Stapleton stated that unfortunately the power plant took a lot of the City's attention and then COVID but Mr. Brown assured her that an agreement is being drafted. Ms. Moss applauded Ms. Stapleton on her creativity both before and after COVID. Ms. Moss indicated that Ms. Stapleton is a very modest lady. She won a cupcake challenge with a cupcake. She used citrus that was actually grown outside the door of the museum. It draws people into the area. She also remembered how on a Downtown Friday Ms. Stapleton had her tray a hot chocolate with citrus which was amazing. Ms. Moss applauded Ms. Stapleton's creativity after COVID by that she meant the amount of hours that she has engaged people at the museum. She felt that was terrific.

Mr. Kite stated that he thought it was a smart use of the Tourist Tax dollars in general in that where ten percent of a budget that creates \$180,000 in revenue for itself, the ripple effect of that is the hotels, restaurants and with 10,000 plus events. He indicated that Ms. Stapleton has done an excellent job. He is very pleased to see their budget being almost \$73,000 on the bench for next year. Again, alluding to that optimism and pent-up demand. Ms. Stapleton explained that people are not getting married just because of COVID. They're just not getting married right now except for Mr. Collins. They have had an enormous number of cancellations and most of those unfortunately have not been able to reschedule. They just decided to do smaller events in different ways. But they're still getting calls about weddings and events all the way well into 2021. There's this pent up demand and people want to resume their meaningful celebrations for sure.

## **5. Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival**

Ms. Jerusha Stewart is the Founder and Executive Director of the Festival. She thanked the Council for allowing her to present for the first year. They requested \$25,000 this year, A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Ms. Stewart, which is on file at the Board of County Commission office. The Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival is an annual celebration in their fifth year. Although they engage the community year round with the power of film. They have been a non-profit since 2017. They have won numerous top awards. The one they're most proud of currently is being named the Top 20 Event by the Southeast Tourism Society. They have had a lot of wonderful people say a lot of great things about the Film Festival from around the world and they bring visitors from around the world. They are the largest screening of independent film on the Treasure Coast and they're very proud of the fact that they have so many incredible film makers who call our film festival their home and recommend them to other film makers from around the world.

The film festival as an event is they brand the destination. They take the name of the city and they broadcast it to the world and hybrids as festivals are one of the largest and fastest growing industries right not in the world. Most of that is due to the success of south by southwest but you'll find that hybrids are growing because in this economy especially you get to have larger crowds. You get to have more people traveling together. They can leverage their dollar by enjoying different activities at the same time. So, as a tourist, it just makes sense to attend a hybrid. DMOs, Destination Marketing Organizations rank Film Festival as the number one activity for tour & film tourism. 35 percent of them travel outside of their city, state or even country to attend a film festival. Now, yes, the pandemic has happened and for the Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival it has been one of the most amazing things because it has allowed them to completely reinvent who they are. BBWFF 2020 Virtual Plus Live. That is the festival beginning August 14<sup>th</sup>. They have gone from being a four-day weekend festival in June to be a four weekend film festival from August 14<sup>th</sup> through September 6<sup>th</sup>. They will screen over a 100 independent films from around the world. They will screen them virtually and they will screen them at live events. Now, how does this happen? On the virtual platform they will screen them in an environment that most people will be familiar, the Netflix on Demand type programming. They will have tons of interaction so from being able to have Q&As with the film makers, virtual wine testing, film maker education, ways to keep them engaged in the destination as well as the festival. They have reached out to their top

venue and they have some new venues so they will be returning to the Majestic. Ms. Stapleton mentioned the Heritage Center. They're coming on board with COLAB as well as the Vero Beach Outlets where they had their second film festival this year. They are very proud of the fact that they are an event that allows them to be multi day and multi venue throughout the entire city and this year potentially the County.

So, an expanded time frame for the film festival is going to encourage longer stays. They are the only multi daily, multi event in the county that shows cases in the entire county and the surrounding cities. This year they're introducing a program called "Film Lab" which will already draw regional film makers, producers, actors, industry guests. They have already been reached out to by a major film distribution company that will be here at the festival this year. They are flying their team in from Los Angeles to buy films. Because of the pandemic, they are historic at this point. They will be it looks, like, the first virtual and live film festival post pandemic. So, what that means for the industry and the film makers and people want to attend because they haven't been able to be in a festival environment for the last three months so all of the other film festivals have been cancelled. Tribeca, CONN, so for the distribution companies it's important because now they have a place to come and shop for film. For the film makers it's important because now they have a place to come and be with audiences who will be seeing their films. Now, designation marketing activities that are very unique to a festival environment so first of all on their virtual platform they're going to have tourism programming. They've already reached out to the Indian River Chamber and they have given them their B rolls and their commercials to put on their site as well as their presenting partner, Vero Beach Outlets. The platform that they are going to be using goes beyond being a website. This is a virtual platform that will be available on any digital device and it is a platform that is built for entertainment and engagement. The activities that people have already been engaging in all throughout the COVID world in terms of watching film, they will now be able to do that within an environment that focuses on Vero Beach and Indian River County as well as they have gotten really savvy about putting live events on line and will be presenting virtual wine tastings where they are pairing that activity with local wine makers and local retailers and doing chef sharing and they've created their Stay In and Take Out Movie Night. What the Stay In and Take Movie Night is and one of the things about being a film festival is you can do things on the fly. With the recent events that have happened in cities around the world, they decided to produce a special event programming called the "Black Experience in Film." They took seven of their past short films that were about the black experience which are dramatic shorts and one short documentary. They will be screening one night during that night so that people can buy tickets to the screening but they will also be able to purchase dinner from a local restaurant.

They have requested \$25,000 which is an investment from the Council to bring more people to our region. That is the purpose of the film festival and that is why they created the film festival originally in June. It was created to support the economic well-being of the area so they are that vehicle that thrives in the shoulder season. They are a very unique film festival in that sense because most of the other festivals happened before us so they are one of the last ones in the festival circuit. It allows them to bring films from Sun Dance and Tribeca because now they've already had their first screenings so they can come to Vero Beach Wine and Film Festival. In the coming year, they would use these funds to expand their digital footprint because that is the main reason and the way that they reach out to their audience globally through their website, through social media. Also, they would have more of a presence in advertising including digital and traditional. Their virtual theater platform they could broaden the functionality. They would increase their email marketing as well as their Facebook and their Google advertising programs and one of the things that they're most excited about is having the festival app. An app is critical in marketing in today's 21<sup>st</sup> century world. People live on their phones. They have partnered with the number 1 website app which is a specific app for events in the world. Their goal is to increase festival attendance by 30 percent. It's to raise their social media engagement by 40 percent, increase their media coverage by 30 percent and increase festival submissions by 50 percent. All numbers that are doable. For example, their current festival attendance they increased by about 25 percent each year. One of the main reasons to increase festival film submissions is marketing. The more film makers who know that the festival exists, the more film makers who submit and attend the festival. They are a group that they are specifically interested in becoming more engaged with. Also, it raises the quality and the name brand of the films that they bring. They have a track record of growth of 25 percent year over year. They've grown in the number of films. This year they'll screen over 120 at this point. One of the reasons that's important is the more films they have to screen, the longer people are here to watch them. People who go to film festivals are binge watchers. They're not there just to see one movie, they're there to see every movie. 35 percent of the over 2,000 attendees that they had at the festival last year were from locations outside of Indian River County. Last year they had film makers from over 12 countries.

The age span was wide. They are staying in our hotels and spending money in the restaurants. They are spending money when they're here. When they talk to their hoteliers, you know, they're basically telling them the weekends that the film festival is here, they don't even advertise because they already know they're going to be sold out. One of the issues that they look forward to in their planning is as the film festival grows, where people are going to stay. Last year they put up 83 filmmakers. They put them up in hotels and homesteads. This year, they know that more than likely they're not going to be doing homesteads. They also have found out surprisingly filmmakers want to attend the festival so that means they have a festival concierge from one of the local travel agencies and she booked the rooms and arranges for the filmmakers to be put up for the days that they're here. They know that as the festival grows, that this is going to become a bigger issue getting the filmmakers places to stay and getting guests' places to stay. The festival is four days. The average length of stay is about five and an half days.

Promoting film tourism in Indian River County is their major goal to get people here so that they can enjoy all of the activities that are here in our city and in our county. They have a special award called "Vero Visions" so what the Vero Visions filmmakers don't know is that is the opening night of the festival, "The Vero Visions Awards and Screening." This year, that screening event will be held at the Treasure Coast Park and Watch Drive-In. They are also working with the ARC this year in Vero to bring back to bring back Joey Travolta and honor him with their VBWFF Visionary Award. He works with adults and children with mental disabilities to films. They reach out to different organizations throughout the county and promote the work they do, promote their organization and promote businesses. They market locally and globally. They are able to market our area through just being who they are and doing what they're doing. Ms. Stewart explained she put up a million plus impressions. That typically is the minimum of impressions that they get. She didn't want to go too crazy on that. The first year they actually documented 8.6 million and after that they just said okay. They currently have over 2,000 Facebook followers, an email list of over 5,000, Instagram which this year went from 100 to 900 followers. Their social media director who is a volunteer is doing a phenomenal job. Her personal Facebook is about 4,000 and her LinkedIn which has 25,000 connections. They have really great reach and opportunities to talk about this area. They partnered with the Sebastian Indian River to do an ad in a Philadelphia magazine. They are a member of Visit Florida's TMAP, the Targeted Marketing Assistance Program. They were actually the first entity on the Treasure Coast to be named as a partner. They also have partnered with the Indian River Chamber in terms of marketing coop and did a full page ad in the *Palm Beach Cultural Guide*. They also do crazy out of book things, like, a partner who has trucks that they can wrap and then they travel up and down the Treasure Coast as well as one of their big things in terms of marketing is the film festival partners so this is their festival partner, Films on Tour. They are the second largest films touring company in the world. They do social change, environmental and activist films. This will be their second year of working with them. Because of this partnership they were able to partner with the wildlife event that happened in Sebastian as well as the Pelican Center so it allowed them to really delve into the ecotourism experience that they have and culinary tourism so they host two dinners, a wine dinner and then devour chef and shorts that prepare a course at a dinner based on a short film. This has been hugely popular. It's an international dinner. Its five courses, five celebrity chefs. They were the only dinner last year to get a James Beard chef. The James Beard chef actually requested that he be able to do the dinner in Vero Beach. They are an incredible investment for the Counsel. She believes that her \$25,000 will be leveraged to the hilt. They can market regionally and locally in terms of bringing visitors here.

Ms. Susan Adams explained that since this is a new event to TDC funding in a year where we have limited funding for everybody, her questions are based on that. (1) She asked whether they are hosting any events outside the Vero Beach area within Indian River County. Ms. Stewart explained yes, they host events in Sebastian and Fort Pierce. In Sebastian, they will be hosting an outdoor screening on August 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Sebastian Chambers "Grill Out Night." The night before they will be hosting the Virtual Cocktail and Conversation and in the past they've actually been a part of the concert series "In the Park" and they will continue to do that. The "Grill Out Night" is an event in conjunction with the film festival. In Fort Pierce, they are hosting the drive in at the Treasure Coast Parking Lot and they will probably do two drive-in nights. They are in the process of talking with the library to do library screenings at the North County Library and they're also speaking with the Jackie Robinson Complex to do the screening of the "Other Boys of Summer." They have also offered to host screenings, like basically be a venue. The Jackie Robinson is closed until the end of June and hope to be open in August. They have one of the top films for Major League Baseball so this particular film has been on television with Major League Baseball so they already have the connection. A majority of what they're going to be utilizing the additional funding for according to their Application is going to be for the virtual aspect of the event and for added marketing for such. She said that marketing for the festival in general and the virtual piece as a tool allows them to extend their marketing reach because now they have a physical tool that allows them to be there year round. So, the virtual theater is not just for the film festival. It operates year

round so year round they can show films. They're basically Net Flicks in Vero Beach. It lets you know that Vero Beach is here and that we have a lot of festivals. Whereas before you might not have even known there was a Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival that was live. Having the virtual piece allows them to be in front of you year round.

Ms. Adams explained that the Application dealt largely with the virtual aspect of it. She explained that she personally just had some concerns related to funding what seemed to be more of a virtual event than an in-person event. Typically in the past and the rare occasions where we have invested in events it's usually for the initial start-up dollars either in the first or second years to kind of get those going and off the ground and they grow into self-funding and they find their own sponsors and things like that. She questioned why now in year 5 because it seemed like they have been successful to grow the event on their own year after year but now we're in year 5 and they're coming to TDC for funding. Ms. Stewart explained that (1) they realized that they are a huge tourist vehicle that they have the capability to put heads in beds and they have been doing it for five years. The first two years they were a non-profit and then the next years they thought they should be wait until they've shown that they have sustainability and that what dollars the TDC Council gives them, it's a great investment. They also were very focused on reaching to different parts of this area to say they can put whatever you're doing on the big screen. They can give you a wider volume. Ms. Adams explained that they have had discussions in the past from this Board on funding events and festivals and things, like, that so they haven't fully completed those conversations. Just in general, Ms. Adams concerns with funding festivals or specific events that are not through some larger agency is that then where do they draw the line with the next event that wants to come in, the Firefighters Fair very well could say that they bring lots of people to the area. She acknowledged that that's just splitting hairs but that has always been a concern of hers and for her she is not really sure if this is the year because of our tight funding that they should be funding a festival that has been growing year in and year out with their limited TDC dollars. She explained that that's where she is coming from and she was not trying to be harsh but she just wanted her to understand where her questions are coming from. She indicated that the festival is a great thing for the community but she is concerned that perhaps the TDC dollars are not as appropriately spent on this as they are. Ms. Stewart stated that she understood what Ms. Adams said because she had thought long and hard about applying for TDC money. She had made a presentation to the group and she read the statute that said that if your primary business is tourism that you should seek funding and they are a growing entity. They do support the community at a time when the community doesn't necessarily have economic strength. She had looked at what was happening with COVID and saw that they are unique with position to share what's happening here and brought tourists here. You know it's going to be in drive in tourists. They're going to want something to do for multiple days which is what they provide.

Ms. Moss explained that she thought their solutions to COVID are very creative and she applauded Ms. Stewart for that. She expressed to Council that the members should consider doing something new because if you never do anything new, you really become irrelevant as a Council. You can just have the finance people run the numbers.

Ms. Adams explained just to rebut what Ms. Moss explained that it's all well and good to do things and she is not against doing new things. Those that have been on the TDC Council for many years have seen many new things come and go along the way. They have invested in other festivals over the years and she pointed out that she is not saying it's not a good idea. What she said is that when you're looking at a budget shortfall of \$44,000 in a year where they are projected to have another at least depending on who you ask whether it's the Board Members or staff, 10 to 30 percent of revenue decreases and having to utilize additional reserve funds for this current year and not even talking about next fiscal year. She does not know if this is the best utilization of those very, very limited funds.

Ms. Moss expressed that she appreciated what Ms. Adams had said and she agreed with her that the Council should be very careful how the money is spent. Unfortunately, this form doesn't really reflect how we're reading this. This will be the only cultural event. We have had an overdependence for many years on sports funding sports. She indicated that the Board probably needs to wean themselves away from that event or back off a little bit on that and COVID is forcing us to. Ms. Moss indicated that Ms. Stewart is very creative in how she is handling the problem with COVID with the virtual and expanding even the range of it so that it went from a few days to a period of time over several weeks. They are involving the other municipalities around the county. Ms. Moss indicated that they have expanded their reach and that will interest more people to come into the county because you have multiple destinations. She feels it is excellent and really thought out.



Mr. Collins indicated that Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival has worked hard and is a good organization. Related specifically to what Ms. Adams was saying, TDC's obligation is to not necessarily to decide what is the best for Indian River County but to compare the organizations that have all presented today what they contribute to Indian River County based on what TDC provides them. Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival is in a very serious disadvantage in that he understands a lot of her presentation was based on diversifying and going in different areas of the county or helping co-marketing but in its actuality the Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival is a long weekend event.

Ms. Stewart indicated that she did not know what the dates for the Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival were. One of the reasons why she didn't include the dates for 20-21 is because they will have a decision point after the festival so typically the festival has always been held the second weekend in June. This year they created a festival the last weekend in February so now they have two so they will get to a point where they will need to decide whether they're doing two festivals next year, are they going to stay with the extended format of four weekends if it's successful because that could become really huge. The question is whether they go back to being the second weekend in June. Mr. Collins indicated that specifically the information we know for sure is the event you have scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> of August to September 6<sup>th</sup>. His first comment is that's in this current fiscal year. He doesn't know that any funding they provide currently today could even be used for that. It would have had to have been done at this meeting a year ago.

Ms. Stewart indicated that it does state that they are an annual event in the Application and it does give you a history. Mr. Kite stated that the money she has requested would not be available until October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2021. Ms. Stewart indicated that they would use the money to market the festivals that happened in February and the Festival that happened in either June or August. She stated a film festival is not just a single event. Not every city gets to have a film festival as a marketing and a tourism marketing vehicle. It's not appropriate for every city and every city can't really afford it or support it. She stated that a film festival is not just that one entity. It is something that will draw people year round. Mr. Collins stated he doesn't disagree with any of that. The unfortunate side of it is that they haven't given the Council any actual data to support that. Mr. Collins indicated that Ms. Stewart hasn't given any actual data to support that. He does not disagree. He started by saying that this is a spectacular event. He is very confident in saying more people will be coming to Indian River County with the film festival. His obligation as far as the TDC Council is to compare each of these organizations against each other and the lack of actual information. He stated he understands kind of the more general thought process of people who learn about who we are. They may come on their own but in its base clear straight forward format it is an event that only takes place at a certain amount of time and can only sell realistically so many rooms during that amount of time. All of these other organizations have the entire calendar year to promote every weekend. They can do events every weekend. They could do sports stuff every weekend. They could do cultural arts every weekend so that is just a disadvantage they have in being a quarter term event. He is not suggesting that your impact is less or more, he just stated that is what it is. One of TDC's base obligation here is to value how many hotel room night's people take from these organizations. Mr. Collins explained that it's going to be tougher for her to sell. Mr. Collins stated one of TDC's base obligations is to make a determination. That is what the rating sheet is. That's when the Council says, well, you know, what is this one killer event worth compared to what the other agencies are doing for the whole year. That is on each of the Council members to decide independently. They need to be forced to make those decisions.

Mr. Kite stated the perseverance, the tenacity, the quality of the film festival, everything that Mr. Collins eludes to, is overboard about the event. Mr. Kite has attended every year. But in looking at the \$2,500 taking your 35 percent of people from out of the county, we're running about 250 to 300 people here for three to five and an half days. We have 30,000 people at the sports events in a year at \$200,000 so on your \$25,000 your return is about almost 100 times less than the actual balancing. Now, taking intrinsic value of the million plus media hits and whatever can be argued. Each of the events in the county leads to maybe other ways that the word gets out about getting tourism here so it's very hard for the Council as an organization that uses tax dollars to quantify the intrinsic value that you're getting out there rather than DMOs or doing it on a year-end basis. If there is any way to find the leverages that you're using such as you do with the Chamber, the Culture Council, all of the individuals' venue events in a major way. As Ms. Adams stated, the Council has found that when they get some events if we can get it started, it needs to be self-funded. So, those are the challenges that they have with the Board on a single event even though it's doing that on an annual basis.

Mr. Gilliams thought it was important to try to welcome a new organization into this big organization. Maybe not give you all of the money that they want but give them something small that they can start out with and then report

back to the Council next year to show how they utilized those funds and how you went into the data to justify the people that you're bringing into the community because he is seeing today at this meeting it seems, like, the Council is emphasizing everything on heads on beds. Mr. Gilliams realizes that is important because it brings in tax revenue for the community but he said he was always open minded to trying something new until you try it. He stated he would be open minded, maybe not \$25,000 but he felt that the TDC Council might be able to find something small to give her just a little hope for next year. He understand that Mr. Collins made a very good point that this budget is going to be projected to the next budget and he thinks that Sebastian cut their budget by almost 50 percent.

Ms. Adams indicated that even with all the budget cuts between Sebastian and Heritage Center and the other agencies that have fallen flat, the County is still at a \$44,000 deficit for what has been asked. Just to address the heads on beds and why they're focused on that is the bed tax dollars are the dollars that they then reallocate out. That is the only revenue source for this Board allocation.

Mr. Gilliams asked about the reserves. He knew that the Council was trying to reserve that for that rainy day but he doesn't think that we have to allocate \$25,000 but maybe \$12,000. He felt we should invest in these people. Give them some direction to come back next year and say hey, this is what we're looking for when you make your presentation next year, explain that this is how we give these funds out and see what you can bring back to the Council. Mr. Gilliams explained that he feels that they bring a lot to this community in a cultural way and if it's done right, he felt that it could be very beneficial.

Ms. Moss addressed what Mr. Collins and Mr. Kite were referring to, you know, the sheer numbers of heads on beds, she thinks the assumption was being made that this is a five-day event so you have five days of heads on beds and then you're done for the year but if Ms. Stewart and she has been successful in bringing people to the community when they come, they fall in love with this place and then they come back again and that will be a challenge to measure. Ms. Moss stated that they do return. It's unlikely they're going to come here and they're not going to come back.

Mr. Collins stated that he agreed with that and he added that all of the organizations that had presented all offer that intrinsic value. People who visit the Citrus Museum also are very inclined to come back. All of the amenities that we offer here involve not any of us can quantify. Mr. Collins stated that he knows it's an awesome event. He thinks everyone agrees. He knows a lot of people come to it. Again, we are much better off with this event as opposed to without it. It's very straightforward but as far as this Board is concerned, their thought process has to be different. It's not is this a great organization. We think maybe they would use the money properly. It's not that simple.

Ms. Stewart stated she totally understands what Mr. Collins is saying and she feels they are unique in that not all organizations actually put heads in beds. They provide exposure and people visit here but it's not like someone is staying overnight because of that. Maybe one time a year, twice a year, three times a year that people do come to the festival and stay multiple nights. Ms. Stewart indicated that they buy houses. They have multiple stories of people coming here for the festival and buying a home which is quite interesting that they have such a memorable experience that they form an attachment to the area.

Ms. Jennifer Bates stated she loves the Film Festival. She feels it brings a very unique dynamic to tourism. She loves the whole film forum and touching on multiple different things. When it comes to tourism, digital marketing there's no limitation and when you look at the growth and you look at the country, you look at where people are coming from this is a very specific niche market that kind of spider webs. Although when you look at the virtual film although they're not staying in a hotel, the virtual aspect is just as like our tourism markets. We're creating a destination for them to come and you have that residual visitor so you're creating an audience in the worldwide web that people may have never heard of Vero Beach before. So, you have that digital footprint that can be tracked that you see that not only maybe they're from other cities and they see this digital thing for the very first time and they're look like wow, I wish I would have known about this sooner. I would have booked a trip because you have the cultural arts and the film people that thrive off of these things. Just like the sports brings people back because if families come here and they fall in love, that they come back as vacation, the film will do that as well. That digital footprint that is out there creates an even greater reach of people that come to Vero. With our tourism marketing in Boston and all these different things are digital and you're creating that atmosphere that invites people to come and a whole new market of people like we have so many unique things about our county that makes us so brave and this film festival just enhances that and to see all the new dynamic pieces that are a part of that. We would be able to see the residual

effects of this maybe not \$25,000, maybe \$8,000 or \$10,000. We would definitely see that return because it's going to greater your reach. It's going to create more of a buzz and you would be able to see the digital footprints.

Ms. Stewart stated that she had met with a couple of producers out of Los Angeles who are going to be making a film here in December. She actually gave them Keith Kite's number because they will need to house actors and their crew and ADs and all of these people for about six weeks and they will need hotels and houses. They can document the number of rooms and people definitely on something like that in terms of projects. They support the Indian River Film Commission with CURB and bringing film making here. Again, that's a year-round activity in terms of putting heads in beds and that's something that the film festival is uniquely positioned to bring to this body.

Ms. Stewart explained that what they do with the Cultural Council is more in market. They are in the News Weekly currently every week with a series called "Box Office Bottles" where their film makers recommend free films and they're paired with wine. They are also in the cultural guide the dates for the festival. They're also on the Cultural Council's website. Their marketing is other film festivals talking about being in a community of people who love film, being in a community of people who love food and having them talk about what they're doing and telling other people to attend.

They do coop programs with the Chambers. They do take marketing dollars on the social side where like Indian River is super strong and they will push out their marketing and they have as well a PR Firm that they can engage with through the Chamber so they currently have a marketing budget of about \$23,000. They take that \$23,000 and leverage it to basically get about \$75,000 worth of marketing because they take festival tickets. They barter their skill sets. They're constantly working with the other organizations to kind of push the festival out and to push out what they're doing. Her vision of the festival is to do the films in very unique venues because they're creating experiences. How unique would it be to see a film in a sky dive and because this year they have a film about Roger Chaffee, the first Gemini astronaut who was killed which is the reason why there's even a space program so his daughter is a volunteer with the Film Festival so they're reaching out to Cape Canaveral Space Association up in Melbourne to make those connections again to draw people here. That's something you can uniquely do with film.

Karen Mechling congratulated Ms. Stewart from doing this from the ground up. But obviously we're all still in COVID mode so come August we're projecting that a lot of the locations that hosted some of these events they may still be under restrictions on spacing and whatever so that's going to have some effect on Ms. Stewart's planning at this point because it is not clear whether you will be able to host as many people as you would hope to host at these individual vendings or can they kind of work that through and decide whether there will need to more viewings in the same venue, you know to support. Ms. Stewart indicated it's really turned out to be kind of a Rubik's Cube so on the one hand you're right they are not able to use a lot of the venues they would typically use. That's turned out to almost be a blessing in disguise because some of those venues are very expensive which they wouldn't be able to even afford in COVID times. That has allowed them to think out of the box and create new experiences. For instance, Ms. Stewart met with the Division Heads for the County. They said hey, why don't come to the Fairgrounds and do something here? Why don't you come to the IG Center and screen films here? Why don't you talk to the library? It's created a whole other route of places. Now, the plan is right now its 50 or less for gatherings, an hour typical average screening is 75 people so it does mean possibly but then the expectation to be honest everyone is telling her that by August we could be in another phase where they're allowed to have more people. Also, it turns out that depending on how your venue is classified so, for instance, the Heritage Center, is in a specific class of building that's allowed to have 50 percent so that means that now they can actually put a 100 plus people in that venue. So, it just really depends. They met the Emerson Center who is also looking at hosting the festival this year and doing one of their high like events. They too have a capacity of 800 plus so 50 percent of that is 450 but then they were even like oh, but we might be able to get because we think we're in this class over here so it's really allowed them to have more opportunities in terms of what the festival could look like and also this idea of maybe the festival shows up in your backyard so one of the things they're looking at is the Indian River Shores Community Center and the Sandridge Golf Club so these different places that are a little bit further out from what their footprint would normally be to see how that draws people because, you know, at the end their mission is to help people change lives. To inspire them for something that might not have otherwise happen through the power of film. They can only do that if they get to see the films. This coming year was their year to look at having film screenings every month, you know, by having these relationships. They have a relationship with the Majestic which they're returning to. She couldn't tell us exactly where the venues are yet because they have so many opportunities. They need to decide on the venues because the program needs to be completed so the filmmakers can know when they're going to travel here and book their hotel rooms. COVID

accelerated the ability to do virtual theater for film festivals so whereas before the tools were not accessible to them. Just a plethora of companies are now offering that service because they realize they don't know what's going to happen with regular theater so it's kind of the balance but it does allow them to put the festival and the city in front of a global audience so people who might never have known about Vero Beach before have the opportunity now to visit.

Mr. Hayes agreed 100 percent with Ms. Stewart about the inclusion of new film festivals but he stated that she has been at this for a while. She had come to the Council five years ago and asked for it and they turned her down because of that fact that she had over the last five years have pursued and have made it succeed year after year and he all for giving them something. This year it is his personal opinion we couldn't afford to give her the full the \$25,000. He felt that we should give them something because they do have an intrinsic value to putting heads on beds and it may be greater than what the Council thinks in the long run.

Ms. Stewart thanked everyone for their comments, feedback. She will definitely take them under advisement.

### **Discussion of Budget Requests for 2020/2021 fiscal year, complete ratings and decide level of funding**

At the conclusion of the presentations, the Tourist Development Council took a brief recess in order for Ms. Kristin Daniels to calculate the rating sheets and provide the scoring for each grant requestor.

Ms. Daniels, Management & Budget Director, advised that the following order for funding was determined upon calculating the ratings by the members.

1. Treasure Coast Sports Commission
2. Vero Heritage, Inc.
3. Indian River Historical Society
4. Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival
5. Cultural Council of Indian River County

Chairperson Adams explained that as indicated the funds balance deficit would be \$44,607 which is the difference between the requests and the budget. In years past, the Board can take these rankings and do with them what they want. In the past whoever ranked last, the lowest ranking lose funding until they get like a grant so it's extended 1, 2, 3, until they get down to no dollars and then no further extended under that. They have diverged from that over the years. They have done no increases in the past so at this point, this is the ranking. They would need some type of motion.

So, Treasure Coast Sports Commission would be funded. The Vero Heritage would be funded. Mr. Jason Brown indicated that the way it would normally work is, like, the State Grant Program where we fund all of the requests fully until they run out of dollars. What that would do is the top four ranked applicants would get full funding. That's the Treasure Coast Sports Commission, Vero Heritage, Inc., Indian River Historical Society and Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival. And then there would not be enough money to fund the Cultural Council their request for \$60,000 so then \$44,707 would be deducted from that so they would get \$15,393.

Ms. Adams commented that regardless of the discussions that they've had about film festival, she thought that everyone agreed that it is a very worthy event for the community. She thinks it's been pointed out that a lot of the requests for the Application was focused on the event this year which is happening in a couple of months which is not going to be affected by this budget cycle that we are currently working with. The budget that we're working now would be for next year and she believes Ms. Stewart had mentioned that she is not quite sure when that event is going to happen but it will be happening. It will be happening but Ms. Stewart doesn't have the dates for next year. Ms. Adams indicated that those dates and what that festival will look like will be known later on in the fall. Her suggestion would be that they ask Ms. Stewart to come back at a different meeting perhaps in December where she has next year's festival is going to look like more flushed out, better dates and also the opportunity to take the data from this year's event and this online virtual asset and kind of bring back some of those questions that they were asking for that he did not have answers to at this time. She knows that they will have them in the future. So, if they were to do that and Ms. Adams is happy to make a spot on the Agenda to do that as a special project. We do special projects through this committee on a regular basis. We have done it in the past for special projects that have come up and they can do a budget amendment at that time. If we were to handle that film festival that way that would free up

\$25,000 out of budget and Ms. Adams said she would be happy to commitment that we will find a place and a time for them to come back and do that once you have those dates available. That will free up \$25,000 from what we're dealing with so the difference that we would have to still cut would be \$19,000 which is a better cut than from one agency then \$44,000. Ms. Adams stated she knows we're struggling and she doesn't disagree that it's not a good event for the community. She doesn't want Ms. Stewart to take her comments as if she is against the film festival because she is very much not. She thinks it's a great event for the community but for the Board's discussion throwing that out there is an option.

Mr. Kite suggested fund 1 and 2 and then divide the current difference across the other three since their rankings came in so tight percentage wise. We could still do exactly what you said across those three at the time that we knew what was going with COVID. We could even address it in the August or September meeting but if we have more clarity at that time to get that to the funding shortage of the \$44,000. Their percentages would be off of their number 3, 4 and 5 but 1 and 2 would be fully funded. So we would have a reduction of some right now but at least all three of them would have some clarity as to where they're going with the reasons that if we can recover the difference, we would look at that and make that an agenda item.

Ms. Adams stated that she liked where Mr. Kite was going with that idea. She would ask though if the Council could still take the Vero Beach & Film Festival out and handle that specifically as a special event. She stated that this is a recommendation to the Commission. She literally cannot go to the Commission and say yes, the Board voted to fund something that we don't have an actual date for in the budget year that we're being asked to fund it. So, if we could take that \$25,000 out and then if you want to percentage wise the other numbers 3 and 5. Then we can work those numbers and see what that looks like.

Ms. Bates explained that she liked the idea. She is not opposed to it. She had two potential options. She stated that she wouldn't be comfortable for the full \$25,000 but she would like to see some money allocated because she felt that it would be a destination marketing tool whether it was current and would be in the future. We would see the residual just like we do with some of these other marketing campaigns that we have so one suggestion would be to cut it to \$10,000. We can bring that \$10,000 over to the Cultural Council which would bring it up to \$25,000.

She is not clear how the numbers came out with that if there is still some. She wasn't sure if that would put some money into the coffer or that would balance it out but she does not feel comfortable with \$60,000 to the Cultural Council but she also doesn't feel comfortable at the full \$25,000 at this point in time for the film festival.

Ms. Adams stated that she is aware that everybody wants to fund the Wine Festival. She heard that loud and clear but she said she could not literally take an Application to Commission for an event that is supposed to happen in the fiscal year. Ms. Daniels said she would have to write the Agenda item upon leaving the meeting because it was due today. Mr. Kite asked whether they could request that they allocate \$10,000 to be determined upon dates of funding. Ms. Adams stated that the Applications have already been submitted so all of the funding is based on the Applications that are submitted. Ms. Adams said that we can make the commitment to bring this back at a future date when there is an actual Application that shows the dates and times of the event.

Mr. Kite stated he is not a supporter of the whole \$25,000 in the first year. He was looking at \$10,000 or \$12,500, 50 percent of the max to begin with. Ms. Adams stated that that is something that they want to message to them that we will be happy to have that discussion based on those numbers at that time in the future. She is totally fine with making that amendment. Ms. Bates stated as long as we don't allocate all of the budget. If we're going to do something, like, that, have something in the budget account. The other thing Ms. Adams stated we could do is we can take whatever we do end up allocating to the film festival in the future out of the fund balance or whatever might returned and not utilized this year. This is a projected allocation for next year. So we've already seen that there are multiple agencies that are not going to be utilizing all of their funds. Ms. Adams stated that we could do a budget amendment at a future date like they did for the Masters and for the fishing tournament. What they could also do is they could roll back and say no budget increases so they start at level funding for everybody so if they put the film festival in a separate category for the future and they do everybody at current level funding. That takes \$25,000 and \$10,000 because the Cultural Council came in with an additional \$10,000. That makes us now at \$9,000 short. Ms. Adams indicated that the Vero Beach Wine & Film Festival will come back on an Agenda item and then they can discuss whatever that funding number will be.

Mr. Will Collins indicated from what they're saying the Council can't do anything with the Wine & Film Festival. We can't grant that money now anyway so we should just mark that off from conversation. It seems, like, also really do is allow them the opportunity to talk about it the next time the Council meets. So, that's the extent of what they're even allowed to do and he would suggest we do that. That puts us at \$20,000. He would suggest we decline the Cultural Council's request for an increase. He thought the consensus of what they had all said at the meeting was that they ranked the lowest. They were the only ones who had asked for an increase. He thought that should be taken away as well. That puts us somewhere around like, \$9,000. Mr. Collins agreed with Ms. Adams on the Treasure Coast Sports Commission, they're in a very unique circumstance where they are event driven. So, in the event that something comes their way, he thought the Board had done special meetings before when it's also straight forward and quantifiable. Mr. Collins suggestion would be that they take the remainder after the \$25,000 and the \$10,699 from the Treasure Coast Sports Commission again with the understanding that they have the capacity to come and ask them for more money later.

Ms. Moss stated that there she thought there was a consensus of Council that the Historical Society was a real value for the \$32,000 and that they are worth every penny of it.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Hayes, the Council unanimously (9-0) approved that they take the remainder after the \$25,000 and the \$10,699 from the Treasure Coast Sports Commission again with the understanding that they have the capacity to come and ask the Council for more money later on.**

Chairperson Adams indicated that the Motion carried.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

The next Tourist Development Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at 2:00 p.m.**

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:11 p.m.