

**CLAYTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Damon T. Williams called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Beth Bailey conducted the roll call.

II. ROLL CALL:

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Damon T. Williams	Chairman	Present
Miyoshi Bourget	Board Member	Absent
Lynda Browning	Vice Chair	Absent
Myla Chapman	Board Member	Present
Tonya Clarke	Board Member	Present
Gabe Johnson	Board Member	Present via Zoom

Staff: Tamara Patridge, Executive Director; Beth Bailey, Special Projects Manager/Interim Finance Manager

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

1. December 2022

FINANCIAL REPORT

1. November and December 2022
 - a. Tourism Authority
 - b. Convention & Visitors Bureau

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve, Myla Chapman; second, Tonya Clarke. Unanimous approval.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2022 Tourism Report/2022 Film Report
 - a. Ms. Patridge reminded the board that each January she prepares 2 separate reports for Tourism and Film for reporting at the State of the County Address. Ms. Patridge reviewed the major milestones for each of the reports and invited board members to read each report in its entirety at their leisure.

- b. Ms. Patridge began with the 2022 Tourism Report and reported that the summary paragraph at the beginning of the report provided an overview of major accomplishments and the remainder of the report provided details on those accomplishments. Ms. Patridge shared that the tourism grant program has proven to be a great success by providing funds to create or expand tourism product offerings to our visitors and residents. Ms. Patridge reported that Clayton County's first-ever Restaurant Week provided support to hospitality partners and provided the opportunity to build relationships with our restaurant community. Ms. Patridge shared the enriching experience of hosting the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority celebration of their 100th anniversary at the Road To Tara Museum. Ms. Patridge shared Explore Georgia Tourism Division's report of Clayton County's ranking for tourism economic impact at 6th in the state which is up from 8th in the state the previous year. Ms. Patridge then expounded on the summary.
- i. Hotel occupancy of 71.1% up 5.5% over the previous year.
 - ii. \$20.00 increase in Average Daily Rate (ADR) over the previous year—from \$77.00 to \$97.00.
 - iii. While short-term rentals had a slight 17.3% decrease in occupancy, Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased to \$170.71 representing an increase of 25% over the previous year.
 - iv. The CVB contracted a research company specializing in daily monitoring of short-term rental companies such as Airbnb and Vrbo. Strictly utilizing data for these two short-term rental platforms, revenue collected in 2022 was \$656,098.29. Of that total, 37.5%, or \$246,036.84, is distributed to Clayton County Government and may be used by the county at their discretion. The remaining 62.5%, calculated at \$410,061.40, is restricted by law and must be used for the promotion and marketing of Clayton County tourism and product development, expansion of existing tourism assets or development of new tourism products. Overall, the increase in travel is attributed to travelers feeling safer to travel by car and plane.
 - v. In 2021 (the most current year of data available from the State Tourism Office), Clayton County ranked 6th in the State for Visitor Spending with an economic impact of \$583.6 million. Visitors to Clayton County generated \$40.2 million in state and local taxes, equivalent to \$415 in tax savings for every Clayton County household. This includes lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail, and transport.
 - vi. Ms. Patridge commended the board on its support of the continuation of the tourism grant program and the success of the resulting projects. Ms. Patridge stated that she has received numerous positive feedback for the Newman Wetlands African American history video, specifically relating to the Freeman Family.
 - vii. Ms. Patridge reported on the success of the inaugural Clayton County Restaurant Week in October 2022. There were 46 participating restaurants with more than 75% identifying as black-owned businesses. Ms. Patridge informed that CVB staff will continue to build these relationships with restaurant owners through calls, emails, and personal

visits. Ms. Patridge said that one of the goals of this year-round communication is to provide support for marketing and to serve as a point of contact for businesses to share needs for assistance. Ms. Patridge is working with staff on communication with owners and language from them that may signal signs of distress. Staff has been directed to pass along calls for help and Ms. Patridge will ensure that the appropriate lines of business within the county are notified immediately. Ms. Patridge's goal is to provide a county-wide net of support for these business owners.

viii. Ms. Patridge shared the success of Sigma Gamma Rho's 100th anniversary held at the Road To Tara Museum in November 2022. Ms. Patridge had personal conversations with leadership of Sigma Gamma Rho's local chapter who assured they will share their experience with other chapters to encourage visits to foster overnight stays in our Clayton County hotels.

c. 2022 Film Report

i. Ms. Patridge reported the Clayton County Film Office hosted 40 productions in 2022. The top 3 filming locations were Southern Regional Medical Center, Clayton State University, and Georgia Archives. Productions spent approximately 200 days filming in Clayton County. The Clayton County local economic impact from the top 3 filming locations is calculated at approximately \$1 million.

ii. Ms. Patridge updated the status of Blue Star Studios, which will be Clayton County's first purpose-built studio and will be located in Forest Park. Ms. Patridge explained the development of the business, sharing that she received the initial call from the Commissioner of the Georgia Office of Film Music & Digital Entertainment. Ms. Patridge began the relationship-building process with City of Forest Park officials and the principals of Blue Star Studio officials. The studio is scheduled to break ground in 2023. Once opened, the studio will host films with a mid-level budget of \$30 million plus. Ms. Patridge explained studio productions would be a mix of film, television, and streaming.

d. Chairman Williams asked Ms. Patridge if she had an idea what the economic impact would be of any Sigma Gamma Rho events. Ms. Patridge replied that she would not be able to gauge that until tours and hotels were booked. Ms. Patridge explained that local groups have less economic impact than other chapters visiting from other states that will need hotels, food, transportation, etc.

2. FY23 Grant applications & guidelines review

i. Ms. Bailey distributed updated guidelines and application for the upcoming FY23 Tourism Grant cycle. She noted that there had been minor edits for clarification from the previous year's documents. Ms. Bailey asked the board to review the documents and let her know if they had any questions or suggestions.

ii. Chairman Williams asked if the staff could assist smaller nonprofits with the application process. Ms. Bailey explained that as grant administrators, assistance is a part of the process. She provided examples of organizations

the staff has assisted in preparation of their grant applications. The organizations are extremely grateful for this guidance.

3. Tourism Product Development/Museum exhibit renovation update
 - a. Ms. Patridge updated the board on the renovation activities in that began in January 2023, which included removal of outdated exhibit cases, addition of newly positioned electrical and updating current electrical to safety standards, and leveling the floor to address a long-existing safety issue.
 - b. Chairman Williams asked if there was an estimate for the project. Ms. Patridge responded that she has budgeted according to the FY-23 board-approved funding. She reported that the second phase of the project would be addressed in the next fiscal year for any additional funding needed. Chairman Williams encouraged Ms. Patridge to request additional funding if needed and expressed that the request would be supported by the board.
 - c. Ms. Patridge reported that the search for items to add to the exhibit is ongoing and that the first pieces of memorabilia have been secured.

4. State of the County Address
 - a. Ms. Patridge shared that the State of the County Address would be held March 15, 2023, and reminded that the Tourism Authority has sponsored in the past, and asked if they wished to support again this year. Board members reviewed the event flyer and discussed who would be able to attend. Members Clarke and Chapman expressed their desire to in attend. Ms. Patridge will follow up with members for a final count.
 - b. Motion by Member Chapman to sponsor the State of the County Address at the bronze level at \$750.00. Motion seconded by Member Clarke. Unanimous approval.
 - i. Member Clarke suggested sponsorship at a higher level for next year's State of the County Address. She explained that sponsorship at a higher level would allow for additional seats that may be offered to Clayton County school students in the Social Studies department. Chairman Williams inquired about the student selection process. Member Clarke replied that she would inform teachers in each respective department who would subsequently select student attendees. Ms. Patridge noted that the request would be added to next year's agenda.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. None

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Member Chapman to enter executive session for matters of personnel; second Member Johnson; unanimous approval. Session began at 4:45pm. *Note: Minutes from

executive session are available to members in attendance by written request. Minutes are delivered in person to protect personnel confidentiality.

Motion by Member Chapman to adjourn executive session; second Member Clarke; unanimous approval. Session ended at 4:55pm.

Ms. Patridge invited Ms. Bailey to rejoin the meeting and announced Ms. Bailey's new title to the board as Finance & Administration Manager for the Clayton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, effective February 14, 2023.

VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

1. Motion Member Chapman; second Member Johnson; unanimous approval.
2. Meeting ended at 4:58 p.m.