



**Ocoee River Recreation and Economic Development Fund Board
March 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes
1:00 pm Central Time
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 2nd Floor
Nashville, Tennessee 37243**

Voting Board Members Present: Deputy Commissioner Jim Bryson, Senator Mike Bell, Macy Brower, Ryan Cooke, Lamar Davis, Drew Freeman, Angelo Giansante, Keith Jenkins, Melissa Woody, Rob Sherrill, Brooxie Carlton, Dan Howell.

Voting Board Members not present: Chris Richardson, Robby Hatcher, Tim Henderson

Guest Present: Robin Peak Robertson, Brian Bivens, Monica Jenkins, Stephanie Cooke, Horace Tipton

Meeting called to order by Senator Mike Bell

Roll call: Tonya Turner

Motion for Approval of September 2021 minutes: Board

- Approved unanimously by voice vote

ORRED Fund Balance Report: Angelo Giansante

- Angelo discussed in depth the schedule of revenues, expenditures, and changes in the fund balance as of January 31, 2022. The total revenues were \$706,781.93, the total expenditures were \$283,233.20, Net change in fund balance was \$423,548.73 with a total fund balance of \$1,128,236.44. Senator Bell discussed the growth of the fund balance and that the legislators may question if the funds are being used for their purpose and why the rafter fees are not being reduced. Angelo stated that they are responsible for the maintenance of all facilities, and this is what they use some of the funds for.

Bus Driver Training: Keith Jenkins & Ryan Cooke

- Keith stated that there is a major shortage on bus drivers for the Ocoee River. Keith also stated that they have advertised in several newspapers, online, and on the website. There are several people that live locally in Polk County that would like to have CDL licenses to drive buses for the Ocoee River. Keith also stated that they would like to take funds to have someone come in and set up a class so that drivers could get a CDL. This would solve the problem of driver shortages and that way they could get drivers for the summer. Keith stated they have received calls from

people that are retired but are limited to the hours that they can work. So, Keith and Ryan are proposing to use funds this year for driver training. Rep. Howell stated that there is a bill coming through the senate that will reconstruct how CDL classes are conducted. This bill will reduce the waiting period from two weeks to one day if an individual fails the test and allow third party testers. Senator Bell asked if the Comptroller would be able to look at the expenditure for this proposal. Deputy Commissioner Jim Bryson asked what the purpose of the funds were but stated that the driver training is a good idea. Will Kerby explained in-depth the purpose of the funds. Angelo stated that one benefit in keeping the cost down is that buses are provided. Keith stated that as it gets closer to summer there will be more calls about bus driver training. Senator Bell stated that a motion and proposal would have to be put together and approved. He also stated that it would be tough getting one together for this year. Keith stated that the idea originated when he thought about approaching some of the community colleges that were teaching CDL courses. Deputy Commissioner Bryson suggested putting together a sub-committee since the board does not meet again until September. He also stated that the subcommittee could spend up to a certain amount of money. Senator Bell suggested putting one of the outfitters, Will Kerby, and Macy Brower on the subcommittee. Lamar suggested to have the drivers pay for their own class. Rep. Howell asked if there are any 2-year classes in Tennessee that offer CDL classes to keep the expenses within the state. Angelo confirmed that there is a junior college in Tennessee that offers CDL certification. Keith stated that he would like to see students go through a CDL class all at the same time. Angelo suggested that a contract should be put in place before hiring a driver once they have finished their CDL class. Lamar agreed with the concept of the Board reimbursing outfitters for the expense of the class. The Board discussed how the funds would be allocated for the drivers. Ryan made a motion to approve up to \$50,000 for CDL driver training with a passenger endorsement to be paid as a reimbursement to outfitters. Melissa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Advertising RFP: Will Kerby & Melissa Woody

Melissa stated that she asked Jeff Cox with Corporate Network Solutions (CNS) to give a report as to where they are with the current contract. The advertising contract started July 1, 2021, and goes through June 30, 2022. CNS stated that everything is good and on track. Melissa stated that they did a full-page ad in "Get Out Chattanooga" magazine and "Tennessee Travel Guide". They did a road trip segment with the ABC affiliate in Chattanooga, WTVC. Ryan stated that the advertisements are going well and bringing more business for their bookings and cabins.

Regarding the upcoming RFP, Will Kerby discussed how the contract is for 3 years and how the gaps in the dates will work. Melissa Woody stated that she felt the gap in the contract dates might be a problem. Will stated that there is a way to continue the contract before it ends. Senator Bell stated that there might be a way to get a month-to-month contract with minimal services. The Board discussed spending up to \$9,995 to maintain the advertising campaigns in between contracts. Angelo made this motion and Ryan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Angelo discussed that there was a significant increase of business on the Ocoee River. Ryan stated that this is the first year that they have had the advertisements running in the spring. In past years the advertisements would start running in July.

Ryan then made a motion to approve the RFP contract proposal discussed in the presentation of advertising. Keith seconded the motion. Will Kerby stated that there will be a need to make decisions before the contract is final. Senator Bell stated that the decisions will be made between Will, Melissa, Macy, and an outfitter. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business: Senator Bell

No additional business

Reminder about Travel Reimbursements: Senator Bell

Senator Bell reminded the Board about travel reimbursements.

Scheduled Fall Meeting: Board

- The Board agreed to have the next meeting on September 29, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. EST in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Adjournment