



Ocoee River Recreation and Economic Development Fund Board

September 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes

1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River State Park

404 Spring Creek Road

Delano, TN 37325

Hybrid Meeting via Microsoft Teams-Recording Available

In-Person Voting Board Members: Vice-Chairman Keith Jenkins, Macy Brower, Ryan Cooke, Angelo Giansante, Representative Dan Howell, Polk County Executive Robbie Hatcher, Lamar Davis, Melissa Woody

Participating via MS Teams: Drew Freeman, Brooxie Carlton, Rob Sherrill

Absent Voting Board Members: Chris Richardson, Tim Henderson, Greer Tidwell

Guests Present: Kari Moates, Sara Page, Heather Iverson, Angie Arp, Whitney Mayor, Tom Tohill, Francisco Valenzuela, Paul Wright, Zachary Bates, Brad Gilbert, Carlos Smith

Participating via MS Teams: Loretta Buchanan, Morgan Gilman, Brian Bivens, Amanda Head, Ian Jakul, Alison Phelps

ORRED Fund Balance Report: Angelo Giansante

Angelo reported schedules of revenues, expenditures, and changes leaving a total of \$850,863.14 dollars in the fund as of June 30, 2022. He discussed expenditures involving advertising, and possible future expenses for projects they would like to accomplish by next year including the installation of a new boat ramp, replacing/repairing boardwalks, and pressure washing decking. Angelo also hoped for an Outfitters meeting to discuss improvements to benefit the Ocoee region. Keith noted this could be added to their next agenda. Keith also asked about use numbers and received a report from Kari indicating white water rafting customer numbers were down from last year. There was further discussion of the changing times, demographics, and other distractions affecting turnout for white water activities. Angelo agreed the new marketing campaign should bring more people to see the Hiwassee/Ocoee River area as incomparable.

Representative Howell announced that Senator Mike Bell was now the Legislative Liaison for TWRA and would remain a non-voting member of the ORRED Board.

Election of Officers:

When Melissa arrived, Angelo conducted a formal roll call confirming 11 voting members participating.

Sara Page expressed Deputy Commissioner Greer Tidwell's excitement to be the TDEC Commissioner's designee to serve on the ORRED Board and although he had a pre-planned out-of-state meeting today, he looked forward to joining the Board.

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Motion for ORRED Chairman:

At this time, Keith opened the floor for nominations for ORRED Chairman of the Board. Ryan Cooke nominated Representative Dan Howell. Lamar seconded. Angelo called the roll. All voting members supported the nomination and Dan took over as Chairman. He stated he was pleased Senator Bell, now Mike, would continue to share his wisdom, skills, and experience with the Board.

Next Chairman Howell asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Robbie Hatcher nominated Keith Jenkins. Ryan Cooke seconded. Robbie Hatcher moved the nominations cease. The roll call vote unanimously re-elected Keith as Vice-Chairman.

On a personal note, Chairman Howell welcomed the visitors and encouraged their participation stating the ORRED Board was created by a legislative act and is open to the public for comment.

Angelo re-capped the ORRED Fund financial report for the official record.

TVA Economic Development Grant: Ryan Cooke & Keith Jenkins

Keith stated TVA was offering a \$100,000 economic development grant with a 70/30 match. He stated the Polk County Industrial Development Board was in support of ORRED applying for the grant maximum so that outfitters could hire staff including CDL-licensed bus drivers and create an Outdoor Certificate Program, possibly through UT and local schools to provide a curriculum that would benefit both Polk and Bradley counties to fill the shortage of drivers, as well as give opportunities for career jump-start for college credit and active river experience. Keith offered a motion to approve \$30,000. Sara and Heather sought to clarify the motion. Lamar offered a substitute motion that ORRED would apply for the "TOEG" grant, approve the \$30,000 for the match once awarded, and for the funds to be used for the economic development certificate program. After a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Tennessee Vacation Guide: Melissa Woody

Melissa stated the Sub-Committee had discussed whether to renew their full-page advertisement in the Tennessee Vacation Guide at a discounted rate of \$20,223.75. She stated the deadline was September 30, 2022. Ryan motioned to renew the full-page ad in the Tennessee Vacation Guide. Chairman Howell called for discussion. Lamar asked about the new ad agency and potential changes from the Time to Raft campaign. Ryan noted the importance of the timelines for a new agency by the first of the year, and the new campaign likely by March. Rather than skip the ad for a year, members preferred changing the existing ad design with more focus on the Ocoee River area until a new campaign could be determined. Sara asked if the ad space could be held for two weeks while a contract is being finalized. Melissa and Lamar suggested a Board sub-committee approve the design. Amanda Head sought to clarify the motion given a sole-source approval must be obtained prior to an invoice. She asked Melissa for the quote to be able to start the process once the Board voted. Chairman Howell presided over the motion on the floor to continue the ad with changes in the Tennessee Vacation guide. Lamar seconded the motion. After a roll call vote, the motion carried with none opposed. Ryan motioned, and Macy seconded the motion, for the Board to create a sub-committee to approve the ad re-design, and the people on the sub-committee would be Carlos Smith, Lance Luke, Morgan Gilman, Angelo Giansante, and Melissa Woody. The motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote. Melissa sought clarification as to whether the original graphic designer could be used to re-design the ad space and that the sub-committee would approve.

AED Purchasing: Ryan Cooke

Ryan reported that fire and rescue departments did not have AEDs on rescue trucks. He stated the Outfitters Association propose the purchase of two AEDs to outfit West Polk County Fire and Rescue and Copper Basin Fire Departments to assist with river rescues and keep on their trucks. Ryan motioned. Lamar seconded. After the roll call vote, all were in favor.

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Pricing/Purchasing of TVA Water: Ryan Cooke

The Outfitters Association Commercial Rating Permits are for 30 years. Ryan indicated that he would like to ask Commissioner Tidwell to work with TVA to obtain pricing for 15 more years of water to better align TVA with TDEC and Forestry Service agreements. Ryan stated they would also like Commissioner Tidwell to negotiate water release schedules specifically releasing water on Mondays in July and adding an extra hour from nine to five; or changing the current water release schedule of nine to four to ten to five. Sara suggested options as Chairman Howell led member discussion to agree on best approach before deciding the Outfitter's Association could prepare a letter and allow Angelo to present it to Commissioner Tidwell. Chairman Howell recognized Paul Wright, who stated that in 1997, TVA was in violation of their constitutional responsibilities by charging a commercial enterprise for water on the Ocoee River because they were constraining navigation. Mr. Wright suggested any negotiation with TVA should not be "how much to pay, but when TVA stops charging." Angie Arp from Ocoee Outfitters also requested TVA provide more water, which brought the discussion back to Ryan's motion that the Outfitter's Association prepare a letter for Angelo to present their requests to Commissioner Tidwell. Following the roll call vote, this motion carried. Chairman Howell acknowledged the importance of the discussion and the excellent comments received. Prior to returning to current agenda items, he stated he thought the topic would require federal legislation.

Future Oversight Options: Continuing RFP Sub-Committee

Ryan and Sara updated everyone on the two RFP Sub-Committee meetings held in Nashville and subsequent work that occurred to bring the Board an RFP/Contract proposal. He motioned for a continuing Sub-Committee responsible to monitor the contract, look at billing, report to the Outfitters, and hold the power to make advertising changes and provide approvals without a meeting of the full Board, and with the following members: Angelo Giansante and Melissa Woody with advisory staff of Carlo Smith, Lance Luke, and Morgan Gilman, and Angie Arp. After further Board/Legal discussion, Melissa offered a substitute motion to include Ryan's nominees and add Keith. Ryan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was unanimous to approve.

RFP and Pro-Forma Contract: Sara Page

Sara explained the status, proposed changes adopted by the Sub-Committee, and then incorporated into the contract with the goal of an end-product by the March campaign deadline. She outlined CPO requirements, internal reviews, broadening specific language within the contract for a timely turn-around, as well as the need for global approval to complete the process, rather than voting on every line item. Chairman Dan summarized the motion to allow TDEC staff to do their jobs and Angelo noted the Sub-Committee could vote after the fine-tuning was finished. Sara assured the full Board their opportunity for review and comment prior to the contract going out for bids. Angelo motioned to authorize TDEC Staff and OGC to make necessary edits to the RFP contract, seek approvals internally and from CPO, and finalize RFP contract. TDEC/OGC will ensure the appointed RFP Development Sub-Committee reviews and approves that document before it's issued for public bid, and the final version will be shared with all ORRED Board members for individual feedback prior to issuance. Melissa seconded. The roll call vote was unanimous.

Motion to Allow OGC to Draft Conflict Letter to CPO to Request Oversight of Process: Sara Page

Sara explained the need for compliance with the CPO process and to verify there are no conflicts. Melissa made the motion to approve OGC to Draft a CPO Conflict Letter for the Board Chairman signature in compliance with CPO business ethics policy to ensure no conflicts exist with the process followed in the development of the contract. Ryan seconded. After the roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.

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Motion to Approve New Scope of RFP: Sara Page

Keith moved to approve new scope of RFP FA that to allow flexibility in types of marketing plans. Ryan seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried.

Motion to Approve Panel of Evaluators/Scorers: Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee nominated the following bid evaluators for ORRED Board approval: Juliet Kastorff, Laura Shigley, Carlo Smith, Alex Storgion, Erin Medley, and Morgan Gilman. Lamar motioned to approve the nominees, and Ryan seconded. After the roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Motion to Approve First Point-of-Contact: Sara Page

A Point-of-Contact individual must be named in the contract. Melissa nominated Angelo Giansante, and Lamar seconded to motion. After the roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Motion to Appoint Oversight or RFP Development Committee Q&A Contacts: Sara Page

Someone needed on Committee to assist with questions and answers regarding the RFP. Robby made the motion, seconded by Keith, to approve the RFP Development Committee to assist with the Q&A of the RFP. Chairman Dan noted staff is available to help committee members answer questions. After the roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Motion to Approve Fee Structure: Heather Iverson

Heather described the current fee structure outlining how contractors get paid, mostly through monthly flat fees, hourly rates for graphic designers, and reimbursements for third-party expenses like media buys. She talked about the “buckets” from which these items are paid and associated caps. Ryan and Melissa agreed this was the standard format discussed by the Sub-Committee. Ryan moved to accept the scope as described. The motion was seconded by Melissa. After a roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Travel Reimbursement Reminder & Other Business: Sara Page

The Chairman reminded Board members who traveled to complete a reimbursement form. Also, global reminder to sign annual Conflict of Interest Forms.

Motion for Sub-Committee: Ryan Cooke

Motion to establish a Sub-Committee to work with Forest Service in the re-development of the Whitewater Center. Keith volunteered to join the sub-committee and asked that further discussion of this topic be placed on the next meeting agenda.

Final Items: Sara Page

Reviewing the Board’s authority to purchase AEDs and looking for options that would allow the gift. Complete the Annual Conflict of Interest Form.

Spring Meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2023, at 1:00 Central to be held in Nashville. All agreed by way of a roll call vote and the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 Eastern.