

Liberty Tourism and Convention Commission minutes for March 2, 2023

Laura Hebrock agreed to serve as chairperson in John Rigney's absence. Hebrock called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm. Members present: Laura Hebrock, T.J. Rayhill, Meagan Klee, Sandy Wolford, Lionel Long, Director Heather Cundiff and Assistant Director Shelby Hatter. Charlie VanLeuven from Casey County News was in attendance as was Chad Combs and Glen Phillips from local VFW. Also in attendance were several guests: Ressie Grider, Carmella Clark and Cindy Board.

Hebrock called for a review of February minutes. Rayhill made a motion to accept the minutes, Wolford seconded, motion passed.

Hebrock called for review of Treasurer's report. Rayhill made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Klee seconded, motion passed.

Glen Phillips reported that VFW will be traveling to Washington DC to represent Liberty with several Congressmen. Phillips also presented plaques of appreciation to Director Heather Cundiff and former Mayor Steven Brown to thank them for their involvement in the community and with the VFW.

Hatter presented the assistant director's report – attached. Cundiff presented the director's report.

Hebrock called for old business.

Plans for Holiday Lights 2023 were discussed. Cundiff shared that it is very difficult to get enough people to volunteer to set up the light displays around town and also to help disassemble them. She said she has been in contact with several tourism directors that would be interested in purchasing the holiday lights from Liberty Tourism. Rayhill suggested selling the existing lights and upgrading the Christmas light displays on the light poles around the downtown area. Rayhill made a motion to explore the sale of the existing lights, Klee seconded and motion passed.

Façade grant committee will meet to set a pay rate for business owners wishing to do their own construction work on their building facades. Rayhill made motion and Long seconded to include detached signs in front of buildings in the façade grant. Motion passed.

Hebrock called for New Business.

Regarding the city stage located behind City Hall: the city council has requested that Liberty Tourism handle booking for the stage – see attached agreement. Hatter reviewed the new agreement for the Tourism Commission. Cundiff suggested that a fee be assessed for access to electricity. VanLeuven asked if an event held at the stage area can be closed to the public. The commission members agreed that events could not be closed to the public.

There was also discussion regarding security for events when alcohol is sold. Cundiff has reached out to local law enforcement to discuss providing additional security for events selling alcohol. Bridgett Blake, the local ABC officer, has to be contacted to approve alcohol sales prior to any event. Klee suggested adding to the contract that Tourism would reserve the right to deny future use of the stage to any group that does not follow the rules. Rayhill suggested we impose a booking fee for stage use but it was determined that we would work it out through the "quality of life" contribution that Tourism make to the City of Liberty each year.

Purchase of flowers for downtown Liberty was next on the agenda. Wolford reported that she had spoken with Allan Sparr, who is working as an assistant to the mayor, regarding a watering schedule for the flowers. Sparr agreed to have summer workers assigned the daily duty of watering. Once the summer workers return to school in August, another employee will be assigned to water the flowers. Rayhill made motion to approve spending up to \$7500 for flowers. Klee seconded the motion. None opposed.

Director Cundiff presented a beautification grant (attached) to provide downtown businesses a 75/25 matching grant, up to \$250, to purchase flowers and planters and non-advertising decorative holiday banners to be placed in front of their stores. Commissioners requested that a definition of "downtown" be added to the grant application. Rayhill suggested 100% funding for the first year. Rayhill made a motion to add these amendments to the grant application and approve for 100% funding. Long seconded the motion with none opposed.

Hiring contract labor for downtown events was discussed. It was suggested that non-profit groups, if available, be given the opportunity to cover areas of needed labor. \$15 per hour per person was the agreed upon payment for contract labor. Hiring a contract photographer for events was discussed but the Commission determined we would not do that at this time.

Rayhill made a motion to adjourn and Klee seconded the motion.

Next regular meeting will be April 6 at 5:00 pm at City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Wolford