

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Chamber Boardroom  
March 23, 2022 - 9:00 am**

**Attendees:** Rachel Beckerman, Woody Brownson, Kristen Call, Jessica Greene, Alex Husner, Ross Martin, Seth McCoy, Patrick Norton, John Rutenberg, Alberto Semidei, Carla Schuessler, Todd Setzer, Chris Shroff, Eileen Soisson, Amy Stevens, Alicia Thompson, Heidi Vukov

**Absent:** Pablo Chavez, Tracy Conner, Kenny Generette, Theresa Koren, Billy McGonigal, Samantha Slapnik, Ryan Swaim

**Guests:** Nathan Skipper, Smith Sapp CPA's

**Staff:** Karen Riordan, Diana Green, Cindy Gettig, Jimmy Gray, Randy McKeel, Bob Harris, Stuart Butler, Diane Charno, Rebecca Edgar

**CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Alex Husner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The February 23, 2022, meeting minutes were reviewed. Upon a motion made by Alberto Semidei and seconded by Chris Shroff, the February 23, 2022, minutes were approved as presented upon a unanimous vote.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Karen Riordan recognized Alicia Thompson as the new CEO of the Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association.

Nathan Skipper, with Smith Sapp, presented the MBACC 2022 Financial Statements and Additional information for the Year Ended December 31, 2022. MBACC received another clean audit for 2021.

**DIVISIONS REPORTS**

*Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Upcoming EVOLVE classes have been scheduled to include Benefits of employing people with autism, Inclusive Workplaces, DEI Vocabulary and Key Terms and Inclusive Leadership.

### *Legislative Advocacy*

Jimmy Gray reported that conversations are ongoing in Columbia on securing \$300 million in the state budget to fund Phase 1 of Interstate 73. The House has passed its first draft version of the budget. Regular meetings are taking place in Columbia seeking support. The FY22 Omnibus spending bill includes \$15 million to finish all right-of-way purchasing. The bill also included H-2B visa provisions to ensure that returning workers do not count against the cap.

### *Community Engagement*

Patrick Norton has been appointed as the Community Engagement Chair for 2022. Patrick will organize a meeting of the full Community Engagement Committee to regroup and strategize for the upcoming year.

### *Investor Relations*

Alberto Semidei presented a list of 24 new member-investors for approval. Eileen Soisson made a motion to approve the new members as presented. Seconded by Chris Shroff, all new members were approved upon a unanimous vote by the Board.

Business Development upcoming events include a job fair in conjunction with Horry County Schools in April and a women's event in October. The Nonprofit Council will hold an educational event in April sponsored by South Atlantic Bank.

### *Finance*

John Rutenberg, Finance Review Committee Chair, reviewed the Balance Sheet and Statement of Activities for the period ending February 28, 2022.

The Finance Review Committee reviewed the 2021 audit in a prior meeting and recommends that it be presented for approval by a Board vote. Chris Shroff made a motion to approve the 2021 audit as presented. Seconded by Alberto Semidei, the motion passed upon a unanimous vote.

### *Marketing Council*

Woody Brownson reported that the marketing team has been focusing on air service, CAN-AM Days, National Travel and Tourism Week, website RFP, and *Chef Swap at The Beach*. MYR was named Best Airport of 2021 by TSA. NTTW Celebration and Update is tentatively scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup>.

The website redesign task force viewed presentations from three finalists on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The group unanimously agreed to send the Miles Agency forward to the board of directors as their choice to engage for Visit Myrtle Beach website redesign.

Woody Brownson made a motion to ratify the decision of the task force and move forward with contract negotiations with the Miles Agency for VMB website redesign. Seconded by Heidi Vukov, the motion passed upon a unanimous vote of the board.

### *Sales*

Bob Harris reported that group sales are up compared to 2021 with association business coming back into the meetings market. Mr. Harris provided updates on Esports, track and field, the MB Invitational, motorcoach tours and several strong leads for meetings and conventions. The sales team will be doing sales calls in Atlanta on April 18-22.

### **CEO REPORT**

Karen Riordan gave a recap of her presentation to City Council on March 22<sup>nd</sup> highlighting the use of A-Tax and TDF funds. With an increase in occupancy and revenues over last year, Myrtle Beach led the country in lodging revenue recovery.

The chamber is working with the city on police recruitment efforts. We are also promoting the HGTC Culinary Institute to attract more students to the program.

The job fair on March 22 was largely successful with a diverse group of employers participating.

Ms. Riordan and Jimmy Gray continue to meet with delegates in Columbia and will travel to Washington DC for the US Travel Association Capitol Hill event in April.

Partnership Grand Strand has held several meetings with potential investors and has raised \$1.7M toward funding the initiatives.

Ms. Riordan and marketing team leadership are working with Myrtle Beach International Airport to close more business with Allegiant airlines. The Canadian film festival will take place at CCU on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Board is invited to attend the reception with Deputy Consul General.

The Annual Meeting will take place on April 21 at the Marriott Grand Dunes. Board members are encouraged to RSVP through the website.

Painting has been completed on the downtown parking garage and banners are ready to be installed on the towers. Ms. Riordan thanked Seth McCoy and Burroughs & Chapin for their contribution to the garage improvements. A ribbon cutting is planned for the project in April.

## *Bylaws Revisions*

Karen Riordan presented the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, dated March 23, 2022, with proposed revisions to:

### Article VI

Section 5. Restrictions from Board Service

Section 12. Vacancies

Section 17. Relinquishment of Position Upon Qualification as a Candidate for Public Office

Section 18. Assumption of Office

### Article IX, Section 1. Composition

Discussion regarding proposed terms resulted in further language changes to Article VI, Section 5. Ms. Riordan withdrew the request to vote on the bylaws as presented. Further revisions will be made based upon the board discussion and the document will be reviewed again in the April meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **CHAIR REPORT**

Alex Husner, Chair, reported that Atiya Stoke-Brown resigned from her position on the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Dr. Michael Benson, President of Coastal Carolina University, has been nominated to fill the vacant board seat. Heidi Vukov made a motion to appoint Dr Michael Benson to the vacant seat created by the resignation of Atiya Stokes-Brown for the remainder of the term ending in 2022. Seconded by Todd Setzer, the motion passes unanimously.

Alicia Thompson has taken the new position as President of the Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association. Per the terms of the revised bylaws, Seth McCoy made a motion to move Alicia Thompson to Ex-Officio capacity for the remainder of her term. Seconded by Alberto Semidei, the motion passed upon a unanimous vote.

As the new Community Engagement Council Chair, Patrick Norton will replace Ms. Thompson's position on the Executive Committee.

Carla Schuessler is currently running for an elected official position. Per the terms of the revised bylaws, Amy Stevens made a motion to move Carla Schuessler to Ex-Officio capacity for the remainder of her candidacy. Seconded by Alberto Semidei, the motion passed upon a unanimous vote.

Heidi Vukov has been appointed to serve as Vice-Chair for the Marketing Council.

### *Membership Model*

Stuart Butler presented the new membership model which will combine Chamber and CVB investors as one membership. The historical 2% increase has been eliminated for 2022-23, along with the tiered memberships. There will be a flat rate for each category with an additional charge per unit for lodging partners. The former T.I.P. program will be replaced with a new program called AMP, which will offer a-la-carte marketing options. Lodging partners will continue to pay 1% additional charge for properties located outside of the City of Myrtle Beach.

The new model will allow the Chamber to help smaller area businesses to succeed. The new membership model rollout and education will be announced May 5 and sales will commence in May-June.

### **ADJOURN**

Upon a motion made by Chris Shroff and seconded by John Rutenberg, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.