

Hotel/Motel Tax Committee Meeting Minutes January 10, 2022

Present: Millie Youngquist (Chair), Isabella Santoro, Clay Whisler, Phil Minino Advisory: Sally Hart and Michelle Redlinger Absent: Diane Gallagher, Rhonda Reed.

Motion by Isabella, seconded by Phil, to approve the agenda and November 29th minutes. Motion carried.

Millie provided a **financial report** with a balance of \$119,945.01 with the third quarter payment at \$18,128.35. In comparison, the City of Riverside's third quarter payment was \$49,771.03.

Motion by Phil, seconded by Isabella, to approve the electrical RFP and **electric vehicle charge station** RFP presented by Sally. Motion carried. They are due mid-February.

Millie provided an update on **Great Places** with grant applications available and are due May 2, 2022. Will need to reactivate the committee. Sally will create an account on the website for the city to apply and access application documents. Millie and Sally will review the previous documents with new city administrator Deanna McCusker. A webinar is being held January 19th at 1 p.m. about the applications and Millie will send out registration information.

Keep Iowa Beautiful Programs – Millie suggested the Paint Iowa Beautiful program, which must have a non-profit apply for stain, paint, or street parking lines. Also, the Middle School ELP program is doing a barn quilt project with proposed walking tour and there's a fundraising component. Michelle explained there will be a mini loop of them in town and walking trails. They are looking to put QR codes on them with interviews with area farmers. Michelle is going to speak with the group about applying for the paint grant.

Website update – Michelle has reviewed two months of invoicing and is going to follow up as certain items are still not working properly including the community calendar and event registration. Alisha is troubleshooting the event section. Image resizing is continuing with the HS OJT student. There are also search bar issues again. Michelle is documenting and following up with the website staff.

Marketing Hire Proposal – Michelle explained and would like to move forward with adding someone to the team with a goal of a Full-time person at \$36,500 (approximately \$50,000 total with benefits) with half time in Washington and the other half of time split among area towns. The area towns could then split the remaining \$25,000. The focus of work would be on promotion, marketing, and website. Phil suggested it would be worthwhile to have this position just for Washington. After discussion, it was decided Michelle will nail down logistics with a meeting with nearby communities with most of the Hotel/Motel Committee in support of hiring someone up to \$25,000 but it has not yet been voted on formally and will see who wants to pursue it and will do the same with the Chamber Board. Michelle will report back at the next Hotel/Motel Tax Committee meeting.

Informational Kiosks – Had previously applied for a Washington County Riverboat Foundation grant but it was not awarded. Michelle has researched the items and wants a full map of the community that can be updated regularly with corresponding pamphlets that are attractive and easy to use. Would like to

have one at the Wellness Park and others throughout town as determined to promote tourism and local amenities. Cost is approximately \$4,000 with less than \$100 per year to print updated maps for kiosks.

Wellness Park playground – Sally explained that the Parks department is working with Kiwanis to raise funds for a full playground structure with a handicap accessible surface. The cost is estimated at \$200,000 total with the structure at approximately \$80,000, installation at \$20,000-30,000, and the remaining cost for the surface. The parks department is reaching out to see if Hotel/Motel would be willing to consider a donation to the playground structure, which could also include an informational kiosk near the playground as the Wellness Park is becoming a regional draw. The suggested amount was \$30,000 split at \$10,000 each year for three years. Hotel/Motel Committee asks that Parks Director Nick Pacha attend the February meeting to provide more information about the structure and fundraising efforts.

ITIP Membership – Iowa Travel Industry Partners – Michelle explained it is under \$300 to join and results in about 300 leads for group travel to go back to the members (bus tours). Suggested joining in a year when more promotional material is available and ready for Washington.

Mural – No updates, still needs repairs and final payment has not yet been made.

Next meeting will be 11:30 a.m. on February 15, 2022.

Motion Isabella, seconded by Phil, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Sally Hart, Temporary Secretary