

Eastern Regional Tourism District Interim Executive Committee Meeting

March 13, 2020

Teleconference

Attendees: Bruce MacDonald, Jim Bellano, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Stephen Gencarella, Gina Kunst, Chris Regan, Tracey Hanson

Guests: Tony Sheridan (CCECT), Courtney Assad (CCECT), Peggy Roberts (GMCC), Megan Gilbert (CCECT), Lori Thompson (CCECT), Colleen Gresh (CCECT)

Call to Order: 1:03pm

1. Discussion of the FY20 Marketing Plan

Jim Bellano discussed the marketing plan for fiscal year 2020 to include a digital buy. Tyra discussed a print opportunity for a partnership with other municipalities. ERTD could use funds to initiate design and move forward with production in FY21. The publication is part of the airline trail and can be made regional. It is a durable functional material that can be folded and kept in your wallet and encompasses several towns in our district. Regional partnership match a possibility because Thompson has \$4.5K to bring to the table. The committee agreed to create a regional partnership model prior to the April 2 meeting. Tyra is going to look at what it would take to make this viable and ERTD can look at backfilling the additional funds. Tyra is identifying other towns that would like to participate and seeing what their capacity to contribute funds are. Sea Mystic will again be doing a campaign for this season and would be looking for a regional partnership as well. Chris proposed using \$150K to do matching programs across the district to increase the reach and impact. Jim expressed concern over the timing and being able to get commitments prior to June 30. There may be two different tiers for municipalities versus private organizations. Chris asked if creative needed to be recreated for digital buy. Gina stated they are moving forward with the current approved creative and hope to refresh for the next media buy. Advertising is being started later and drawn out. Chris recommended doing an RFP for a new media agency for FY20. The concern is time, but they agreed to do a short turnaround RFP. Courtney will work with the marketing committee to draft a RFP and circulate to agencies and post publicly. Peggy recommended displays in the area welcome centers. Bruce asked about additional opportunities for print advertising. Marketing narrative will also be required for the state contract.

2. Discussion of the FY20 Budget

The bulk of the budget will be the marketing plan in addition to administrative and operating costs. The Chambers will work on a draft budget for the committee to further discuss and develop. A budget committee of the board will be developed for FY21.

3. FY20 State Contract

Jim reviewed the breakdowns of the FY19 expenditures that he is submitting the final report for to the state.

Asking for 3 narratives

How has the organization benefitted from this funding? 200 word max

How has the DECD/COT credited for its support?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Must be submitted and approved to move toward the FY20 contract. Courtney will help Jim finish up the last three narratives.

The committee will prepare to vote on the FY20 contract at the April 10 meeting.

4. Discussion of Public Announcement of Partnership

The ECT Chamber can draft a press release for discussion. The committee discussed a potential press conference. Bruce recommended having a public signing ceremony of the contract. Peggy offered to draft a media proposal to communicate. Bruce also offered to work on the plan and has history with this. With COVID-19 in mind, timing will be looked at.

5. Discussion of RFQ Preparation

Draft will be provided within a week by the Chambers.

6. Review of Accounting Records

Jim will be reaching out to NCDC to request transfer of files and access. There are also physical assets at SCCOG.

7. Other Startup Questions

Tony will be submitting a resignation from the board. Tony recommended again following up with the municipalities on board member status and terms. The Chambers will work with the Nominating/Membership Committee.

8. Discussion on Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism

Tony asked about the impact and recovery and what we can do to help our venues. Gina spoke about their impact on the hotel industry. Potential staycation messaging for the summer could be valuable. Bruce recommended being in line with the State Office of Tourism and working closely to be on the same page. The committee will put together a list of recommendations for our district.

Adjournment 2:05pm