



**MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
DESOTO PARISH TOURISM COMMISSION**
115 N. Washington Street
Mansfield, LA
FEBRUARY 12, 2019
2:00 – 5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: President, Margaret Dickerson

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Margaret Dickerson, Mary Mac Thompson, Donna Cagle, Charlotte Miller, Pam Rodgers, Shirley Payne, **ABSENT:** Jean Williams

GUESTS ATTENDING: Iris Harper, Consultant, Dudley Green, Julie Vidler Morris, Linda Curtis Sparks, David Calhoun, Van Reech, Mark Armstrong, Byron Wilcott

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INVOCATION

OLD BUSINESS:

- Iris Harper: Update regarding best use of current and future funds followed with the following motions. Ms. Harper reviewed rates offered by two local banks. After discussion the board decided to research the La Asset Management group and make the final decision at March meeting.
- Progressive Bank will be the only checking account beginning immediately. Community Bank checking account will be transferred to CDs at a to be determined bank or management group.
- **Election of Officers**
- **Nominations for President** named Margaret Dickerson made by Charlotte Miller; second by Shirley Payne. All approved.
- **Nominations for Vice President** named Charlotte Miller. Motion by Shirley Payne; second by Mary Mac Thompson. All approved.
- **Nominations for Treasurer** named Pam Rodgers. Motion by Mary Mac Thompson; second by Margaret Dickerson. All approved.
- **Charlotte Miller/Iris Harper/Linda Curtis Sparks – Update on No Man’s Land** – Charlotte Miller presented ideas for the bi-annual quilt show to held in May 2020 to include a No Man’s Land element to include the NML traveling exhibit. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of working with the DP School Board to work with the theme regarding inclusion by students to participate in event. The parish is encouraged to add elements of No Man’s Land to their featured events for the next 3 years.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2018 meeting – Motion to approve minutes made by Charlotte Miller; second by Pam Rodgers. All approved.
- Approval of Financials – January 2019 – Motion to approve financials made by Shirley Payne; second by Mary Mac Thompson. All approved.
 - **Guests presentations:**
 - **David Calhoun – Historic Nabors Trailer sign**
Mr. Calhoun presented the Nabors Trailers sign project. Beginning with the history of the company in the area and asking for the necessary funds to restore and relocate the

historic landmark sign. The city has donated the sign and will maintain the sign upon completion of restoration. Current estimate is \$30,000 and they are requesting public donations asking individuals and businesses to contribute. Lively discussion followed from attendees and board members.

- **Van Reech – Clista A. Calhoun Center**

Mr. Reech presented the impact the center has had on tourism in Mansfield with 'return on investment' charts. He also stated that the center had booked 75+ meetings and events in 2018 and is currently booked through August 2019. Mr. Reech noted that biggest investment is the utility bills and maintenance. He was asking for \$20,000 from the Tourist Commission.

- **Mark Armstrong – iTour USA**

Mr. Armstrong is working on a promotion to get visitors off the Interstate with Thank You Cards and introducing a fund raiser for local events & festivals to raise their own funds. The cards would be paid for and distributed by the Tourist Commission/Chambers and would include local dining, shopping and accommodation discounts for visitors to utilize during their visit to Desoto Parish and help establish the culture of the community. The board discussed prices and minimum quantity and how much the investment would be if they selected to participate. There would be no charge for visitors. It was also noted that local festivals and events would most likely need assistance funding to pay for their cards also and that this cost would be considered advertising and marketing to fit within the state guidelines. Price break is 5,000 cards and would cost \$2500 otherwise the cards are \$1.00 each.

- **Byron Wilcott – Main Event Pro Wrestling**

Mr. Wilcott is returning to Mansfield and Logansport with a successful fundraiser for the schools' sports teams. The event would include logo placement and promotion for the Tourist Bureau. He is asking for \$3,000 per each event or \$6,000 total. The first event is in Mansfield on March 30 and the Logansport event is in May.

The board thanked all the guests for attending and presenting and said the grant committee would be meeting shortly and present their recommendations during the March 12 board meeting for discussion and approval.

- **Approve job description for Executive Director position.**

The Tourist Bureau approved using criteria for position submitted by Linda Curtis Sparks, Executive Director, Toledo Bend Lake Country. Iris Harper stated she would get this posted on the website and linked to social media and run ad in the Mansfield Enterprise for the following Thursday. The deadline for resumes was set for Thursday March 7 with interviews to be held for final selection on Monday March 11.

- **Appoint committee to begin search for new Executive Director –** Board members appointed: Mary Mac Thompson, Charlotte Miller and Pam Rodgers.

- **Appoint committee to review grants and report to monthly board meeting.** Board members appointed: Shirley Payne, Donna Cagle and Margaret Dickerson.

- **Approve additional person to sign checks.** Need letter from the board to the banks. Charlotte Miller made a motion to appoint Iris Harper to become the additional

check signee along with Pam Rodger and Margaret Dickerson. Second made by Mary Mac Thompson. No discussion. All approved

- Guests were asked to depart the meeting to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss resolution of personnel issues and impact on commission. Along with the board, Linda Curtis Sparks and Iris Harper were asked to join in the discussion.
- Board meeting resumed after the Executive Session.
- Resignation Edna Thornton. Charlotte Miller met with Edna Thornton 3 days prior to meeting to notify her of Executive Session. Charlotte Miller received a signed statement regarding this discussion. Charlotte Miller will present Edna Thornton with a brief letter for her signature stating her inability to continue working due to her failing health. The board discussed working with the Chamber to host an afternoon event to honor Edna Thornton. Several suggestions were made regarding an appreciation gift including a Kindle Fire with contributions from board members & chamber.
- Discuss and approve Management Agreement with Sabine Parish Tourism – Motion to approve made by Charlotte Miller; second by Mary Mac Thompson. Some discussion followed regarding budget category to place annual fee of \$31,000. It was suggested to temporarily budget this line item out of the Advertising budget “Contingency” line.
- Additional updates or discussion – Mary Mac Thompson presented appeal from Krewe of Aquarius regarding their expended funds for the 2019 event. Mrs. Thompson noted they had spent \$6,300 to date on expenses for the parade. Lengthy discussion followed regarding the rightful use of tourist bureau funds. The board compromised on paying \$1,800 toward the Krewe’s advertising costs when invoices are received.
- Iris Harper requested that Linda Curtis Sparks send a list of criteria to the Tourist Bureau for them to proceed with finalizing the fish project. Selecting artist, approving design and who was responsible for location to finish project along with transportation. Installation will be done by Desoto Parish Police Jury upon completion of project.
- Adjourn

Presented by: Iris Harper