

Memo



To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Shirley A. Freeman, Director of Finance/Administration
Date: March 8, 2016
Subject: Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Recommendations

Town of Bluffton
20 Bridge Street
PO Box 386
Bluffton, SC 29910
843.706.4500
843.757.6720 (fax)

Recommendation: In accordance with the grant process, the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee met on February 16, 2016, to review the quarterly grant applications and have made the following grant award recommendations for Town Council's consideration:

Requesting Organization	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc	53,535	24,068
Old Town Bluffton Merchants	24,000	24,000
Total	\$ 77,535	\$ 48,068

Background: Total State and Local Accommodations Tax funds currently available for distribution are \$119,472 as outlined below.

State ATAX

Remaining from Previous Quarters	\$ (13,040)
2nd Quarter Revenue	35,575
General Fund	-
5% to General Fund	(1,779)
30% to Visitor's Convention Bureau	(10,672)

Local ATAX

Remaining from Previous Quarters	\$ 57,814
2nd Quarter Revenue	91,412
8% to Visitor's Convention Bureau	(7,313)
Disaster Recovery Designation	(914)
38% to Town's CIP	(31,611)

Total State ATAX Funds Remaining for Distribution	\$ 10,084
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Total Local ATAX Funds Remaining for Distribution	\$ 109,388
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Note: When comparing the State and Local Accommodations Taxes collections for the quarter ending December 2015 to the same quarter of the previous year, the revenues are up \$8,455 or 7.1%.

Documents attached for your review:

- ATAC meeting minutes from February 16, 2016
- Previously funded grant listing
- Final Report – 2015 Farmer's Market

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2016

Chairman Bret Anthony called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other committee members present were Sam Britt, Charlene Gardner, Maria Kramer, and Erin Reichert. Courtney Hampson was absent due to illness. Staff in attendance was as follows: Director of Finance Shirley Freeman, Assistant Director of Finance Trisha Greathouse, and Town Clerk Sandra Lunceford.

The total funds available for distribution are \$119,472.

Agenda Amendment:

Anthony moved to amend the agenda to place the Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society's funding request for third and fourth quarters for consideration. Reichert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Approval and Recommendation to Town Council on Applicants Request as follows:

1) Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc. – Annual Request of \$53,535:

Kim Viljac, Market Manager, stated her annual request of \$53,535 will be reduced to \$36,497 due to reducing the need for police support for traffic control based on recommendations from the Town Police Chief with the installation of the bollards on Calhoun. The requested funds will be used for advertising, solid waste collection, public restrooms and shuttle service. The Market relies on rack cards and posters that are placed in hotels, welcome centers, stores and businesses throughout the area and on advertising in visitor publications, magazines, newspapers, radio, WHHI, web site, etc. to inform the public. Besides the requested funding from the Accommodations Tax funds, the Market continues to explore additional support through grant writing, sponsorships, merchandise sales, vendor fees and tent rental fees. The new shuttle service is in the planning stage, and negotiations regarding contract price with Savannah Tours reduced the proposed application cost from \$23,125 to \$21,472.

The use of parking spaces at Bluffton Village is proposed and approval from the POA at Bluffton Village would be the next step.

The committee had concerns on funding the shuttle service at \$21,472 for a full year. It was proposed to use the 50% previous tourist attendance number in the application since this was a new endeavor and no actual count was available for meeting percentage of tourist served ruling from TERC (State's Tourism Expenditures Review Committee). The application did not indicate an expected increase in attendance numbers with the implementation of the shuttle service.

(Continued)

Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc. – Annual Request of \$53,535 - Continued:

The Chairman questioned if the 50% match could be made up by the applicant. She stated she would have to draw from sponsorship funds or decrease merchandise inventory purchases. The Chairman proposed fully funding the budgeted advertising costs giving an additional \$3,675 in accommodation tax funds for the allowable 100% item to the Market's annual budget.

Anthony moved to grant funding of \$25,761. Gardner seconded.

Anthony stated he is recommending \$5,368 to cover 50% of the cost for 6 months of shuttle service. The applicant could come back to the committee for the additional \$5,368 for the second half of the year if the market sees a continuing benefit in offering the service and it is utilized by tourists.

Reichert moved to amend the motion to grant funding of \$24,068 for the following:

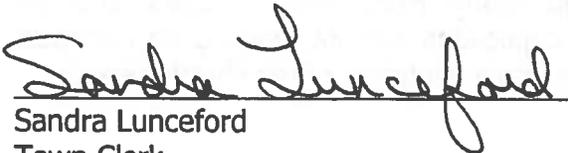
- **Advertising and Public Relations – \$15,675**
- **Solid Waste Collection – \$1,225**
- **Public Restrooms – \$1,800**
- **Shuttle Service – \$5,368**

**Britt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
Vote on original motion was all opposed.**

2) Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society – Balance of Annual Request of \$24,000:

Reichert moved to grant the balance of their annual request (third and fourth quarter) of \$24,000(\$12,000 per quarter as previously awarded for quarters one and two). Gardner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.


Sandra Lunceford
Town Clerk

FY 2016 ATAX Grant Report
2/18/2016

FY 2016 Grant Requests	Amount Requested	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Source of Funding	Paid FY 2016	Remaining
Applications Received March 31, 2015						
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000	100,000	25,000	25,000	State ATAX	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 100,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000	\$ -
Applications Received June 30, 2015						
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce	\$ 20,000	\$ 3,250	\$ 7,500	State ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000 (2nd Req)	\$ 75,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	State ATAX	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,000	\$ -
LowCountry Golf Course Owners Assoc	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ -	Local ATAX		\$ -
The May River Theatre Company	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	Local ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	Local ATAX	\$ 12,000	\$ -
Society of Bluffton Artists - Visual Arts as a Destination	\$ 10,700	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX	\$ 7,290	\$ 2,710
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 160,200	\$ 81,250	\$ 82,000		\$ 79,290	\$ 2,710
Applications Received September 30, 2015						
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	State ATAX	\$ 15,800	\$ 34,200
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000 (2nd Req)	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	Local ATAX	\$ 8,091	\$ 3,909
Farmer's Market of Bluffton - Annual Request \$34,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 14,142	\$ 14,142	\$ 14,142	Local ATAX	\$ 11,786	\$ 2,356
The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce - The Taste of Bluffton	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX		\$ 10,000
Total Grants for 2nd Quarter Payments	\$ 96,142	\$ 86,142	\$ 86,142		\$ 35,678	\$ 50,464
Applications Received December 31, 2015						
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000				
Farmer's Market of Bluffton - Annual Request \$53,585	\$ 53,585	\$ 24,068				
Total Grants for 3rd Quarter Payments	\$ 77,585	\$ 48,068	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Total FY2016 Grants	\$ 433,927	\$ 240,460	\$ 193,142		\$ 139,968	\$ 53,174

APPLICATIONS ANNUAL SUMMARY FOR FY2016:

Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - \$100,000 Annual Request (2nd sub)	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	State ATAX	\$ 65,800	\$ 34,200
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 24,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,091	\$ 3,909
The May River Theatre Company	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	Local ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,000	\$ -
Farmers Market of Bluffton - Annual Request \$34,000 (FY15 \$14,149)	\$ 67,727	\$ 38,210	\$ 14,142	Local ATAX	\$ 11,786	\$ 2,356
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce	\$ 20,000	\$ 3,250	\$ 7,500	Local ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Society of Bluffton Artists - Annual Request \$15,000 (FY15) (2nd submission)	\$ 10,700	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX	\$ 7,290	\$ 2,710
LowCountry Golf Course Owners Assoc	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ -	Local ATAX	\$ -	\$ -
Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce - Taste of Bluffton	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Total FY2016 Grants	\$ 308,927	\$ 240,460	\$ 193,142		\$ 139,968	\$ 53,174

Accommodations Tax Funding Final Report

You may record information directly on this form or create a separate document for more detailed responses.

1. PROJECT INFORMATION:

Organization Name:

Project Name:

Contact Name:

2. PROJECT COMPLETION:

Were you able to complete the project as stated in your original application?

If no, state discrepancies.

3. PROJECT SUCCESS:

Please share any additional comments regarding the project (e.g., lessons learned, successes, problems encountered, etc.)

4. PROJECT ATTENDANCE:

Record numbers in table below. Numbers are to reflect attendance and funds received for projects for both the current and previous periods.

	Prior Period	Current Period
Total budget of event / project	95,150	106,950
Amount funded by Town of Bluffton Accommodatons Tax	26,976	25,632
Amount funded by other sources	68,174	81,318
Total attendance	1000-2500 per week	1000-2500 per week
Total tourists	500-1250 per week	500-1250 per week

5. Methods:

Please describe the methods used to capture the attendace data listed above (e.g., license plates, surveys, zip codes, etc.)

6. Project Budget:

Please attach report indicating project expenses compared to budget for the current grant.

7. Organization Signature:

Provide signature of official within organization, verifying accuracy of above statements.

Name: Title:

Signature: Date:

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01/31/16
Accrual Basis

**Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc.
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2015**

Final Report E-2

	Jan - Dec 15	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Income				
Donations	359.04			
Grants				
ATAX Grant				
ATAX - Advertising		18,000.00	-18,000.00	
ATAX - Police	5,946.91	12,800.00	-6,853.09	46.5%
ATAX - Trash & Restrooms		3,200.00	-3,200.00	
ATAX Grant - Other	19,988.45		19,988.45	100.0%
Total ATAX Grant	25,935.36	34,000.00	-8,064.64	76.3%
Total Grants	25,935.36	34,000.00	-8,064.64	76.3%
Interest Income	0.37			
Merchandise	2,186.00	6,500.00	-4,314.00	33.6%
Sponsorship				
Contracted Sponsors		7,500.00	-7,500.00	
Daily Sponsorship	3,900.00	2,500.00	1,400.00	156.0%
Total Sponsorship	3,900.00	10,000.00	-6,100.00	39.0%
Tent/Table Revenue	1,740.00	1,500.00	240.00	116.0%
Vendor Revenue	28,021.02	29,000.00	-978.98	96.6%
Total Income	62,141.79	81,000.00	-18,858.21	76.7%
Total Income	62,141.79	81,000.00	-18,858.21	76.7%
Gross Profit	62,141.79	81,000.00	-18,858.21	76.7%
Expense				
Accounting Services	484.80			
Marketing and Promotions				
Banners/Signage	596.55	500.00	96.55	119.3%
Constant Contact Newsletter	135.00	425.00	-290.00	31.8%
Other - TV/Radio/Special Promo	300.00	1,500.00	-1,200.00	20.0%
Print Advertisements	7,265.90	12,825.00	-5,559.10	56.7%
Print Brochures/Rack	888.00	1,500.00	-612.00	59.2%
Special Events/Demonstrations	90.81	500.00	-409.19	18.2%
Web Design and Maintenance	1,885.21	500.00	1,385.21	377.0%
WIC/SNAP		250.00	-250.00	
Total Marketing and Promotions	11,161.47	18,000.00	-6,838.53	62.0%
Operations Expense				
Bank Charges/EBT Machine	113.00	750.00	-637.00	15.1%

E-2

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Accrual Basis

**Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc.
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2015**

	Jan - Dec 15	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Contract Labor				
Casual Labor	4,515.00	5,000.00	-485.00	90.3%
Market Manager	29,250.00	30,000.00	-750.00	97.5%
Police Fees	10,457.75	12,800.00	-2,342.25	81.7%
Total Contract Labor	44,222.75	47,800.00	-3,577.25	92.5%
Entertainment	500.00			
Insurance	350.00	550.00	-200.00	63.6%
Licenses/Permits		250.00	-250.00	
Market Equipment Expense	2,640.90	3,000.00	-359.10	88.0%
Market Merchandise	2,568.48	5,500.00	-2,931.52	46.7%
Market Supplies	905.33	1,500.00	-594.67	60.4%
Membership Dues	495.00	500.00	-5.00	99.0%
Office Supplies	921.71	1,200.00	-278.29	76.8%
Phone	1,398.87	1,750.00	-351.13	79.9%
Postage		200.00	-200.00	
Property Maintenance	1,818.60			
Travel	38.97			
Total Operations Expense	55,973.61	63,000.00	-7,026.39	88.8%
Total Expense	67,619.88	81,000.00	-13,380.12	83.5%
Net Ordinary Income	-5,478.09		-5,478.09	100.0%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Donated Services	34,850.00	25,950.00	8,900.00	134.3%
Total Other Income	34,850.00	25,950.00	8,900.00	134.3%
Other Expense				
Donation Usage				
Banners		250.00	-250.00	
Donated Advertising				
104.9 Surf		2,500.00	-2,500.00	
Bluffton Today	1,000.00	2,500.00	-1,500.00	40.0%
CH2	1,000.00	2,500.00	-1,500.00	40.0%
Island Packet	1,000.00	2,500.00	-1,500.00	40.0%
Pink		2,500.00	-2,500.00	
Total Donated Advertising	3,000.00	12,500.00	-9,500.00	24.0%

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Accrual Basis

Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc.
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2015

	<u>Jan - Dec 15</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Entertainment	7,350.00	5,000.00	2,350.00	147.0%
Office Expense		500.00	-500.00	
Property Maintenance		2,700.00	-2,700.00	
Property Use	24,500.00	5,000.00	19,500.00	490.0%
Total Donation Usage	<u>34,850.00</u>	<u>25,950.00</u>	<u>8,900.00</u>	<u>134.3%</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>34,850.00</u>	<u>25,950.00</u>	<u>8,900.00</u>	<u>134.3%</u>
Net Other Income				
Net Income	<u><u>-5,478.09</u></u>		<u><u>-5,478.09</u></u>	<u><u>100.0%</u></u>