

## **VSC Finance Committee Minutes**

April 9, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

**Attendees:** Board members – Wes Santos, Cindy Moore, Tim Self and Heather Van Wie (Zoom)  
Staff – Erin Duggan, Andrea Hunt, Kelly Harb, Pete Harvey, Suzanne Hackman and Jess Bertolini

The draft fiscal 2027 County budget was presented to the committee.

Erin Duggan began by reminding the committee that the budget being presented is the public County funds. The private funds budget will be presented later in the year to this committee. This budget will be presented to the Board in May, TDT in June and BCC in July with approval sometime in September. Per discussions with the County, Erin explained the County is requesting the budget remain flat from previous year with a slight increase of 3% in management fee. County has requested all one-time funding to be included in the flat budget. Erin explained she spoke to the County admin and asked them to clarify the role of VSC. VSC believes our goals are to raise TDT funding and continue drawing visitors to the destination. The County agreed and has revised their recommendation to allow some items to remain as one time funding rather than include in the flat budget.

Next, Kelly Harb and Jess Bertolini explained there is a need for new website build, accounting for the increase in website for 2027. Kelly discussed the slight decrease in PR budget. She explained it is hard to know what cool opportunities might be available and having some funds available is beneficial. Digital Engagement, formerly social media and content, will increase slightly as money was moved to make more sense. Airline funding is significantly down from FY26 as airlines are entering year 3 of their agreements. If additional flights are secured, VSC will request money from the County at that time. Kelly then presented the paid media budget detailing the plans for the funding. She explained some of the increases in other budgets resulted in a decrease in paid media. Kelly is looking to specifically do some marketing in Nature and Outdoor to help fulfil the goals of the County in FY27. Kelly presented the research budget noting an increase of \$12,000. County has informed VSC that Zartico funding is approved for a third year at \$120,000. The County loves the data and VSC reports date to County quarterly.

Erin Duggan discussed the Promotion budget and funds will slightly decrease. She indicated these memberships, including US Travel Association, are necessary to maintain as they allow us to co-op with Visit Florida etc.

Erin presented the visitor services budget and funding would remain flat from previous year. VSC will continue to work with the Chambers.

Suzanne Hackman presented the sales team budgets and said that meetings would remain flat. VSC contracted with a meetings sales rep in FY25 using one time funding. The funding was built into the flat budget in FY26 and again for FY27. Suzanne would like to increase the presence at IMEX as more partners would like to attend. Suzanne discussed the need to keep the international budget flat from last fiscal. The County gave VSC one-time funding of \$220,000 in FY26 but asked VSC to move

that into the flat budget for FY27. VSC pulled \$150,000 of funds from paid media. Suzanne is also looking to possibly add a Brand USA show in FY27.

Pete presented the Sports budget and detailed a few budget changes. Sports FY27 budget includes 2 one-time funding for Sr. PGA and SRQ BMX events. Sports budget details a portion of the management fee to cover Sports related salaries in addition to brand awareness, web, PR, Telecommunications and Research. Pete is hoping to get one-time funding for events for 17<sup>th</sup> Street from reserves when needed.

County has approved the fourth year of funding for Arts and Culture at \$250,000. These funds were requested as one time in FY24, FY25 and FY26 to promote Sarasota as Florida's Cultural Coast.

Telecommunications will remain flat.

Postage will decrease as postage costs have decreased.

Administration is capped at \$50,000 per County ordinance. This budget covers legal fees, computer expenses and IT services.

Management fees will increase 3% from last year, County included for us.

Tim Self made a motion to present the budget to the Board from the committee. Wes Santos seconded.

All in favor. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.