

## **VSC Finance Committee Minutes**

April 5, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

**Attendees:** Board members – Gil Reyes, Richard Russell and Nick Mavrikas  
Staff – Virginia Haley, Andrea Hunt, Erin Duggan, Kelly Defebo, Shelby Connett

The fiscal 2023 County budget was presented to the committee.

Andrea Hunt began with explaining the FY23 summary budget is presented slightly different from years past due to the breakout of Sports as its own budget for FY23.

Next, Erin Duggan presented the Brand Awareness budget detailing the plans for the funding. She explained while VSC will continue to promote the destination digitally, there are some funds budgeted to bring print back in conjunction with EDC efforts. An increase in Creative is due to complement the market studies VSC's research team will be conducting. Airline funds will remain flat with a contingency for additional airlines. VSC's agreement with the County and Airport allows unused airline funds as of May 1 be transferred to VSC promotion budget to be used for additional marketing. Erin also explained the increase in the Web Online budget is due to new website creation in FY23. The current droople is outdated and in need of an update to be the most effective and efficient source for information. Social Media budget will decrease slightly as funds are being used to rebuild the website. PR and Earned Media budget will be used to host media with a bigger push for off season mid-week business.

Virginia Haley discussed the Promotion budget and funds will remain flat even though many dues and membership fees have doubled from prior year. She indicated these memberships are necessary to maintain as they allow us to co-op with Visit Florida etc. Research budget is increasing from prior year to include a market study to help assist with marketing. Due to the nature of the visitors and working alongside the EDC, VSC needs marketing in areas that traditionally have not be marketed, such as the schools in the area to attract businesses and families to move to Sarasota.

Shelby Connett presented the Sports budget and detailed the new budget changes. Sports FY23 budget will include portions of the promotion budget related to Sports directly. Sports budgets details a portion of the management fee to cover Sports related salaries in addition to brand awareness, web, PR, Telecommunications and Research. Shelby explained that events in Feb and March will be excluded from grant money and focus more on off season. Powerboat races has been reduced to \$75,000 in the current year. Historically, the County required VSC pay \$100,000 but the event has since changed ownership and VSC feels it is time to reduce funding and hopes to push the date of the races to later in July or early in June rather than 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. Sports is also excited to host an event in October with event rights holders to showcase the destination at once rather than one on one site visits.

Kelly Defebo presented the sales team budgets and they have determined the list of shows they believe are important for FY23. VSC received input from hotels etc. and determined IMEX was not worth their while and therefore will not attend for FY23. A small budget line has been added to

identify an event that focuses on VSC and EDC's collaboration. Sales team is working on not hosting events during Feb/March. International budget will continue to focus on UK, Germany and Canada. A new partnership with Brand USA will be implemented in FY23 which will serve as a 24/7 virtual tradeshow. Brand USA is the DMO for USA and will connect VSC with visitors/events all over the world. Visitor services budget will increase slightly to allow for improvements to the VIV and to support and increase need in collateral due to the increase in visitors visiting the centers.

Telecommunications will remain flat. However, VSC is looking into options to reduce phone services. Postage will decrease slightly as some funds have been moved to Visitor Services. VSC would like to move from reimbursing monthly postage to the Chambers into a sponsorship with them.

Administration is capped at \$50,000 per County ordinance. This budget cover legal fees, computer expenses, IT services, archiving and back up for files. Richard questioned why the cap of \$50,000 is in place and Virginia explained the County wants to be cautious with paying too much overhead. In order to increase the amount, it would require opening the ordinance and now is not the time to do that with the 6<sup>th</sup> penny on the horizon. Gil asked if the funds are not all needed, could they be used elsewhere. Andrea explained each March at the 6- month mark, VSC reviews all budget to determine and shifts in funding but historically, the admin budget rarely has excess.

Management fees will increase from last year. It has remained flat for the past few years and VSC is need of an increase. It is expected that the management fee for FY22 will run out after 11 months and the remaining funds will need to come from OPS.

Virginia Haley mentioned the possibility of eliminating the kiosk at Ed Smith stadium next year due to strains on staff and not having much interaction with visitors. Nick mentioned the possibility of moving the location of the kiosk for better interaction.

Richard Russell made a motion to present the budget to the Board from the committee. Nick Mavrikas seconded.

All in favor. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.