

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MUSKOGEE TOURISM AUTHORITY APRIL 20, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Muskogee Tourism Authority met in a Regular Session at 4:00 p.m., on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at Five Civilized Tribes Museum located at 101 Honor Heights Drive, Muskogee, Oklahoma, with Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas residing.

**Item 1:** Roll call and recognize Citizens wishing to speak. **(Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas and the roll was called as follows:

**Present:** Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

**Absent:** Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

**Staff Present:** Tammye Howell, Interim Director of Tourism; Avery Frix, President, Oxford Productions; John Tyler Hammons, Attorney; Angie O'Neal, Assistant to John Tyler Hammons

**Item 5: Motion Made to consider Item 5 first due to visitors and speakers concerning this item.**

**Motion made by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas and seconded by Trustee Aanje Wilkerson.**

**AYE:** Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

**NAY:** None

**OTHER:** Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**(Item 5) Consider approval of the Advisory Committee's recommendations for the Tourism Support Grant program or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

Marsha Dixon of Muskogee Golf Club spoke to the Board about the upcoming APT Tournament to be held on May 15-20, 2023, at the Muskogee Golf Club. She spoke of the need for monetary support grant in the amount of \$10,000.00 rather than volunteers, media promotions. Robert Smith, representing the Exchange Club of Muskogee, also spoke of the need for monetary support in the

amount of \$5,000.00. Avery Frix informed the group that the Bull riding group has yet to respond to communication from Tourism and suggested putting the \$5,000.00 earmarked for their group to be repurposed for other grants. He informed the group that we are coming to the end of our fiscal year, therefore, the money requested by both is simply not available. Mr. Smith expressed frustration with the grant process, being that his application was not completed in a timely manner, and not adhering to the required acknowledgements.

After presentation of both guests the discussion of the board ensued with concern of event organizers expecting payment without going through proper application process. Different amounts were discussed for the granting of the applicants. Discussion also included the need to start cutting back on funds given each year to the same group so that new events would be encouraged.

Motion was made by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas and seconded by Trustee Mark Patel to grant the following:

Three Rivers Museum	\$1,092.00
Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame	\$1,908.00
All Pro Tournament	\$1,000.00
Exchange Club	<u>\$1,000.00</u>
Total of Grants	\$5,000.00

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

NAY: None

OTHER: Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**Item 2: Consider approval of Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2023, or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

**Motion made by Secretary/Treasurer Tracy Cole to approve the minutes as prepared, seconded by Trustee Mike Gragg.**

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

NAY: None

OTHER: Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**Item 3: Consider approval of financials and claims for February and March 2023, or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

**Motion made by Secretary/Treasurer Tracy Cole to approve financials and claims, seconded by Trustee Aanje Wilkerson.**

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

NAY: None

OTHER: Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**Item 4: Consider approval of the multi-year NJCAA Tournament Contract or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

Deputy Director Tammye Howell spoke of the success of the tournament held at Rougher Village and the financial impact it made in Muskogee. The contract secures the tournament to be held in Muskogee for the next four years.

**Motion made by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas to approve the four-year contract as presented, motion was seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Tracy Cole.**

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

NAY: None

OTHER: Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**Item 6: Receive reports from Oxford Productions, Inc., regarding the Visit Muskogee Tourism Program and the Roxy Theater or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman)**

Avery Frix, President of Oxford Productions spoke of the flooding at the Roxy Theater and the plan for cleanup and maintenance. Barebones Festival will be held at the Roxy next week and visitors from around the country are expected to attend the festival. The Movie Hall of Fame Induction to be held at the Roxy on May 6, 2023.

Interim Director Tammye Howell presented copies of the Power Point given to Muskogee City Council of the highlights for the month. The plan for the Motor Coach Convention is still in place and the nomination for 2023 Red Bud Awards has been submitted.

No action taken.

**Item 7: Consider appointment of Tammye Howell as Executive Director of Tourism or take other necessary action.**

Avery Frix reported that Tammye Howell has been in the position of Interim Director and is best qualified to assume position of Executive Director of Tourism. Her strong background in sales and marketing made her a standout among other applicants, and he recommends hiring her for the position.

**Motion made by Trustee Aanje Wilkerson to hire Tammye Howell as Executive Director of Tourism, seconded by Trustee Mike Gragg.**

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

NAY: None

OTHER: Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

**Item 8: Thank and recognize host of MTA Board Meeting, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, and Director Sean Barney.**

Museum Director Sean Barney gave an overview of the museum and the different events throughout the year. The Board was also invited for a tour of the museum.

No action taken.

There being no other business before the Board of Trustees, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.

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**Daniel Chepkauskas**  
**Chair**

ATTEST:

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**Tracy Cole**  
**Secretary/Treasurer**