

**MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
MUSKOGEE TOURISM AUTHORITY
JULY 20, 2023**

The Board of Trustees of the Muskogee Tourism Authority met 4:00 p.m., on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at Muskogee Tourism Office, 216 W. Broadway, Muskogee, Oklahoma, with Chairman Daniel Chepkasuskas residing.

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 by Chairman Daniel Chepkasuskas and the roll was called as follows:

Present: Chair Daniel Chepkasuskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

Absent: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

Staff Present: Tammye Howell, Executive Director of Tourism; Mike Miller, City Manager; 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 Chepkasuskas, seconded by Trustee Traci McGee.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkasuskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

(Item 5) Consider approval from the Advisory Committee for the following grants:

- a. Okie Raceway
- b. 3rd Street Area Celebration
- c. The Community Light Foundation

Jeff Lee, representative for the Okie Raceway, discussed the event to be held September for the fourth year. He spoke of the money associated with the event, and last year’s event brought approximately 25 overnight stays in Muskogee hotels. Their request is for \$4,975.00 from MTA.

Vanessa Desmuke, representative for the 3rd Street Area Celebration, discussed plans for the event happening over Labor Day weekend in September. The last event held in 2017 had approximately 1,000 visitors. This year they will have a block of rooms reserved at Best Western. Their request is for \$3,500.00 to \$5,000.00.

No one was present to represent the Community Light Foundation grant request. Executive Director Tammye Howell discussed details of the grant application and associated costs. This organization has not received any prior funding through MTA. Shiron Ray informed board of the Advisory Committee's discussion and provided more information on the project named Black Towns of Oklahoma Bike Tour to be held September 23, 2023. Their request is for \$3,000.00.

After discussion of the Board, and following the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the following was decided:

- A. Okie Raceway did not follow all procedures for the previous grants received. Trustee Traci McGee would like a notarized letter to go to organizers to explain that all steps must be completed to receive any future grants.

Motion made by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas to approve grant of \$750.00 as recommended by the Advisory Committee, motion was seconded by Trustee Traci McGee.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

- B. 3rd Street Area Celebration did not complete all procedures for previous grants received. Incomplete financials and incomplete reports, along with lack of funds in budget were reason Advisory Committee recommended \$750.00.

Motion made by Chairman Daniel Chepkauskas to approve grant of \$750.00 as recommended by the Advisory Committee, motion was seconded by Trustee Traci McGee.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkauskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg; Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel; Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

- C. The Community Light Foundation is first time grant applicant and has approximately 200 riders for the two day event. Advisory Committee recommends \$1,500.00 due to limited funds.

Motion made by Trustee Traci McGee to approve grant of \$1,500.00 as recommended by the Advisory Committee, motion was seconded by Chairman Daniel Chepkasuskas.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkasuskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg;
Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel;
Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

Item 2: Consider approval of Meeting Minutes of May 2023 and June 2023, or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkasuskas, Chairman)

Motion made by Trustee Traci McGee to approve the minutes as prepared, seconded by Trustee Mike Gragg.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkasuskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg;
Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel;
Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

Item 3: Consider approval of financials and claims for May 2023 and June 2023, or take other necessary action. (Daniel Chepkasuskas, Chairman)

Motion made by Chairman Daniel Chepkasuskas to approve financials and claims, seconded by Trustee Traci McGee.

AYE: Chair Daniel Chepkasuskas; Vice Chair Evelyn Hibbs; Trustee Mike Gragg;
Trustee Traci McGee; Trustee Tim Wheeler

NAY: None

OTHER: Secretary/Treasury Tracy Cole; Trustee Sharon Champlin; Trustee Mark Patel;
Trustee Aanje Wilkerson

The Chairman declared the motion approved.

Item 4: Receive report from Oxford Productions Inc on the operation of the Visit Muskogee Tourism and Roxy Theater.

Executive Director Tammye Howell gave report on Annual Tourism Awards to be held on August 3, 2023 at MLT showcasing Beauty and the Beast. The Christmas Campaign is in planning stages. The Balloon Festival is set for August 25-27, we have secured the NJACC venue, and the plans for the RV Convention are moving forward. Discussion of the Roxy events and the water issues have been resolved.

There being no other business before the Board of Trustees, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Daniel Chepkauskas, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tracy Cole
Secretary/Treasurer