

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Wednesday April 1, 2020 @ 2:00 pm**

Present: Jesse Hamilton, Jeff Suddaby, Scott Doughty, Matthew Phillips, Kaushal Gandhi, Karin Terziano and Christine Kropp

Staff: Kelly Haywood, Bill Farnsworth, Torin Suddaby, Scott Ovell, Morgan Richter

Guests: Bob Stone

1. Welcome

Approve Agenda as presented

Be it resolved that the agenda be accepted as presented

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Scott Doughty

CARRIED

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

3. Approval of Minutes

Be it resolved that the minutes from the February 14th, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented.

Moved by: Scott Doughty

Seconded by: Cristine Kropp

CARRIED

4. Staff Report

Bill Farnsworth gave an update on the Board Administration actions

- Partnership Agreement converted to fillable PDF and sent to the 7 approved organizations
- MAT website Partnership page updated
- Work is ongoing to develop a Board procurement policy

Torin Suddaby gave a marketing update

- Proposing a 3-step plan
 - 1) Currently creating as much content as possible around outdoors and "Huntsville is Open for Business" to publish as soon as business returns to normal.
 - 2) Target Ontario residents looking to travel to convert to accommodation bookings
 - 3) Target visitors who have booked with content surrounding local businesses to get them spending money in our community.
- Looking for funding opportunities to help with content and online marketing.

Scott Ovell spoke to what the Town of Huntsville is doing during the crisis

- Trying to maintain engagement with the community, create a web portal with the Chamber and Morgan at BIA to keep business community engaged and give access to businesses to promote themselves.

- Looking at ways the Municipality can support businesses and create strategies to inject money into local economy, including tourism and retail, when restrictions are lifted and the situation starts to get back to normal. Ideas include cash voucher style program. HMATA Board will have an important role to play in this initial marketing strategy.
- Question was raised if the Town would be using any of their percentage of MAT funds to help stimulate economy once restrictions are listed. Answer is that the decision is ultimately up to Town Council but hope is that some of the money will be used to help jump-start economy.

Jesse Hamilton made point that plans to allocate funds for programs when businesses can re-open must take into account that there is currently no new MAT revenue and there will be a significant delay once businesses can re-open before more MAT revenue is actually deposited in the bank.

5. Financial Update

Jesse Hamilton stated that the Board is now receiving financial information from the municipality in an updated format that is closer to what they have been asking for, but the Board has not yet had time to adequately review the updated version.

Scott Ovell walked the Board through the updated format. Discussion was had over specific columns and how the numbers are reconciled. There are still issues with reporting between businesses and ORHMA which creates some variance in the numbers. Scott Ovell says some owners still concerned about confidentiality even though they have been assured sensitive information will not be shared. Figures are constantly updated in appropriate month even when reported much later and perhaps columns that have had numbers updated could be highlighted the following month for clarity. Recommendation was put forward to produce financials in an Excel format to make data easier to compare.

Jesse Hamilton asked about putting together a policy around how often transfer payments would be made from the Town. Karin Terziano says finance department would like to make quarterly payments. Discussion ensued about how long after the end of a quarter would a payment be made. 45 days was proposed and Scott Ovell was asked to clarify this issue with the town.

6. Partnership Program Application Update

Bill Farnsworth reported that Partnership Agreements were sent out to all 7 approved organizations March 13, but that 3 organizations had not yet responded in any way.

Huntsville Girls Hockey

- Event took place January 2020.
- Approved partnership amount was \$9000
- Will reach out to organization for agreement status
- Board will go ahead with payment once Agreement is signed

OFFSA

- Event has taken place.
- Original amount of \$20,000 was less due to cancellation of portion of event

- Kelly Haywood to send spreadsheet of final actual expenses

Ontario Museum Association

- Conference to be held in October 2020
- Have not yet responded to Partnership Agreement
- \$15,000 will be paid as long as event can actually take place in current COVID-19 situation

TriMuskoka

- Event has been cancelled until 2021
- Original amount approved was \$20,000
- Organization will be asked to re-apply for next year in upcoming intake

Band on the Run

- Originally approved for \$20,000
- Hoping to be able to postpone event mid-August to September
- Originally to be held in May making it shoulder season. Discussion ensued on whether, if current COVID-19 are lifted before end of summer, would this summer be considered shoulder season
- Board decided that a date needs to be put forward before further decisions can be made

Muskoka Hornets Baseball

- Event was to take place June 7-10
- Originally approved for \$9,000
- Haven't responded to Agreement email
- Similar to other organizations, they will need to re-apply next year

Huntsville Festival of the Arts

- Originally approved for \$19,000 for shoulder season programming
- Application included proposed suggestions for dates and artists/acts
- Will need to submit dates and revised plan before decisions can be made

Retreat to Nature

- Signed Partnership Agreement has been returned
- Project is to create a wellness website
- Approved amount is for \$10,000
- Project to go forward as planned

Further discussions held around the fact that expenses will not be paid if incurred before official Partnership Agreement has been signed.

Karin Terziano requested that in future Partnership Agreement status document should be sent out 48 hours in advance of meeting.

7. Partnership Program Future Dates and Process

Decision was made to discuss future intake dates when the current situation improves. Board would like to know how much money will be needed for revised list of Partnership Agreements.

8. Short-Term Strategic Plan

Decision made to discuss at next meeting once current Partnership commitments are known. Board confirmed that for any Muskoka-wide recovery endeavours Huntsville MAT money should be spent on local efforts.

9. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

10. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 3:45 pm

Moved by: Jesse Hamilton

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

Next meeting to be held virtually on Wednesday April 8, 2020 at 2:00 pm.