

MINUTES
ABILENE-TAYLOR COUNTY EVENTS VENUE DISTRICT

Public notice having been posted, a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Abilene-Taylor County Events Venue District was held on Wednesday, May 29, 2013, in the Basement Conference Room of City Hall, 555 Walnut, Abilene, Texas, at 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Norm Archibald, Mayor, City of Abilene
Downing Bolls, Jr, Judge, Taylor County
Stan Egger, Commissioner, Taylor County
Robert Briley, Councilmember, City of Abilene
Glenn Dromgoole

Others Present: Representing City of Abilene: Dan Santee, City Attorney;
Mindy Patterson, Director of Finance; Linda Smith,
Finance Secretary; Tiffni Herrera, Assistant City
Secretary
Representing Frontier *Texas!*: Jeff Salmon, Kim Snyder,
Bill Gollihar, Audrey Perry, Sue Ball
Representing Taylor County Expo Center: Rochelle
Johnson, Randy Bibb, Mike Pueschel,
Ikie Taylor

1. The first order of business was the administration of the Oath of Office by Tiffni Herrera to Stan Egger and Glenn Dromgoole.
2. The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Norm Archibald, President.
3. The election of officers was held. A motion was made by Stan Egger to retain the same slate of officers. Robert Briley seconded the motion. The motion carried. The officers for 2013 are: Norm Archibald, President; Downing Bolls, Vice President; and Glenn Dromgoole, Secretary.
4. The Board meeting minutes for July 11, 2012 were presented for approval. Mayor Archibald commented that these minutes reflect the Board's approval of the release of the balance of funds in the Abilene Independent School District (AISD)-Shotwell Stadium Improvement reserve. The only funds that AISD currently receive are to pay their indebtedness. A motion was made by Glenn Dromgoole to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2012 Board meeting. Norm Archibald seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. Presentations regarding programs and venue tax use were made by 1) Frontier *Texas!* and 2) Taylor County Expo Center, as follows:

Frontier *Texas!* – Jeff Salmon greeted the board and introduced Kim Snyder, who is their board president. Ms. Snyder thanked the Board members for their service to the community. Mr. Salmon commented that this is a great venture and is happy to be partners with the Expo Center and AISD. He presented an overview and noted that they are the official visitor center for Abilene and the

Abilene-Taylor County Events Venue District Minutes

May 29, 2013

Page 2

Texas Forts Trail Region. Frontier *Texas!* was open 362 days in the past year, and they are committed to serve visitors and promote tourism. Frontier *Texas!* has 4 full-time and 2 part-time employees, along with 25 board members and 30 active volunteers. In 2011, there were 28,929 visitors with 19,325 from out of town with an economic impact of \$1.183 million.

Ms. Snyder reported on the renovations to Frontier *Texas!*, which were historical, educational, and technological upgrades. The venue was closed in January and February for the \$1.9 million renovation, which was paid by private donations and foundations.

Mr. Salmon reported that all of AISD 4th and 7th graders tour the facility along with 50 area school districts. He commented that they keep costs tight and the venue tax is 65% of their operating revenue. Ms. Snyder asked that they keep their current allocation.

Glenn Dromgoole asked Mr. Salmon how much they received in admissions. He reported \$139,254 for admissions, rental, and membership fees. Mr. Dromgoole commented that they did a really fine job on the upgrade. Mr. Salmon noted that Frontier *Texas!* and the Expo Center are both important to tourism and thanked the board for their support.

Mayor Archibald thanked Mr. Salmon and Ms. Snyder for the presentation to the Board.

Taylor County Expo Center – Rochelle Johnson thanked the board. She reported that in FY 2012, there were 478 event days (multiple events on same days), and they hosted 235 events. The Expo Center has 17 full-time employees and approximately 220 seasonal employees with a total payroll of \$828,000. The utilities for last year were approximately \$309,000, repair and maintenance expenses were around \$150,000, and the note at the bank was reduced to \$32,000. She reported that they have had 2 fund raisers and good weather, which helped with revenue. They have 27 board members and approximately 700 volunteers. Also, the Expo Center board has started a committee to look at future needs of the facilities. They have hired a local architect to look at a long-range site plan.

Ms. Johnson reported that the 4-H Horse Show and the High School Rodeo, which are two large contracts, were recently renewed. She commented that these events have an economic impact of \$20 million. She commented that it is difficult competing with newer venues.

Ms. Johnson reported on the recent and upcoming facility updates, which are replacing horse stalls, replacing water lines, adding a new sound system, and installation of new seats for the Coliseum after the West Texas Fair. Ms.

Abilene-Taylor County Events Venue District Minutes

May 29, 2013

Page 3

Johnson commented that the Expo Center's budget is \$3 million, is supplemented by about \$2 million including in-kind services from Taylor County, and recently started a reserve fund for operations.

Downing Bolls commented that heads in beds fund the venue tax, and the Expo Center brings in a large number of visitors.

Ms. Johnson thanked the Board for their consideration.

Mayor Archibald thanked Ms. Johnson for her presentation to the Board. No action was taken on this item.

6. The Board discussed the allocation of the 2% venue tax. Norm Archibald commented that the allocation is currently 60% for Frontier *Texas!*, 40% for Expo Center, and no reserve funds to AISD-Shotwell. The debt is always paid first and will be paid off in 2024. Mayor Archibald discussed with the board the venue tax collections for this year, the current budget, and a comparison of the allocation for the last few years. The venue tax collections depend on the hotel receipts, and year-to-date receipts are up approximately 3%. He reported that the cap is 2.5% that an allocation can change in any fiscal year. He reported the budget for FY 13 is \$775,000 and how a change in the allocation percentage for next year could affect the entities. A 2.5% change in allocation is \$16,381. Robert Briley asked how much less in collections has Frontier *Texas!* received this year compared to last year. Mindy Patterson reported that through April they have received \$2,169 less for this year.

Stan Egger commented that the Expo Center and Frontier *Texas!* reports were both good. He commented that during the creation of the venue district the county and city talked of a 50-50 split. The city believed it would take a while to get Frontier *Texas!* started so the county agreed to a higher split for Frontier *Texas!*. Mr. Egger commented that he would like to add 2% of the allocation to the Expo Center for next year but would never want the split to be more than 50-50 including debt. He noted that both venues are beneficial and important. The board continued discussion regarding the intent of the venue district. Glenn Dromgoole commented that it could hurt Frontier *Texas!* by lowering the allocation again for next year since this is a big part of their funding. He noted that he would like to wait a year before shifting any allocation. Mr. Egger reported the increase has helped with additional operations at the Expo Center.

Glenn Dromgoole made a motion to keep the allocation the same for FY 14, which is 40% for the Expo Center and 60% for Frontier *Texas!*. Norm Archibald seconded the motion. Before voting, discussion continued. Mayor Archibald commented that he would like to keep the allocation the same for one more year to see if the venue dollars level out. He commented that the 2.5% cap to the allocation gives stability to the venues. Downing Bolls commented that everyone

Abilene-Taylor County Events Venue District Minutes

May 29, 2013

Page 4

counts on the venue tax. The big picture is putting people in hotels and that all 3 venues are important.

Following discussion, the Board voted on the motion to keep the allocation of 40% to the Expo Center and 60% to Frontier *Texas!* effective October 1, 2013. The following voted for the motion: Norm Archibald, Robert Briley, Downing Bolls, Jr, and Glenn Dromgoole. The following voted against the motion: Stan Egger. The motion carried.

7. The Board discussed the next meeting to approve the audit and to adopt the FY 2014 budget. The next meeting was tentatively set for July 22, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room of City Hall.
8. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Linda Smith, Recording Secretary for
Glenn Dromgoole, Secretary

Norm Archibald, President