



**Minutes of Meeting
Tourist Development Council
St. Johns County, Florida
County Administration Building
500 San Sebastian View
St. Augustine, Florida 32084
June 16, 2025 - 1:30 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Kass called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Present: Irving Kass, District 2, Chair
Troy Blevins, District 5, Vice Chair
Regina G. Phillips, District 2
Krista Joseph, BCC Representative
Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor, City of St. Augustine Representative
Dylan Rumrell, Mayor, St. Augustine Beach City Commission, Seat 2
Michael Wicks, District 4
Charles Cox, District 3
Michael Gordon, District 4

Staff Present: Dena Masters, Senior Tourist Development Council Administrator
Jesse Dunn, Deputy County Administrator
Lex Taylor, Deputy County Attorney
Artricia K. Allen, Deputy Clerk

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kass led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Masters called the roll. Council members Gordon, Joseph, Sikes-Kline, Rumrell, Kass, Wicks, Cox, and Blevins were present. Phillips arrived during Regular Agenda Item 7.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Rumrell, seconded by Cox, carried 8/0, with Phillips absent, to approve the Agenda, as submitted.

Yea: Rumrell, Cox, Kass, Gordon, Joseph, Sikes-Kline, Wicks, Blevins

Nay: None

Absent: Phillips

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Blevins, seconded by Cox, carried 8/0, with Phillips absent, to approve the minutes for the May 19, 2025, meeting, as submitted.

Yea: Rumrell, Cox, Kass, Blevins, Sikes-Kline, Gordon, Joseph, Wicks

Nay: None

Absent: Phillips

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

7. FISCAL YEAR 2026 TOURISM BUDGET DISCUSSION

Dunn presented the details of the Tourist Development Tax revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026 tourism requested budget.

Discussion ensued on the penny being worth \$4 million; Category 5, with 1.4 percent received; the calculation on the indirect administrative cost allocation and breakdown; what the reserves were for and how were they being used; Dunn responded. Discussion ensued on why Category 2 showed no activity. Questions were raised about the Tourist Development Specialist position and why the Sports Marketing Specialist appeared as a separate line item. Council members also questioned whether advertising was classified under Category 3 and whether those figures should be evaluated together. Additional inquiries addressed how the River Town project qualified as a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) as a one-time expense, the use of revenue bonds, and details regarding the "Huddle Up" app. The Council requested more information on specific projects, the tourism strategic plan, and how the budget was being managed and modified. Masters responded by explaining that the advertising typically involved promoting parks and recreation opportunities on external websites as part of the recruitment process.

Public Comment:

Albert Seyles spoke about the Arts, Cultural, and Heritage Grant budget and thanked the Council for their support in the previous year. He noted that reserves remained for the upcoming year but indicated that some cutbacks would be necessary. He emphasized the importance of supporting local grant applicants, stating that this was their only source of funding for arts and cultural initiatives.

Bonnie Adams thanked the Council for their support of the Funk Festival and arts organizations in St. Johns County. She requested that the Council approve the proposed budget request.

Mary Claire Branton thanked the Council for their support of the arts and shared that, despite federal and state budget cuts, the Limelight Theatre was struggling but continued to thrive within the community. She encouraged the Council to approve the proposed budget request.

Olivia Amos thanked the Council for their support through Tourist Development Council arts grant and spoke about the St. Augustine Ballet. She noted that the Ballet would be celebrating 17 years of performing The Nutcracker during the Nights of Lights and emphasized that, due to reduced state funding and not meeting the threshold for support this year, they were relying heavily on local funding.

City of St. Augustine Beach Funding Request for Splash Park Upgrades at Pier Park

Max Royle, City Manager of St. Augustine Beach, and Russell Adams presented the details of the splash park upgrades and displayed pictures at the pier (Exhibit A). Discussion ensued regarding recycling, playground responsibilities under the mutual agreement between the County and the City of St. Augustine Beach, whether funding could come from Category 5 or Category 3, fall protection, and presenting more detailed information and pictures of the equipment to the Board of County Commissioners. Further discussion ensued on using the funds sooner rather than later, with clarification on the allocation of money. The Council members then expressed their positions on the motion.

Motion by Blevins, seconded by Cox, carried 9/0, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve using \$125,000 from reserves, appropriately from Category 3 or Category 5, for the City of St. Augustine Beach to be included in the fiscal year 2026 budget.

Yea: Blevins, Cox, Sikes-Kline, Joseph, Rumrell, Gordon, Kass, Wicks, Phillips

Nay: None

City of St. Augustine Funding Request for Night of Lights

Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager of St. Augustine, presented the financial details of the Nights of Lights budget and displayed a financial report (Exhibit A). Discussion ensued regarding the funding request, availability of additional parking for shuttle services, restroom locations, and the use of contractual repayment of parking garage debt, and whether this would become an annual funding request. Additional topics included the contracts related to the Players Championship, adjusting the shuttle service budget, bathroom facilities, city revenue generation, allocation, and handling of Francis Field revenue under the general funds.

Motion by Sikes-Kline, seconded by Cox, carried 9/0, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to allocate \$1.2 million and to direct staff to explore funding options across various categories.

Yea: Sikes-Kline, Cox, Joseph, Wicks, Rumrell, Blevins, Phillips, Gordon, Kass

Nay: None

**8. ST. JOHNS CULTURAL COUNCIL FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROMOTION PLAN
PRESENTATION**

Jeff Potts, St. Johns Cultural Council, presented the details of the Council's promotion plan. Discussion ensued regarding the allocation of funds for hiring a third-party consultant to present as experts, potential modifications to the budget, and encouragement to collaborate with other

communities that have cultural councils. Rumrell also discussed teaming up with various communities to form a state coalition that would advocate in Tallahassee for preserving the Tourist Development Tax (TDT).

Brenda Swann responded to the Council's questions, explaining that funding had primarily remained flat, but that part-time help had been hired to assist with operations at the Waterworks.

9. ST. JOHNS VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROMOTION PLAN PRESENTATION

Susan Phillips, President and Chief Executive Officer of the St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau, presented the details of the St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau's fiscal year 2026 marketing plan. Council members expressed their position on the marketing budget.

Public Comment: There was none.

Motion by Rumrell, seconded by Gordon, carried 9/0, to allocate St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau's funds back to \$100,000 as a flat annual budget.

Yea: Rumrell, Gordon, Kass, Wicks, Joseph, Sikes-Kline, Phillips, Blevins, Cox

Nay: None

10. MONTHLY REPORTS PROVIDED IN PACKETS

Kass stated that the monthly reports were provided in the agenda packet.

Susan Phillips, VCB, presented the new advertising agency for the "Forever Summer" brand campaign billboards and displayed an example of the radio spot.

11. MEMBER COMMENTS

Wicks spoke about visiting the St. Augustine Amphitheater and expressed the efforts of Gabe Pellicer and his staff, noting that the venue was currently ranked No. 2 in the United States. He also highlighted the progress at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and mentioned that it was six to seven weeks away from its grand reopening.

Sikes-Kline thanked the Council members for their support and vote for the Nights of Lights. She highlighted that Anastasia State Park was named one of the top ten beaches in Florida by USA Today and noted it was the second most visited state park in the State.

Rumrell thanked the Council for approving funding for the playground and shade equipment at St. Augustine Beach. He acknowledged the St. Augustine Amphitheater's achievement of ranking No. 2 in the United States and No. 3 in the world for ticket sales. He also announced that the grand reopening of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall was scheduled for August 1, 2025, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 31, 2025.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for July 21, 2025.

13. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Approved _____, 2025

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Irving Kass, Chair

ATTEST: BRANDON J. PATTY,
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER

By: _____
Deputy Clerk