



April xx, 2019

Greenville County Council Finance Committee
Greenville County Council
301 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29601

Re: FY2019/2020 Accommodations Tax Recommendations

Honorable Members of Council:

On behalf of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, it is my pleasure to present to you our recommendations for the disbursement of projected 2019/2020 Accommodations Tax funds. All applications were reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the guidelines as mandated. Top consideration was given to those organizations whose events or programs have, or will have, a direct, high impact on tourism in Greenville County.

The Committee conducted interviews with the applicants on Wednesday, April 3, and met on April 29 for grading and funding recommendations. Of note to Council is that, due to decreased occupancy during this fiscal year and based on hospitality projections for next year, we felt it was necessary to reduce the budget by 7%. Also, of note is that in prior years, we had the good fortune of having a surplus to carry over into the next fiscal year. Again, because of a decrease in occupancy, we don't anticipate a surplus and have budgeted accordingly.

The total projected budget for FY2019/2020 is \$1,116,000. After mandated and previously approved Council funding, the balance for distribution is \$307,698. Please see the breakdown below:

Projected Budget	\$1,116,000
County	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
	\$1,091,000
County 5%	\$ 54,550
VGSC 30%	<u>\$ 327,300</u>
	\$ 709,150
County Council Approved:	
Community Foundation	\$ 146,320
Recreation	<u>\$ 50,000</u>
	\$ 512,830
VGSC 40%	<u>\$ 205,132</u>
Remaining for Grants	\$ 307,698

Page Two
Greenville County Council Finance Committee
Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Recommendations
FY2019/2020

You will note that our budget this year does not include a Signature event. Instead, we felt it was important to spread the funds among those organizations and events that potentially have the most impact on tourism. Among those, we are recommending that Discover Upcountry Carolina be awarded \$51,928. Based in Greenville, Discover Upcountry was established more than 35 years ago, and its mission has been, and remains, attracting tourists to the upstate. Specifically, the organization works closely with Visit Greenville SC to maximize results for Greenville County. We feel this county-wide effort will be more beneficial overall to occupancy rates than greater funding for one individual event.

The grading breaks down as follows:

A – 51%

B – 39%

C – 10%

Please see the attached spreadsheet for our recommendations.

In other business, we discussed the need to make some changes in the application that, we hope, will clear up some of the questions that have proven to be confusing for the applicants and, also, ensure that material is provided that will aid in better evaluations by the committee. We have scheduled a workshop for November 13 to review these changes and the mandates for funding. Past and current applicants will be invited and encouraged to attend. The committee plans to meet in late September to amend the application and plan the agenda for the workshop.

On behalf of the Advisory Committee, I wish to thank Council for the opportunity to serve on this important committee. We appreciate the work of each applicant and consider each of them to be of value to Greenville County and its citizens. We understand that Council may have questions regarding these recommendations and welcome the opportunity to address them.

Yours truly,



BJ Koonce, Chair

cc: Nicole B. Wood, Assistant to the County Administrator, Greenville County

Committee:

Catherine Stoddard - VGSC Chair

Victoria Fernandez – Greenville Marriott, Large Hotel

Michael Heater – Midas Hospitality, Small Hotel

Joyce McCarrell - at large, restaurant

B. J. Koonce - cultural organization

Penny Cooper – at large

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