

**TUMWATER LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
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CONVENE: 2:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember & Chair Eileen Swarthout and committee members Chami Jo Ro, GuestHouse International; Jack Park, Best Western Inn; David Bills, Tumwater Area Chamber of Commerce; Satpal Sohal, La Quinta Inn & Suites; Brett Hardcastle, Tumwater Downtown Association; and Brian Reynolds, Olympic Flight Museum.

Staff: Executive Assistant/Deputy City Clerk Hanna Miles and Recording Secretary Valerie Gow.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Swarthout welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members provided self-introduction.

The committee received 14 applications totaling more than \$200,000 in funding with only \$160,000 available to distribute for events next year.

**REVIEW OF
TOURIST ACTIVITY
GRANT
APPLICATIONS AND
INTERVIEWS:**

**GREAT OLYMPIA
DIXIELAND JAZZ
SOCIETY:**

Charlotte Dickison, Festival Director, The Greater Olympia Dixieland Jazz Society, provided members with a copy of the 2017 program booklet and program brochure. The jazz festival was cancelled earlier this year because of the lack of a venue. The committee awarded funding last year for the jazz festival. Statistics submitted in the application were from the last festival in 2017. Funds awarded in 2017 were returned to the City after the festival was cancelled. This year's request is for \$10,000.

Mr. Bills asked whether next year's attendance would be impacted by the loss of this year's event. Ms. Dickison said she does not believe attendance would be impacted for next year's event. The event is posted on the organization's website along with local hotel rate information. She has contacted some local hotels; however, rates are pending at this time until she has been contacted by hotel representatives.

Chair Swarthout asked how the organization accommodates visitors traveling by a recreational vehicle. Ms. Dickison said approximately 85 spaces are offered at St. Martin's University in the parking lot area. An RV park in Steilacoom is also available for RVs. The date of the festival is June 27-30, 2019 and RVs can be accommodated the day prior to the event.

Last year, the organization sponsored 13 children to attend Jazz Camp in

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Sacramento, CA. Attendance also includes roundtrip airfare.

**WASHINGTON
STATE SENIOR
GAMES:**

Jack Kiley, President, Board of Directors, Washington State Senior Games, reported 2018 was a record-breaking year for the organization with over 2,000 senior men and women participating in 24 sports. Participants must be 50 years of age or older. The oldest athletic this year was former coach George Roswell who is 100 years old. Approximately 5,000 to 6,000 visitors accompany the athletics. Over 60% of the visitors traveled 50 miles or further from Thurston County with 20% of the visitors from other states or countries. Of the sports offered, 30% are located in the City of Tumwater. Mr. Kiley played a video of a variety of senior games. Many of the events are held in other locations because of specific requirements for the sport.

One of the fastest growing events is pickleball attracting over 300 players this year. The games feature events for everyone.

Chair Swarthout asked about the reason for an increase in the funding request. Mr. Riley said the increase is predicated on the need for additional funds to avoid increasing participant fees. The organization pays for the rental of all venues and payments to officials for team sports, such as softball, soccer, basketball, and volley ball. All officials increased their respective fees last year.

**CRAFT DISTRICT –
CITY OF
TUMWATER:**

Ann Cook, Communications Manager, City of Tumwater, reported the funding request is to help promote the City of Tumwater as a destination. The effort is part of the City's overall strategy to revitalize the brewing district to increase tourism, bring brewing back, and attract new businesses to Tumwater. The State of Washington is number two in the nation for craft brewing and is the first for craft distilling and cider-making. All funds awarded last year were expended with the exception of \$34. The primary areas of focus included marketing the Warehouse District, purchase of advertising banners, t-shirts, coasters, and advertising placements to help identify the location of the Warehouse District in the City. The City launched a Warehouse District website at *warehousedistrict.com*. The Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB) features Deschutes Landing as a destination on its website. Tenants in the Warehouse District offer cider, beer, bakery, fine foods, and other products.

Print ads were purchased for the Tumwater Brewfest. The ads targeted demographics matching with consumers of beer, cider, spirits, and fine food, income, age, and gender. Attendance this year at the Brewfest increased significantly from last year.

Other marketing efforts include attendance to conferences with the City sponsoring the Cascadia Grains Conference last year attracting brewers,

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growers, distillers, and bakers, etc. A tradeshow kit was developed featuring the Warehouse District as a destination. Signs along Interstate 5 feature the Warehouse District as a destination.

This year's focus is on Tumwater Craft as a larger umbrella featuring the newly formed Craft Brewing & Distilling Center, college program, development on Capitol Boulevard and E Street, as well as the Warehouse District and redevelopment of the brewery. The focus is to revitalize the community through craft food, the craft beverage industry, and other craft goods. One of the next steps is rebranding the website to serve all craft interests. The website will include information on the City's historic properties and unique experiences in Tumwater.

Chair Swarthout asked about the status of unspent funds in 2017. Manager Cook advised that some of the funds in 2017 were carryover funds, which were expended.

Mr. Hardcastle asked about the status of the development located off Capitol Boulevard and Tumwater Valley Drive. Manager Cook reported the development is part of the new Craft District and will feature the collage program, Heritage Distilling Company, a brewery, a restaurant, and a number of other food vendors. Development of the site is pending final completion of paperwork.

Mr. Sohal suggested including local hotel information on the website as local hotels are contributing to lodging tax funds. Manager Cook affirmed the information could be included.

**OLYMPIC FLIGHT
MUSEUM:**

Paul Faul, Secretary, Board of Directors, Olympic Flight Museum, reported the Olympic Airshow is the largest event held in Tumwater. He introduced Teri Thorning. Ms. Thorning previously managed the airshow and continues to provide assistance.

Mr. Reynolds asked about the cost of the airshow program. Mr. Faul said the cost to print the airshow program was approximately \$3,000. The program includes information on Tumwater businesses and hotels. The program is distributed during the airshow. Approximately 2,000 programs are printed with many distributed to visitors throughout the year. Links to Tumwater lodging establishments are on the Olympic Flight Museum's website and the Olympic Airshow website.

Chami Ro arrived at 2:31 p.m.

This year, approximately 8,400 people attended the airshow representing a slight increase from 2017.

Ms. Thorning addressed questions on efforts to feature military aircraft

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and displays. Several regular features return each year. Each year, new acts and displays are invited to participate based on cost. Military participation is a goal to the extent possible since sequestration has limited military participation. The application for the 2018 airshow has been submitted to the Air Force, Navy, and to the Marine Corps.

Mr. Sohal asked whether the number of hotel rooms was based on an estimate. Ms. Thorning affirmed the number is an estimate. Mr. Sohal recommended contacting the hotels to generate accurate figures because 400 room nights appear to be too high.

**TUMWATER
ARTESIAN
BREWFEEST – CITY
OF TUMWATER:**

Chuck Denney, Director, Parks & Recreation Department, City of Tumwater, said funding would be used for the seventh annual Tumwater Artesian Brewfest in 2019. The 2018 event was the largest with an increase of 25% in attendance. The City is striving to expand the event.

Director Denney played a video of the event. This year's event held last month attracted over 4,000 attendees. Approximately 702 attendees participated in a survey. Survey results revealed 61% of the respondents were from Tumwater, Olympia, and Lacey along with a significant number of respondents traveling from Seattle, Centralia, and Chehalis. Approximately 1,300 attendees live outside Thurston County, 5% live in another state, and 1% reside in eastern Washington.

This year's Artesian Brewfest featured 52 brewers, distillers, and cideries located from Bellingham to Bend, Oregon and from Astoria, Oregon to Aberdeen, Washington. More vendors participated this year than in previous years, and there has been an increase in the number of vendors approaching the City for information to participate next year. Staff has received many positive comments about how the event was organized and was fun for both vendors and participants.

The LTAC funds are used to market the event through brewers. The event poster and coasters are sent to all breweries, distilleries, and cideries participating in the event. The companies feature the information at their respective facilities to help advertise the event. Other advertising includes social media, paid advertising, flyers, coordination with the VCB, ads in the *Brewing News*, and other magazines and digital ads. The City advertises at Joint Base Lewis McChord in both base papers. Director Denney cited specific publications that include ads promoting the event. The City displays a street banner advertising the event as well as releasing a number of press releases with the event featured on the City's website and Facebook page.

Although partnering with local hoteliers has not been successful to date, staff plans to continue to pursue partnerships. However, La Quinta provided a special brewers rate prior to the event.

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The Brewfest features owners of breweries serving the beer and answering questions. That aspect of the Brewfest is unique, as most beer festivals do not feature owners serving attendees. The City anticipates a 10% growth in attendees at next year's event.

Mr. Sohal recommended the survey should include a question as to how the respondent learned about the Brewfest to help target limited advertising dollars.

Director Denney added that brewers donate prizes to entice participants to fill out the survey.

Ms. Ro asked whether any brewer expressed interest in moving to Tumwater. Director Denney replied that although he has no specific information about a company moving to the City because of the event, the event does provide the City with contact information for every brewery. The City promotes Tumwater and efforts related to the Craft District and the Warehouse District as possible locations for brewers and distillers to relocate.

**TUMWATER
DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION:**

John Morton, President, Tumwater Downtown Association, reported this year's 4th of July Artesian Festival was the 18th annual event. The festival begins with a 4th of July parade and ends with the Thunder Valley Fireworks Show. The festival features music, bounce houses for children, food vendors, and open seating on the driving range. The festival is family-friendly and family-oriented ending with one of the region's best fireworks show.

Mr. Reynolds asked whether the City's fireworks ban played a role in attendance this year. Mr. Morton affirmed that the ban likely contributed to the increase; however, the largest influence is the day of the week the event is held. If the event falls on a weekend, attendance tends to increase. Next year, the 4th of July is on a Thursday.

Ms. Ro inquired about the possibility of featuring the event within the Seattle TV market with an emphasis on the ease of arrival and departure in comparison to Seattle or Tacoma fireworks shows. Mr. Morton said ease of accessing and departing the event is much more evident during a weekend event. Many attendees have commented on the ease to access and leaving the festival. That aspect of the festival is definitely appealing.

Chair Swarthout asked whether it is possible to view the fireworks from the LaQuinta Hotel. Mr. Sohal affirmed that some people book rooms just so they can enjoy the fireworks show.

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**WSU FOOD
SYSTEMS:**

Abigail Kiser, Cascadia Grains Conference Coordinator, WSU Food Systems Program, said her position is transitioning to a Cascadia Grains Network Coordinator because of the groundswell in the movement of bringing the event back to Tumwater and Olympia next year. The success of the event could not have been predicted, as the event is quickly becoming the premier event for the local grains movement in the Northwest. In 2018, the conference sold out for the first time. Over two days, over 500 participants attended the January 19-20, 2018 conference. The conference was possible because of collaboration with the City of Tumwater and South Puget Sound Community College. The conference attracted industry professionals and leaders from across the state and the nation to be part of an important conversation about bringing local grains back. The conference featured cutting edge science with WSU professionals and farmers. The conference is the only one that offers both high quality education by WSU staff and on-the-ground experience from local farmers in the area. Next year, the conference will expand to a third day to include a debrief session on Sunday featuring a pancake breakfast prepared by a celebrity chef and author of *The New Bread Basket*. Grains grown less than 100 miles from the area will be featured in the breakfast. The January conference in Tumwater will continue to be the premier event as WSU expands efforts to other parts of the state.

A Cascadia East Conference was a pilot program hosted in Moscow, Idaho to assess interest in that area. The conference sold out. Many of the participants are interested in joining the conference next January.

Ms. Kiser reviewed the 2018 summary report of conference attendees. Of the participants from Washington, only 24% were from Thurston County. All other participants reside outside the county. Attendance has increased with 309 participants attending the Saturday events this year with many more participating in the Friday field trips. The Friday field trip featured a Tumwater Brewing and Distilling tour. The event will continue to be important for the movement in the region. WSU is excited to be partnering with the City of Tumwater to bring tourism and economic development to the area. The website includes a list of hotels that have partnered with the conference. This year, Best Western Hotel served as a host hotel.

Mr. Bills asked about the source of a \$10,000 grant. Ms. Kiser replied that the program is applying for a grant from Washington State University for events involving Extension professionals, which include many of the presenters at the conference.

Mr. Reynolds requested clarification of the relationship between WSU-Food Systems and Jefferson County Extension. Ms. Kiser explained that her supervisor, Laura Lewis, Conference Director, was previously the Director of Jefferson County Extension and has moved to the Food

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Systems Program position. The application this year was filed under the WSU Food Systems Program.

Chair Swarthout asked about any new events planned for next year's conference. Ms. Kiser said the program has featured an historical tasting event at the Schmidt House for the last several years. Richard Scheueman, a grain historian, has been involved. She is collaborating with South Puget Sound Community College to prepare dishes with flours produced during different eras. Next year a special brew will be featured and premiered at the Schmidt House.

Mr. Sohal inquired about the status of seeking funding from the City of Lacey. Ms. Kiser said the City of Lacey has not been approached for funding. Although, contacting the City of Lacey was considered, the plan is not to pursue a funding request from Lacey at this time.

**TUMWATER
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION:**

Chuck Hornbuckle, Board of Directors, Tumwater Historical Association, thanked the committee for its efforts to promote Tumwater's heritage. He has been a member of Tumwater Historical Association for 20 years and a member of the Board of Directors for 15 years. Tumwater Historical Association provides free historical activities within the Tumwater community to educate and entertain people about the community's heritage beginning with the pioneers settling in 1845. Some activities include the New Market Quilters. Members document historical quilts, educate the public on the historical significance of those quilts, and assist in the research, identification, restoration, and preservation of historic quilts. Members also sponsor historical reenactments of events, historical people, and technology from the mid-1800s. Grant funds provided to the organization by the City are used for office expenses to include printing and mailing of flyers, newsletters, and incidental expenses, as well as maintaining the website related to the events that are directly linked to local hotels and motels in the Tumwater area.

Current events include *Thurston County Through the Decades* involving all historical organizations in the county sponsoring a free one-day event for the public, quilt shows with guest presenters, and a presentation on the significance of the Jackson House built in 1850 located south of Chehalis by John Jackson. The house was recently restored as part of the state park program. Washington State Parks Historian Alex McMurray will present a program. Other programs include the history of the Amtrak Station and the Salem Witches. Because Tumwater Middle School no longer offers its Homesteaders Program, the organization is seeking other avenues next year.

Mr. Hornbuckle shared that he is a member of 13 historical groups. They include the Oregon California Trails Association and the Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers. This year will be the 175th anniversary of

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the Oregon Trail. The end of the Oregon Trail is Sylvester Park in Olympia generating much interest from visitors outside the state. Many of the visitors participate in the organization's programs to include gold mining demonstrations when the period of 1850s was of focus. All events are free and well-attended. Subsequently, rosters or sign-in sheets are not maintained. Most information is shared through conversations. Many of the visitors live outside the county or outside the state.

Councilmember Swarthout asked whether the Association recently sponsored a tour of historical homes in Tumwater. Mr. Hornbuckle replied that the Olympia Tumwater Foundation was the primary sponsor for the tour of the homes. The Association worked closely with the Foundation and attended the tours.

Mr. Bills asked about the Association's involvement with the Homesteaders Program. Mr. Hornbuckle reported the program was established in 1988, one year before the centennial. Two middle school teachers initiated the program and have since retired from the Tumwater School District. The middle school has reformatted the program to a generalized format to involve more students. In 1998, during an event sponsored by the Oregon Trails Association in Pendleton, Oregon, both middle school teachers received the national Teachers of the Year award.

Chair Swarthout asked whether the Association is planning any events to celebrate the City's sesquicentennial. Mr. Hornbuckle responded that an event is planned at Tumwater Falls Park on the first Sunday in October 2019 celebrating the City's 175th birthday. He plans to attend with a display featuring Oregon Trail route.

**EXPERIENCE
OLYMPIA &
BEYOND:**

Shauna Stewart, CEO, Experience Olympia & Beyond, said the organization serves as the Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) (for Thurston County) to promote Thurston County as a visitor destination. The organization primarily focuses efforts on visitors by influencing and inspiring every piece of the visitor journey from the planning stage, booking, to experiencing the visit. The mission of *Experience Olympia & Beyond* is strengthening the region's economy by developing meaningful experiences and promoting travel to vibrant Thurston County. Thurston County is outpacing the competition in tourism growth with annual increases. In 2017, the region increased by 15.6% in destination spending while the state average was 7%.

Accountability is a core value of the organization and subsequently, monthly score cards are submitted to the Board of Directors, Tourism Promotion Commission, and to the local cities as part of the lodging tax receipts. Public relations impressions are trailing somewhat as of September. A Washington Post article featured Olympia and Thurston County, which also featured Tumwater. The article was also published in

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the Chicago Tribune newspaper and several West Coast publications attaining 76% of the goal for September. Tumwater has achieved a 62.6% lodging occupancy rate year to date with an average rate of \$81.84 dollars.

The VCB website received an award in 2017. The website features Tumwater Falls Park on the home page. Hotels are a key driver for visitors to the website. An online booking engine is free to all local hotels and motels and directs visitors to hotels to book directly with the venue. The Tumwater City page highlights different events and attractions. The Visitor Guide is distributed to a variety of locations and features Tumwater Falls on the front page with Tumwater featured throughout the guide with hotels listed in the back of the guide. Tumwater photos have been featured in direct digital ads. The ads target millennial and boomer travelers interested in craft beer, wine spirits, and outdoor experiences through direct digital ad campaigns. Tumwater was featured in a Hong Kong inflight magazine. The organization works with the Port of Seattle and Visit Seattle to expand its reach further. The organization also works with media and social media influencers (bloggers) and invites them to the area to experience Thurston County firsthand. Bloggers write about their experience and share information on their social feeds reaching many more audiences than the organization could reach. Selfie spots were successful. Approximately 21 selfie spots were placed throughout Thurston County with three located in Tumwater. One of the favorite spots was Tumwater Historical Park. The spots are shared on social media and serve as a form of storytelling.

The organization also worked with local hospitality professionals to conduct a tour of the Tumwater area with local hoteliers, colleges, and restaurant owners to help them learn more about the area and serve as ambassadors to visitors on what the City has to offer. In 2019, the intent is to continue ongoing efforts and publish the Visitor Guide, the website, and social feeds, continue effective sales and marketing efforts, and adjust sales and marketing plans on what is working and what is not as successful. The organization will continue to promote Tumwater events and attractions, broaden the target marketing for extended stays, and continue to partner with local signature projects to tell the story about the Warehouse District and the Craft District.

Ms. Ro asked to receive a copy of the presentation. Ms. Stewart acknowledged the request.

Mr. Bills complimented the organization for its efforts, as the outreach and focus of the organization have been very successful.

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EXPERIENCE
OLYMPIA &
BEYOND –SPORTS
COMMISSION:

Ms. Stewart reported *Experience Olympia & Beyond* has been serving as the region's Sports Commission for several years. Over the last several years, the market has continued to grow. Because of the growth, the organization created more visibility around the program enabling the organization to serve the market at new levels. Currently, the appetite potential for the sports market is large placing the organization in a limited position because of the lack of funds. To support the sports market without affecting other key markets hoteliers have identified as important, new ways are required to help grow some of the key initiatives. This is the first year for submittal of a specific program budget and a funding increase to help the agency increase its Sports Commission efforts by requesting funding from the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater.

The Sports Commission is essentially a destination marketing organization specific to sports. The role is to attract sport directors, tournaments, and groups to the area for the purpose of economic development and to increase the number of hotel stays. The Sports Commission is governed by the agency's Board of Directors as one organization with one budget and one strategic plan. However, a Sports Commission Advisory Committee was created with members representing local stakeholders to help support and expand sports market initiatives. Charlie Groth with Tumwater Parks and Recreation Department is a member of the advisory committee and has added tremendous value. Some activities of the Sports Commission include sponsoring a sports website, publication of a sports facility guide featuring sports venues, actively promoting the region at tradeshow, participating in team conferences, and attending the National Association of Sports Commissions Conference.

The sales team includes the Director of Sales and the Sales Coordinator who also serve the other markets of tours, travel, and meeting markets. The organization also created a bid fees and sponsorship fund to assist with hospitality or cash sponsorships. Because many of the sports groups are nonprofits or schools, funding is limited requiring local community support. Some examples of assistance include free delivery of pizzas to team members, hospitality booths with food and water, direct digital advertising for some groups to help promote the teams or event. The Sports Commission also provides assistance for planning successful events in the area by generating proposals from local facilities, hotels, hosting site inspections, public relations and press releases, and connecting the groups to restaurants. In 2016 and 2017, economic impact nearly doubled in the region generating seven leads with five events booked in 2016 and 23 leads in 2017 leading to the booking of 11 events. In 2017, Tumwater events included the USA Sectional Championship at the Tumwater Valley Athletic Club with Comfort Inn as the preferred hotel. Approximately 60 room nights were sold for the event. In 2019,

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Tumwater is scheduled to host the WIA State Golf Tournament for the next four years. The tournament will be held at six golf courses in Thurston County to include Tumwater Valley Golf Course. Best Western in Tumwater is a preferred hotel with 125 room nights anticipated to be booked for the tournament each year for the next four years.

The VCB general budget allocates approximately \$100,000 for the Sports Commission representing approximately one-third of the next highest competitor. The organization is seeking to expand through sustainable growth and ensure the growth can fill local facilities without over booking facilities. Ms. Stewart described how the \$100,000 budget allocation supports sports through marketing the sports facility guide, supporting the website, creating promotional video content, advertising and design, tradeshow, sponsorship fees, and membership and research. The requested funds of \$45,000 would be allocated to marketing efforts with a major portion focused on sales to increase attendance at tradeshow, sponsorships, and bid fees.

Mr. Bills inquired about the date the Sports Commission was created. Ms. Stewart said the Sports Commission has always been in existence with the VCB serving as the region's Sports Commission since 2011. Branding and identifying the Sports Commission began approximately two years ago. The Sports Commission Advisory Committee was established two years ago.

Mr. Bills asked whether the Commission's budget is a new fund. Ms. Stewart replied that the VCB has allocated funds to the sports budget for several years. The request is for funds to expand efforts for sports marketing. Mr. Bills asked whether the request for the two funding requests was a similar proposal presented to the cities of Lacey and Olympia. Ms. Stewart affirmed two proposals were submitted to all cities. She asked for feedback from the committee as to whether the committee prefers to receive two applications or one combined application. All cities have strived to maintain a specific level of funding consistently for the organization. However, because the proposal was new and greater than the typical funding proposal, the decision was to separate the proposals as a way to present the program separately.

Ms. Ro asked whether the relationship and function of the Sports Commission is separate from the VCB. Ms. Stewart advised that both organizations are under one umbrella. The Sports Commission could be considered a division of the VCB with the same Board of Directors, staff, and tour and travel marketing efforts. Ms. Ro asked whether the Seattle Sports Commission is affiliated with the Seattle VCB. Ms. Stewart affirmed the Seattle Commission is a division of the Seattle VCB. Ms. Ro asked whether the request is a one-time request or an ongoing request. Ms. Stewart said the intent is to achieve sustainable growth. If funding is

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awarded, the intent is to sustain the programming and continue to request funds.

Mr. Bills said he prefers to have two separate proposals submitted as it identifies efforts that are sports-oriented.

Ms. Ro asked whether establishment of the Sports Commission was prompted because sports fields are underutilized and sales and marketing might generate more use. Ms. Stewart said there is a need in the community to attract more sports to the region. While some resources are underutilized, some business has been turned away because of the lack of facilities, which speaks to the amount of the request as the intent is start small versus establishing a larger sports effort to afford adequate time to identify available resources and the right type of business to attract to the region.

Ms. Ro said some sports events typically held in Thurston County were cancelled in 2018 creating impacts to her property. She supports the VCB receiving additional funds to attract more sports events to the area.

Mr. Sohal asked whether the additional funds of \$13,000 over last year's request would be allocated to the Sports Commission or allocated to the general budget. Ms. Stewart said the additional funds would supplement the general budget but earmarked for sports-related marketing.

Chair Swarthout recessed the meeting at 3:47 p.m. to 3:54 p.m. for a break.

**TUMWATER
SOCCER CLUB:**

Craig Boone, Kick in the Grass Director, Tumwater Soccer Club, provided a slide presentation on the annual soccer tournament, Kick in the Grass. The mission of the Tumwater Soccer Club is to provide affordable soccer opportunities to Tumwater youth ranging in age from 5 years old to 18 years of age. The annual Kick in the Grass tournament is the only fundraiser each year. The funds raised during the tournament are used to:

- Maintain a low cost, quality recreational soccer program for Tumwater area youth ages 5-18.
- Provide quality equipment for teams.
- Purchase goals and nets for local schools and city parks
- Provide donations to Tumwater parks and the Capital Soccer Complex (93rd Avenue) for maintenance and development
- Provide scholarships to graduating seniors

Tournament statistics include:

- 2019 will be the 40th annual Kick in the Grass tournament, the

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- longest running soccer tournament in the state
- In 2018, 123 teams participated in 221 games on 21 fields in the region.
 - The tournament attracts 8,000 visitors to the area
 - Field rental expenses are approximately \$10,000, referee fees are \$17,000
 - The cost of the tournament is approximately \$50,000
 - The tournament attracts soccer teams from across the state
 - Approximately 29 teams stayed in local hotels equating to approximately 1,900 visitors totaling 1,160 room nights
 - Prior to the tournament the organization visits and notifies local restaurants and stores about the tournament.

Mr. Bills inquired about the location of the games. Mr. Boone reported that this year, games were held entirely in Tumwater and included fields at Tumwater High School, Black Hills, High School, Bush Middle School, Pioneer Park, and the Capital Center Complex.

Ms. Ro asked about the organization's partnership with the VCB for accommodation reservations rather than using a travel agent as hotels pay a commission to travel agents. Ms. Ro said she prefers to offer a discount directly to the teams. Mr. Boone said the organization does not work with a travel agent; however, the organization lists all local hotels on the website. He offered to meet with Ms. Ro to discuss options for next year.

Mr. Bills noted the budget reflects a fiscally responsible organization as the budget shows some excess. He asked about the extent of the organization's scholarships for youths. Mr. Boone said the budget information pertains only to the Kick in the Grass tournament, which is not reflective of all club expenses. Any profit is used to invest in balls and other equipment. At the last board meeting, members approved purchasing a new set of goals for East Olympia Elementary School.

Ms. Ro inquired about the possibility of hosting another tournament during the September timeframe. Mr. Boone said the organization is an all-volunteer club. The Kick in the Grass tournament is nearly a year-long effort.

TUMWATER
MARCHING BAND
FESTIVAL:

Kari Hertter, Vice President, Tumwater Marching Band Festival, reported the marching band competition started in 2006 at Tumwater High School. At that time, the competition was managed by another organization at Tumwater High School. After the organization expanded to such a degree, the Tumwater Marching Band Festival was formed. Over the last 13 years, the festival has become one of the largest marching band competitions in the state attracting bands and schools from across the state, Idaho, and Oregon. The event is held on the second Saturday in

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October at the Tumwater High School Stadium. Typically, the festival attracts 16 to 23 marching bands. This brings approximately 1,600 students and their teachers, staff, and families into the City for the one-day event. Many students and their families stay during the weekend with others only staying for the competition. Most of the schools house students in local school gyms because of the lack of funding. The focus for spending tourism dollars in the City is on staff members, judges, family members, and bus drivers. This year, a new program for those electing to stay at a local hotel received a refund of \$50 discount off the registration fee for every two hotel room nights booked. This year's event is scheduled to attract 18 bands. All proceeds from the Marching Band Festival support marching band programs in the Tumwater School District. Black Hills High School is the hosting band this year. Funds also support middle school band programs.

Mr. Bills asked about the projected number of participating bands this year. Ms. Hertter said last year, the festival included 22 bands with the average number participating between 18 and 19 bands. This year's registration will close at the end of September. However, registrations are accepted up to several days before the festival.

Ms. Hertter addressed questions about encouraging students to book hotel rooms. The festival extended efforts to encourage schools to consider booking room nights instead of staying in local school gyms. Information has been provided to other schools about the availability of hotel rooms. The rebate offered for the registration fee applies to family members who book hotel rooms. Ages of the students range from 8th grade through 12th grade students.

**CAPITAL
LAKEFAIR:**

Bob Barnes, Capital Lakefair, said he has been with Capital Lakefair since 1978. He expressed appreciation for the funds awarded last year. Adam Stiliz is the Office Manager.

The fair program is mailed to 30,000 addresses in three counties. For the last 11 years, Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater have been featured on the front cover of the program. Estimated attendance is 230,000 people for 2018 with only 200,000 people attending because of the higher temperatures, which affects attendance. Additionally, several nonprofits withdraw as food vendors. Overall, 2018 represented a 13% decrease mainly because of the high temperatures. Expenditures are estimated at \$168 per visitor based on survey. Attendance in 2019 with cooperation of the weather is estimated to be 220,000 attendees.

Capital Lakefair participates in 15 parades at a cost of approximately \$11,000. The organization did not participate in the Port Townsend or Portland parades because of an accident. Hotel nights are estimated at 25 rooms each day over four days in addition to expenditures at restaurants

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and retail stores. This year, a basketball tournament, Capital City Hoopfest, was held for the first time on Capitol Campus over three days during Lakefair. Capital Lakefair is also renting warehouse space in the City of Tumwater. The goal is to increase marketing efforts for Capital Lakefair and recognizing funding sources.

Mr. Barnes cited how other groups, such as participants in the Kick in the Grass Tournament spend time at Capital Lakefair. The Seattle All City Band attends with approximately 335 people who spend a day in the local area. Next year, Capital Lakefair will celebrate its 62nd year anniversary.

Mr. Sohal asked about the number of teams participating in the basketball tournament. Mr. Stilz reported approximately 176 teams participated with over half of the teams staying in local hotels.

Mr. Barnes said the site of the basketball tournament was on Capitol Campus. The tournament was very successful. The goal is to expand the tournament. Plans are to eliminate the Capital City Marathon except for the short 3-and 5-mile marathons.

Mr. Barnes reported the float was damaged during an accident with several motorcycles.

OLYMPIA
TUMWATER
FOUNDATION:

John Freedman, Executive Director, Olympia Tumwater Foundation, introduced Don Trosper, Public History Manager. Mr. Freedman cited examples of tourism activities in support of the City. Mr. Trosper conducts many Riverwalk Tours, history lectures, and art shows. Last year's art show attracted over 2,000 people with 20% of the visitors from outside the county. The Foundation is engaged in branding of the Tumwater Historic District in partnership with the City of Tumwater focusing on Craft Brewing to include a scholarship program and historic services.

The Foundation actively seeks promotional and public relation opportunities with various media outlets, such as newspapers and TV shows. Last week, the Foundation was featured in the *Washington Post* as an alternative destination other than Seattle and a must see for Tumwater Falls Park and its historical activities. A meeting is scheduled with King 5 News next week to discuss a feature on Tumwater Falls Park as one of the top 25 destinations in Washington to view fall colors and salmon runs. The Foundation is implementing new technology through the City of Tumwater on the GIS story mapping project.

Mr. Trosper reported the Foundation is known for its tradition of producing videos. TC Media and the City of Tumwater worked with the Foundation to include the History Talks on YouTube. The videos provide visibility. This year has been an important year for publicity for the

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Foundation. Ms. Ro has always spoken to the importance of social media and the importance of Facebook, etc. Efforts have intensified at the Foundation on social media, which has reaped some benefits this year with more people attending History Talks and Riverwalk Tours. The first History Talk of the season held at Schmidt House resulted in turning people away because capacity had been exceeded. The Foundation is working on a story map of the Historic District. A one-minute video presentation will feature current and past uses of different sites. Fourteen sites will be featured on the map. Additionally, the Foundation is hosting events at the Henderson House and Crosby House. Over the last several months, two three-house events were held concurrently. More historic home events are planned.

Mr. Freedman summarized last year tourism activities:

- History Lectures at the Schmidt House
- Riverwalk Tours
- Schmidt House Tours
- Tumwater Falls Parks attracts 250,000 visitors each year and is anticipated to increase when the new hatchery opens.
- Interactive online maps with an improved search engine. The Foundation receives 5,000 Google views each month for Tumwater Falls Park.
- LA Times published a feature article
- Washington Post has a circulation of 95 million each month
- The same article will be published in the Chicago Tribune

In a survey conducted by the VCB, Tumwater Falls Park was one of the top reasons people bring other people into Thurston County.

Mr. Freedman said the request is for funding for the printing and distribution of a cartoon fun map. A fun map uses images and graphics to enhance the map detail to make it more appealing. It is used by facilities that appeal to children and their parents. The maps are very collectable. The project is nearly 95% completed from funding awarded last year. However, the artist experienced some health issues and his wife died of cancer creating a delay in the project. The intent is to complete the project by mid-October. On the reverse side of the map is a listing of all Tumwater hotels and motels and other historical information. The funding request is for \$4,500 to help fund the \$9,000 cost to print and distribute 50,000 maps along the I-5 corridor by Certified Folder Display, a national company known for its work. The map will likely be a tri or a quarter fold. Maps will also be provided to the VCB, local hotels, and other sites.

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**THE WASHINGTON
CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING
ARTS:**

Jill Barnes, Executive Director, The Washington Center for the Performing Arts, thanked the committee for its continued support over many years. Not only does the Washington Center provide inspiration and enjoyment to residents, arts strengthen the social fabric of the community. The Washington Center partners with Tumwater, as well as with *Experience Olympia and Beyond* in marketing the county. The Washington Center is home to over 20 artistic partners reaching a large cross-section of individuals in the region. They contribute to the vibrancy of all communities in the region. Over 100,000 people pass through the Washington Center doors annually through ticketed and free events. Washington Center is considered a community gathering space and is used in a variety of different ways. Tumwater residents value the Washington Center as they make up 8% of the Center's volunteers providing over 950 volunteer hours exceeding 500 hours in 2016.

Last season, Washington Center sold out multiple shows. The Center serves as a venue for shows as well as a rental house for artistic partners and commercial promoters. Ms. Barnes shared information on several sold out shows. Over three thousand tickets have been sold to Tumwater residents totaling over \$100,000. The Washington Center attempts to capture as much information through pre-sale tickets. Overall, between Washington Center events and artistic partners, over \$1.5 million in tickets were sold. Recently, some investments in facility improvements have been completed to include upgrading the assisted listening systems to support different types of hearing loss that will be accessible on many levels of the theater. A new HD projector was purchased last year. All rigging has been removed and is being replaced in time for the next show. Additional funds were recently raised for some audio components as part of a larger audio enhancement project.

Olympia Junior Programs, one of the Center's artistic partners, use the theater for an average of 40 student performances each year. Not many performing centers typically serve their community as the Center serves Thurston County. Last year, the theater hosted students from Black Lake, East Olympia, Littlerock, Michael T. Simmons, Peter G. Schmidt, and Tumwater Elementary Schools. Ballet Northwest has also hosted Tumwater students. The Washington Center has a growing educational program for students in the local area.

With lodging tax funding, the City of Tumwater receives two free days of the theater that are typically gifted to nonprofit organizations. Businesses that cater to arts and cultural audiences reap the rewards from the economic activity. Many Tumwater businesses partner with the Washington Center. Capital City Press, the River's Edge Restaurant, Pellegrino's Italian Kitchen, and Valley Athletic Club are just a few of the partners.

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Studies and statistics through Americans for the Arts document that dinner and a show are typical for an evening and the average attendee spends \$25 for the event in addition to the cost of admission. Art tourists tend to stay longer than the average traveler and often stay in hotels or motels because of the late hours involved. Art patrons outside of the county spend twice of that of their local counterparts. During a recent Melissa Etheridge show, several attendees flew in from Alaska. They paid for VIP tickets to meet with Ms. Etheridge. Many of the larger shows tend to attract people from other areas of the country, which is interesting because of the size of the community.

Based on previous input from the committee, Washington Center has provided monthly tickets to hoteliers to educate them about the Washington Center so they can share the experience with lodging guests.

Ms. Barnes referred to the 2016-17 Season in Review. The Washington Center just completed its 2017-18 season. Upcoming shows include many big name performers. Lodging tax funds are used for radio advertising because of the larger broadcast market. Brochures are also mailed to patrons that have purchased tickets in the last three years. Stephen Stills and Judy Collins are featured in October. The show sold out in two weeks in June.

Ms. Ro asked about other shows that might sell out. Ms. Barnes said she envisions Capitol Steps; Shoshana Bean's Spectrum: Soulful Standards; Wizard of Oz; Golden Dragon Acrobats; Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy; Kinky Boots, a substantial Broadway tour; and Pinkalicious, another Broadway show. Other shows are sponsored by Washington Center's artistic partners. Additionally, Washington Center manages space at South Puget Sound Community College at the Kenneth J. Minnaert Center. Typically, the Washington Center has some type of event 180 days a year to include business meetings, rehearsals, or rental events during the legislative session. The Washington Center has been closed for the last 75 days for the rigging project.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The committee discussed whether to require two applications or a combined application next year for *Experience Olympia and Beyond* and agreed to discuss the issue at the next meeting on September 19, 2018.

Mr. Sohal asked about the budget for lodging tax funds for next year. Executive Assistant Miles reported the budget is \$160,000.

Mr. Reynolds questioned the status of the new event fund as the City received no applications for new events this year. Executive Assistant Miles said she believes the balance is \$16,000. Mr. Reynolds asked about adding those funds to fund events this year. Executive Assistant Miles explained that the fund was designated to fund new events or when new

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applications are received during the year. The committee could determine whether to add the funds to the regular program fund. Mr. Reynolds recalled the committee approving the transfer of some funds to support some organizations that were worthy of funding.

The committee and staff discussed pro, cons, and options for utilizing or transferring new event funds.

MOTION: **Mr. Bills moved, seconded by Mr. Hardcastle, to transfer \$15,000 from the New Event Fund to the regular program fund for 2019 events. Motion carried unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Swarthout adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.**

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