

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mr. Mayor, Mr. City Manager, and Greenville City Council Members

**From:** Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

**Date:** May 4th 2022

**RE:** 2022-2023 ATAX Funding Recommendations

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Below are the recommendations of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee for Funding in Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Committee members were Joe Hindman (Chair), Lindsey Davis (Vice-Chair), David Edwards, Kenisha Brantley, Bill Groves, Joshua Riley and Mary Hipp.

In considering the requests, the Committee used the criteria outlined in the Guidelines for City of Greenville Tourism (Accommodations and Hospitality Tax) Funds and various information provided by the City Staff in interpreting those guidelines.

In FY 2021-22, \$1,500,000 was awarded. The amount available for the next fiscal year 2022-23, is \$1,950,000 which is still slightly lower than the FY 2019-20 amount of \$2M. This year \$3,853,967 was requested. As market conditions have begun to go back to FY 2019-20 levels, the committee used FY 2019-20 award amounts as a baseline for FY 2022-23 awards.

### **Artisphere — \$50,000**

Artisphere requested \$97,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$50,000. Artisphere is a widely recognized, annual arts event in Upstate South Carolina's cultural arts calendar. This three-day festival has an economic impact in Greenville of over \$5.4 million. This organization has a long and successful track record of stewardship of ATAX monies and with a continued high number of attendees, more than 17% of which are from outside Greenville. The committee does express concerns that the event falls on the same weekend as Mother's Day, Clemson graduation and BJU graduation.

### **BMW Charity Pro-Am — \$20,000**

BMW Charity Pro- Am requested \$100,000 for the Golf Channel. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$20,000. These funds requested will go directly to offset the expense associated with NBC Golf Broadcast with an estimated total cost of \$450,000. BMW Pro-Am is a destination event with players, volunteers and support staff coming to Greenville for 3 to 7 days.

### **Bob Jones University (BJU) – Living Gallery — \$15,000**

The Bob Jones University Museum and Gallery requested \$30,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$15,000. The funds requested are to promote and market BJU's Living Museum production, held every year in the spring, to grow the number of attendees for this event. The Committee feels this level of funding would be appropriate to help BJU in marketing the event to out of market attendees and to help grow its

economic impact. The committee would like to see BJU Museum & Gallery partner with more local hotels within the City Limits.

**Cancer Survivor's Park — \$12,000**

The Cancer Survivor's Park requested \$31,267, largely to provide trail signage, healing station plaques, and entry gate signage. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$12,000. The committee recognizes that this park and trail connection is vital to the landscape and attraction of downtown tourists. We advise that the funds provided should be used towards the entry-signage as gateways to the park area.

**Children's Museum of the Upstate - Exhibits — \$25,000**

The Children's Museum requested \$54,500. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$25,000. The Committee's recommendation is based on the fact the Children's Museum is a tourism destination that is accessible year-round, and this award will help attract additional out-of-market attendees, which the Museum has been working hard to track. The Children's Museum has been a good steward of previous ATAX funding and is a facility that encourages out of state visitors to make longer trips to Greenville. With the change in travel habits it is believed people will be looking for entertainment closer to home yet "out of town" from their home locations.

**Clemson University Men of Color Summit — \$50,000**

Clemson University Men of Color Summit requested \$50,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$50,000. These monies will be used for marketing for an out of market reach. The Men of Color National Summit is an inspiring two-day conference to help prepare and empower underrepresented students to be future leaders in the global economy through higher education. This event has had consistent growth each year.

**Community Foundation - SC New Play Festival – NEW Applicant — \$5,000**

Community Foundation - SC New Play Festival requested \$5,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$5,000. These monies will be used for marketing for an out of market reach. This inaugural festival will be a multi-day, citywide event utilizing local theatrical venues, including The Warehouse Theatre, Greenville Theater, South Carolina Children's Theater, Center Stage, and the Peace Center. The festival will celebrate engaging and dynamic new plays and musicals from across the United States. The readings will take place over 3 days, Fri-Sun, making the festival a destination event and encouraging travel and hotel rooms for audience members from the region. The festival will utilize theater spaces all over town, making it a city-wide event.

**Euphoria — \$50,000**

Euphoria requested \$70,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$50,000. This event attracts national attention, and we recognize its significant importance to the city and its attendant and significant economic impact. Euphoria has a long and successful track record of stewardship of ATAX monies and the Committee feels this has become a signature Greenville event that strongly promotes tourism and has a great economic

impact. The past two years euphoria has pivoted for their 2020 & 2021 event calendars and has managed to continue to bring people to town despite COVID setbacks.

**Fall for Greenville — \$50,000**

Fall for Greenville requested \$60,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$50,000. The funds will be used to exclusively advertise, and market activities related to their free admission outdoor food festival. This event is one of the largest in the Southeast and attracts 200,000+ people per year. This applicant has successfully begun tracking out-of-market visitors with the help of VGSC, this investment does directly support marketing efforts promoting tourism and this event has grown in recent years to be a significant food and music festival in the area.

**Glow Lyric Theater — \$3,000**

Glow Lyric Theater requested \$3,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$3,000. These monies will used to promote the 2022 season in August 2022. In the last three years GLOW'S audience has increased by 175% and the committee feels GLOW provide a one-of-a-kind experience in the South with a passionate following.

**Greenville Center for Creative Arts — \$5,000**

GCCA requested \$5,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$5,000. The funds requested are for marketing of workshops being taught by visiting artists. GCCA has significantly expanded the three day and weekend workshops schedule for out of town artists who have strong followings outside of Greenville. Despite being outside the city limits the closest hotels are inside the city limits. It continues to be an economic driver and critical landmark for the Village of West Greenville (Greenville's Arts District).

**Greenville Chautauqua — \$10,000**

Greenville Chautauqua requested \$10,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$10,000. The funds requested are for marketing of upcoming events. The Committee feels this award is appropriate to help this organization with the promotion of arts and cultural events and to help market their events to out-of-market attendees. They have a great record of being very responsible stewards of ATAX dollars.

**Greenville Restaurant Week — \$25,000**

Greenville Restaurant Week requested \$30,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$25,000. Restaurant Week is a culinary event that brings visitors to restaurants during an otherwise very slow period of time. Local restaurants partner with hotels to offer special packages which are advertised within and outside South Carolina. Conservative estimates indicate that nearly 360,000 people will dine in Greenville during these two 11-day events, with 90,000 being from outside of the City of Greenville, which benefits both restaurants and hotels. This is a strong initiative that directly impacts tourism and demonstrates a significant economic impact in the restaurant industry during slow times.

**Greenville St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival – NEW Applicant — \$5,000**

Greenville St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival requested \$10,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$5,000. These monies will be used for marketing for an out of market reach. The Greenville St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival is a long-standing annual parade and celebration of Greenville's Irish heritage that takes place the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day. The parade runs the length of Main St. from the West End to Noma Square and culminates with a street festival on the block between E. North St. and Beatty St. with live music and vendors in and around NOMA Square.

**India Association of Greenville — \$15,000**

India Association of Greenville requested \$50,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$15,000. These monies will be used for marketing for an out of market reach. The India Association of Greenville last received funding for their Festival in 2019-20. They're hoping to expand and increase their reach with their 2022-23 event to further provide visibility, representation, and inclusivity in Downtown Greenville through cultural programming, food, and vending.

**Lake Conestee Nature Park - Playscape — \$15,800**

Lake Conestee Nature Park - Playscape requested \$25,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$15,800. These monies are to be used to build a children's playscape. This Nature Playscape will provide an unparalleled opportunity for children to safely connect with nature and will serve as a unique and important addition to the City's collection of public outdoor spaces. The committee feels that Lake Conestee is a gem of Greenville County and with new leadership has proven a strong understanding of marketing and branding to further promoting the City of Greenville.

**MAC — \$475,000**

The Metropolitan Arts Council requested \$500,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$475,000. MAC continues its role as the city's leading arts marketing and advocacy agency representing over 50+ arts organizations, theatres, and venues in the downtown area. MAC efforts are focused on marketing activities for these arts organizations, which allows the arts organizations to concentrate on programming and performing. The arts are often why an overnight visit to Greenville is extended an extra day. MAC has a long and successful track record of stewardship of Accommodations Tax monies and the Committee strongly feels this is a significant but appropriate level of investment in tourism.

**Rotary Club - Kringle Holiday Village – NEW Applicant — \$10,000**

Rotary Club - Kringle Holiday Village requested \$20,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$10,000. These monies will be used for marketing for an out of market reach. The Rotary Club of Greenville, in conjunction with the Greenville Drive/West End Events is excited to bring Kringle Holiday Village back to Fluor Field after a smashing inaugural event in 2021. Kringle Holiday Village is modeled after Europe's festive holiday markets but features the unique southern charm of Greenville, SC. Kringle Holiday Village is a weekend of unique local vendors and artisans, European and family favorite foods, strolling

and musical entertainment, visits from Santa, games, rides and inflatables for the children and a German Bier Garden featuring warm traditional Gluhwein for the adults. Net proceeds directly benefit Rotary Charities.

**SC Arts Education Association — \$5,000**

SC Arts Education Association requested \$5,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$5,000. These monies will be used to market to all 79 school districts as well as implement new technologies for the event. The SCAEA Conference has been held in Greenville since 2018 after alternating between Greenville and Beaufort for several years. The Association decided to remain in Greenville at the request of the attendees.

**Scottish Games — \$30,000**

Scottish Games requested \$50,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$30,000. These monies will be used to exclusively advertise and market activities related to the events held in the City of Greenville attracting 18,000+ people of which 55% are considered qualified tourists. This organization has a very successful track record of stewardship of ATAX monies and the Committee appreciates this organization's targeted efforts to host events in the downtown area.

**Sigal Music Museum (was Carolina Music Foundation) — \$5,000**

Sigal Music Museum (was Carolina Music Foundation) requested \$10,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$5,000. These monies will be used for marketing for their newest exhibit, "The Sounds of America," scheduled to open in July 2022. The exhibit will highlight stories from the founding of America to the present, using instruments, objects, recordings, and visuals dating between 1750 to today to demonstrate trends in American music making and celebrate American ingenuity in musical instrument design, music printing, and recording. The exhibit marketing plan builds on the successful campaign used for our current exhibit "Sensational Sigal" and will run for 8 to 12 months. Through zip code analysis, Sigal has determined that 44% of visitors reside outside Greenville County, and 34% reside more than 100 miles away.

**Upcountry History Museum — \$10,000**

Upcountry History Museum had requested \$20,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$10,000. This funding will be used to support the exhibit and marketing costs related to the "Nutcracker: The Exhibition", on November 19, 2022. The first of its kind, the Nutcracker exhibition will bring together loans from Walt Disney Archives, The Walt Disney Family Museum, the Charles M. Schulz Museum, R. Michelson Galleries, authors/illustrators James Ransome and Jan Brett, and Greenville County's own Carolina Ballet Theatre. The Committee feels this investment supports tourism-related activities.

**Upstate International - International Month — \$4,000**

Upstate International - International Month requested \$4,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$4,000. These monies are to be used for marketing. UIM has 400 events during International Month across Greenville County. Highlighting the international community of Greenville showcases the diversity of the community.

**Upstate International - Salsa at Sunset — \$3,000**

Upstate International - Salsa at Sunset requested \$3,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$3,000. These monies are to be used for out of area marketing to areas people have come from in the past: Asheville and Charlotte NC, Columbia, SC and Atlanta, GA. The committee has seen this fun, free event in downtown Greenville create a cultural experience as a great opportunity to further diversity & inclusion among our City.

**Upstate Veterans Alliance – Veteran’s Salute — \$2,500**

Upstate Veterans Alliance requested \$2,500. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$2,500. The funds requested are to assist with marketing of the Upstate Salute event for veterans. The Committee feels this event is incredibly worthwhile and growing, and that marketing of the event out-of-market could result in greater economic impact for the City.

**Visit Greenville SC (VGSC) – Overnight Visitation Promotions — \$925,000**

Visit Greenville SC requested \$2,484,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$925,000. The largest recipient of ATAX funds has traditionally been this organization, which directly promotes tourism and whose efforts have clearly yielded a significant and positive economic impact for the City, both through promotional campaigns and through recruitment of conventions and other events. VGSC has a long and successful track record of stewardship of ATAX monies and the Committee strongly feels this is a significant but appropriate level of investment in tourism. The Committee recognizes the desire for additional funding, but would note that the total amount requested by VGSC this year exceeded the total amount of all Accommodations Tax funds available for the 2022-2023 year and that VGSC continues to ask for funding for more specific events each year which are fully funded for 2022-2023 in addition to general marketing dollars requested.

**Visit Greenville SC (VGSC) – VGSC - AME Church ASPIRE (NEW) — \$10,000**

Visit Greenville SC has requested \$10,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$10,000. The ASPIRE conference assembles the Christian education-leadership, and the theological institute together, to discuss and adapt new standards and protocols to enhance The Seventh Episcopal District of the AME church. This conference has been a key annual event within the denomination, providing training in a variety of topics for church leadership, committees, and ministries. It is an opportunity to further support and highlight diversity and inclusivity using tourism funds. The ASPIRE Conference brings in as many as 3,000 church leaders from all over South Carolina. The Committee strongly feels this is an appropriate level of investment in tourism and proper use of funding.

**Visit Greenville SC (VGSC) – NCAA Women’s Basketball — \$63,000**

Visit Greenville SC has requested \$63,000. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$63,000. This event directly promotes tourism and has shown great economic impact to the City previously. The estimate for the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship - Regional Round total business sales is estimated at \$10.5M, with direct business sales at \$6.6M and local tax revenue estimates at \$167,000. These funds would be used to pay for part of the venue rental fee for Bon Secours Wellness Arena.

**Visit Greenville SC (VGSC) – SEC Women’s Basketball — \$29,500**

Visit Greenville SC has requested \$29,500. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$29,500. This event directly promotes tourism and has shown great economic impact to the City previously. The event is expected to attract more than 9,700 fans and generate 5,193 room nights. The Committee feels this event provides significant economic impact for the City and provides an opportunity for this event to showcase Greenville as a tourist destination for those attending the event.

**Visit Greenville SC (VGSC) – SYNEX National — \$17,500**

Visit Greenville SC has requested \$17,500 for this event. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$17,500. These monies will be used to help support the National SYNEX Inspire Conference. This event directly promotes tourism and is expected to attract 1,300 participants, of which 1,000 are from out-of-market. The Committee feels this event provides significant economic impact for the City and provides an opportunity for this event to showcase Greenville as both a tourist destination and business location for those individuals and businesses attending the convention and the meeting. These funds are being requested to provide shuttles. We do have concerns that this event is restricted to invited guests, and not marketed to the public.

**Wits End Poetry - Poetry Slam — \$4,700**

Wits End Poetry - Poetry Slam requested \$4,700. The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding in the amount of \$4,700. These funds are to be used for marketing purposes. Slam Poetry events have become very popular in Greenville bringing visitors from Georgia, North Carolina, and Coastal Carolina. The committee feels this is a worthy investment. It is attractive to younger, more diverse audiences.

**TOTAL SPENDING RECOMMENDED BY COMMITTEE: \$1,950,000**

If you have any questions or would like any additional detail, please let us know. Thank you for your continued support and trust in our Committee’s recommendations to you.