



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 22-1129A, Version: 1

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2023 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Elite Events.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of attendees or substantial room nights in the County, Category 4 events to generate at least 7,500 attendees and Category 5 events to be a new event to Pinellas.
- This is the first-year staff evaluated Elite Event applications and submitted recommendations for funding to the TDC.
- TDC unanimously approved staff's recommendations to fund 30 FY23 Elite Events for a cumulative total not to exceed \$1,385,000.00. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event to ensure a return on investment.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator or the Director of Administrative Services will execute the agreements and they will appear as Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer the Elite Event Funding Program, which provides funding to qualified, high -profile events that meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Guidelines and that provide media and/or marketing exposure for the County. CVB staff will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits, in accordance with the Guidelines.

Background Information:

The current Guidelines were adopted by the Board on March 8, 2022. One of the major changes to the Guidelines included shifting evaluation of the applications from the TDC to staff. The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 attendees or 15,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 15,000 attendees or 4,500 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees or 3,000 room nights and Category 4 events to generate at least 7,500 attendees. Category 5 events are required to be new events to the County in order to qualify for the program.

On June 21, 2022, during the full regular TDC meeting, CVB staff presented their recommendations for the FY23 Elite Event Funding Program. Of the 35 applications received, two were deemed

ineligible, Clearwater Sangria Festival and Spring Beach Bash, as they did not meet the minimum criteria for room nights or attendance and were not new events. Additionally, the MLK Dream Big Parade, Reggae Rise Up Florida, and Holiday Putt Putt on the Pier did not receive the minimum score of 70 to be considered for funding.

TDC members discussed staff's recommendations and were concerned the MLK Parade had not received the minimum scoring. Subsequently, the TDC asked the CVB to explore other ways this worthwhile event could be funded. After further discussion and consideration, the TDC members approved the recommendations from staff as set forth below, including the maximum (or "up to") funding amounts, by a vote of 9-0. Council member Williams abstained from voting on the Valspar PGA Championship due to a voting conflict. Mayor Welch and Council members Prather and Rodriguez were not in attendance.

On July 18, 2022, the CVB met with MLK organizers from the Advantage Village Academy, Inc., (AVA) and a representative from the City of St. Petersburg. During the meeting the CVB discussed how their Elite Event application was scored, funding options outside the Elite Event Program and sponsorship opportunities. Future meetings are planned and will include among other things the valuation of AVA's sponsorship packages, discussion of marketing ideas to grow the event, and opportunities for increasing the County's exposure in other markets.

Total Category 1 Events: \$525,000
\$150,000 Pelican Women's Championship
\$ 75,000 Clearwater Beach Day & ReliaQuest Bowl
\$150,000 Valspar Championship
\$150,000 P1 Offshore St. Pete Grand Prix

Total Category 2 Events: \$450,000 (\$75,000 per event)
Publix Rock 'n' Roll Running Series Clearwater
Clearwater Jazz Holiday
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals
St. Pete Pride Parade
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival
St. Pete BikeFest

Total Category 3 Events: \$225,000 (\$25,000 per event)
29th Annual Fall King of the Beach
St. Pete Run Fest
14th Annual Sanding Ovations
Gasparilla Bowl
John's Pass Seafood Festival
Festivals of Speed
Dunedin Highland Games & Festival
30th Annual Spring King of the Beach
St. Pete Tacos and Tequila Festival

Total Category 4 Events: \$95,000
\$20,000 St. Pete Pier Fall Festival
\$15,000 Holiday Lights in the Gardens

\$20,000 St. Pete Bacon & BBQ Festival
\$20,000 Localtopia
\$20,000 The Fourth on the St. Pete Pier

Total Category 5 Events: \$90,000

Fall Beach Bash
Banyan Music Festival
Sunshine City Smokeout
NYE on the Pier
Shamrock Fest
Tall Ships® St. Petersburg 2023

Total Categories 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Events: \$1,385,000

Fiscal Impact:

FY 2023 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$1,385,000

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council
Cities of St. Petersburg, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines