Tourist Development Council

July 23, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Brevard County Government Center, Viera

The Tourist Development Council met on July 23, 2025, at 2:00 PM, at the Brevard County Government Center, Viera. Members present were Chair Rob Feltner, Mayor Connors, Larry Jarnes, Wayne Soard, Mayor Medina, and Julie Braga. The staff present were Justin Caron from the County Attorney's Office, Peter Cranis, John Giantonio, Andrea Walke, Deborah Webster, Terry Parks, and Juawana Brooks from the Tourism Development Office. The guests present were Gaell Francois, Brevard County Budget Office; Dave Berman, Florida Today; Sarah Joyner, Brevard Attorney Intern; Debbie Paule, Hampton Inn; Tamsin Bell, City of Cape Canaveral; and Becky Zingarelli via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Action: The Board approved the May 28, 2025, Tourist Development Council Minutes.

Result: Approved
Mover: Julie Braga
Seconder: Larry Jarnes
Ayes: Soard, Jarnes, Mayor Medina, Braga, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Vice Chair Hermansen, Alex Litras, John Moran, and Mayor Connors.

John Moran's sub-committee appointment

Marketing Committee: Sean Williams

Action: Mayor Medina motioned to approve the sub-committee appointment as presented for John Moran. Braga seconded the motion.

Result: Approved
Mover: Mayor Medina
Seconder: Julie Braga
Ayes: Soard, Jarnes, Mayor Medina, Braga, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Vice Chair Hermansen, Alex Litras, John Moran, and Mayor Connors.

Director's Report/ Budget Report

(Mayor Connors entered the meeting at 2:05 PM)

Cranis reported that April and May TDT collections were up over last year, with May increasing by 6.5%. Year-to-date revenue is 3.9% ahead, totaling over $18 million. If trends continue, collections could reach a record $25.9 million.

Preliminary data shows June is trending ahead, and July is tracking close to last year. While some hoteliers report declines, overall collections remain stable, supported by increased inventory—now over 11,200 rooms.

Though the annual budget was set at $27 million, collections are pacing closer to $26 million. A $500,000 reserve in the marketing budget was set aside to cover the shortfall, and all other accounts remain in good shape.

FY 2025-2026 Marketing Support Program Grant- Culture Events

Cranis reported that, under the Marketing Support Program for cultural events, a total of 29 applications were initially received. Two applicants withdrew during the review process, resulting in 27 completed applications.

Of those, 18 met the minimum requirement of 5,001 out-of-county attendees, while 9 did not meet the threshold.

District Awards	$10,000
5,001 – 10,000 (200 - 1,000 room nights)	$12,500
10,001 – 25,000 (1,001-1,500 room nights)	$17,500
25,001 – 50,000 (1,501+ room nights)	$22,500
50,001+	$45,000

1	Space Coast Super Boats/Thunder on CB	63,237	$45,000
2	National Air Sea Space/CB Air Show	62,141	$45,000
3	Brevard Productions/Space Coast State Fair	26,159	$22,500
4	Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge	24,255	$17,500
5	Brevard Regional Arts Group/Henegar Center	23,650	$17,500
6	Museum of Dinosaurs and Ancient Cultures	21,085	$17,500
7	Valiant Air Command	17,059	$17,500

8	Titusville Playhouse	14,397	$17,500
9	Melbourne Main Street	7,004	$12,500
10	US Space Walk of Fame/American Space Museum	6,049	$12,500
11	Brevard Symphony Orchestra	5,920	$12,500
12	Cocoa Beach Main Street	5,821	$12,500
13	City of Palm Bay	5,813	$12,500
14	Space Coast Symphony Orchestra	5,586	$12,500
15	Cape Canaveral Lighthouse	5,570	$12,500
16	Florida Surf Museum/Surfing Santas	5,561	$12,500
17	Cocoa Village Playhouse	5,560	$12,500
18	Cocoa Village Main Street	5,410	$12,500

Each District Commission Office has $20,000 in discretionary funds for district awards. Applicants were ranked by prior-year out-of-county attendance. *Thunder on Cocoa Beach* and the *Cocoa Beach Air Show* qualified for the $45,000 award based on FY 2024–2025 data (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025). Three previously funded events did not apply this year.

Braga asked whether out-of-county attendance figures came from organizers or internal sources. Cranis clarified the data is provided by a third-party cellular data company and is based on prior-year attendance.

Jarnes inquired if the *Cocoa Beach Air Show* could lose eligibility if this year's attendance falls below the 50,001 thresholds *(Amendment 8/27/25 by Hermansen).* Cranis responded that awards are based on the best available data at the time of review. If future data falls below the threshold, the event may not qualify next year, or the award could be reduced. He also reminded the group that these are reimbursement-based grants.

Action: Mayor Medina motioned to approve the Marketing Support Program- Culture Events Applicants 1-18 as presented. Braga seconded the motion.

Result: Approved acc
Mover: Mayor Medina
Seconder: Julie Braga
Ayes: Soard, Jarnes, Mayor Medina, Braga, Mayor Connors, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Vice Chair Hermansen, Alex Litras, John Moran

FY 2025-2026 Marketing Support Program Grant- Sports Events

Staff outlined a major change to the Sports Grant Program: awards are now a flat $15.00 per room night, up to $25,000, replacing the previous range-based model. For FY 2025–2026, 24 applications were received, with 20 meeting the 250-room night minimum.

Notable examples: 1) *Cocoa Beach Spring Training* – 6,953 room nights, 2) *Space Coast Spring Games* – 2,433 room nights, and 3) *Space Coast Cup/Soccer* – 1,543 room nights

Awards are based on verified prior-year data.

Cranis requested input on *Bless the Babies Bowl*, which produced 1,730 room nights last year but was excluded this cycle due to a late application tied to staffing issues—not event performance.

Three events (*Boxlite Boxing*, *7 x 7 Flag Football*, and *Columbia Classic Golf*) were deemed ineligible due to being new or lacking qualifying room night history. *Columbia Classic Golf*, while awarded last year with 230 room nights, fell short of the 250 minimum and requires TDC review for current eligibility.

Mayor Medina raised questions regarding the *Blessed the Babies Bowl* event, which generated 1,730 room nights last year but did not qualify for funding this year due to a late application. He asked if the late submission—resulting from internal personnel changes—was the only reason for the event's ineligibility.

Cranis confirmed that the event was ineligible solely due to a late submission caused by staffing issues. He noted it remains one of the top-performing sports events based on room night production.

Mayor Medina emphasized the value of supporting organizations that drive room nights and promote tourism. He highlighted the importance of reviewing past event data, noting these events engage the community and attract national and international visitors. He expressed support for continuing such events and questioned whether all efforts have been made to help them qualify for grant funding.

Cranis explained that while the organizations applied for funding, their events were classified as new under Sports Event guidelines, as staff was unaware of similar events held in the past year. He noted that the TDC may choose to award funding based on the 250-room night minimum and assess performance after the event. Funding is calculated at $15 per room night, and awards are prorated if the minimum is not met

Mayor Medina asked if ineligible Sports Event applicants could receive funding from the District Commission's $20,000 awards

Cranis confirmed that any applicants not awarded through the Cultural or Sports Event programs are eligible for consideration under the District Commission Office's awards

Chair Feltner asked the TDC's hotel members how much of an impact on tourism they have observed when sports events are taking place in the area.

Hoteliers Braga and Soard noted that youth and sports events can be challenging for some hotels, while events with an older demographic better suit their facilities. Braga added that her hotel is specifically designed to accommodate these types of events.

Action: Mayor Connors motioned to approve the Marketing Support Program- Sports Events Applicants 1-20 and 21-23 as presented providing these events hit the minimum required 250 room nights.

The committee discussed the Sports Events program. Jarnes expressed strong support for the $15 per room night funding matrix, highlighting its clarity and fairness compared to cultural event criteria. He emphasized the important role sports events play in promoting tourism and benefiting the county.

Jarnes stated new events need funding early in their development, not in later years. He recommended including Columbia Classic Golf and *Bless the Babies Bowl*—which generated 1,730 room nights—emphasizing the latter should not be excluded due to a missed deadline.

He recommended flexibility in the room night threshold, suggesting events just below 250—like 240 room nights—should still be eligible for funding. He emphasized encouraging organizers to host events in Brevard County.

The committee explored options to help an ineligible application qualify for funding and discussed whether to reconsider lowering the 250-room night minimum set by the Board of County Commissioners.

Action: After extensive discussion, Mayor Connors amended his motion to approve the Marketing Support Program – Sports Events applicants 1–20 as presented; and 21–24, contingent upon each event meeting the revised minimum requirement of 225 room nights. Mayor Medina seconded the motion.

Result: Approved
Mover: Mayor Connors
Seconder: Mayor Medina
Ayes: Soard, Jarnes, Mayor Medina, Braga, Mayor Connors, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Vice Chair Hermansen, Alex Litras, John Moran

1	Cocoa Beach Spring Training	6,953	$25,000
2	Space Coast Spring Games/Softball	2,433	$25,000
3	Space Coast Cup/Soccer	1,543	$23,145

4	Florida Marathon	1,366	$20,490
5	Cocoa Beach Half Marathon	1,127	$16,905
6	Space Coast Clash/Soccer	1,030	$15,450
7	Cocoa Beach Triathlon	644	$9,660
8	Central Brevard Soccer/Winter Classic	544	$8,160
9	Central Brevard Soccer/Hurricane Classic	537	$8,055
10	NKF Rich Salick Surf Fest	520	$7,800
11	University of Louisville/Moon Golf	442	$6,630
12	USA Beach Running Championships	409	$6,135
13	ESA Surf	453	$6,795
14	Softball Mag Seniors	372	$5,580
15	Softball Mag Spring Training	354	$5,310
16	Space Coast Triathlon	350	$5,250
17	Foil Surfing Race	300	$4,500
18	American JR Golf Association Championship	285	$4,275
19	Florida Futures Lacrosse	255	$3,825
20	Brevard Soccer Club	250	$3,750
21	Bless the Babies Bowl*	1,730	$25,000
22	Boxlite Boxing*	250	$3,750
23	7 v 7*	250	$3,750
24	Columbia Classic Golf*	230	$3,450
	Total		**$247,665**

*Must have at least 225 room nights.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Board Reports

Braga reported that no recent Beach Improvement Committee meetings have been held due to focus on the IRL grant process to build reserves for beach renourishment. The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2025.

She also shared that the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association will host the 5th Annual Space Coast ROSE Awards on September 11, 2025, at the Courtyard Marriott by Cocoa Beach, honoring outstanding frontline tourism professionals.

Mayor Connors announced that the Valiant Air Command will hold its dedication ceremony on September 12, 2025, in Brevard County's largest event space. He thanked the TDC for grant support aiding tourism recovery and expressed excitement for the organization's opening.

To further support the Valiant Air Command, Mayor Connors will host a Mayor's Ball fundraiser on December 6, 2025, crediting Mayor Medina for the inspiration and emphasizing ongoing tourism promotion efforts.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Tourist Development Council meeting will be held on August 27, 2025, at 2:00 PM at the Viera Government Center, Building C, 3rd Floor, Florida Room.

Marketing Committee Meeting Dates are August 19th and September 25th.

The Beach Committee Meeting Date is September 18th.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 PM.