

## STPB POLICIES

The STPB is subject to all Tompkins County policies regarding the conduct of advisory boards. These replace the policies identified in the *2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan*. (listed alphabetically)

### *60/40 Split*

Continue to invest Hotel Room Occupancy Tax funds in tourism marketing and tourism product development as specified by state enabling legislation and local law. After subtracting the county administrative fee and other expenses, the Tourism Program budget should maintain a ratio of 60% for marketing and 40% for product development.

### *Budget Reserve and Surplus Hotel Room Occupancy Tax*

#### Reserve Funds

- a) Purpose of Reserve Funds: External factors can have adverse effects on local room tax revenues. A wide variety of circumstances could lead to reduced visitation to Tompkins County. Some organizations integral to the local tourism sector rely on room tax funding as a primary source of funding. If room tax revenue declines, the reserve fund is intended to assist organizations of vital importance to sustain the county's tourism sector.
- b) Target Reserves: Five percent of the projected annual Tompkins County hotel room occupancy tax collections should be held in reserve. (For example, if \$3,000,000 in hotel room occupancy tax is projected for a given year then \$150,000 should be held in reserve.)
- c) Use of Reserves: If room taxes decline year over year, the STPB may authorize reserves to be used to sustain essential operations necessary to our local tourism sector.

#### Surplus Funds

- a) Source: Each year the STPB prepares a projection of Tompkins County's hotel room occupancy tax collections. This forecast is based on detailed market data and professional knowledge about the region and industry. From time to time, room tax collections exceed this projection, leading to surplus funds.
- b) Fully Fund Reserves: To maintain an adequate reserve balance, surplus funds should first be applied to achieve the reserve target.
- c) Allocate Remaining Surplus to Existing Programs: To ensure a transparent, equitable process for accessing county room tax funds, any surplus more than the amount needed for reserve should be applied within the existing framework of the Tompkins County Tourism Program.
  - i. Preferred Application / Strategic Tourism Implementation: The STPB is charged with the implementation of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan. To date

there are several “critical actions” in the plan which are not yet complete. To accomplish these actions, the STPB prefers to allocate all remaining surplus funds to the Strategic Tourism Implementation (STI) grant program. This program funds projects which advance tourism projects in Tompkins County that enhance quality of life and promote economic development. This program uses a rolling grant application which would allow funds to be applied in the same year as the surplus.

- ii. Alternative Application / Marketing & Product Development: The 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan established a policy of splitting funds 60/40 for marketing and product development. When all “critical actions” defined in the current Strategic Tourism Plan are complete or deemed unnecessary or at the discretion of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, surplus funds may be made available for one-time projects in accord with the 60/40 policy. (For example, if \$100,000 of surplus funds are available, \$60,000 should be allocated to marketing and \$40,000 to product development.) Due to the timing of room tax collections and grant decisions, funds will be available in the following year.

### *Conflict of Interest*

Tompkins County depends on volunteers to serve on its Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB). STPB members have varied backgrounds and interests. They are active in the community in their professional and private endeavors. Consequently, situations may arise that create a conflict of interest.

This policy applies to all current members of the STPB and all members of any advisory committee involved in the decision making process. It is expected that all persons subject to this policy will conduct themselves honestly and fairly when dealing with STPB business.

A conflict of interest is defined as an activity or interest of a Board member that may cause bias for or against a particular action being considered by the Board such as a grant request. A conflict of interest will be presumed when the Board member or household member has a formal affiliation or interest in an organization, which could expect funding from a particular decision.

Whenever a Board member identifies that a conflict of interest may exist with a funding request, policy decision, or any voting matter considered by the STPB or one of its Committees, the member will inform the STPB Chair or the Committee Chair of the conflict. The Board member may (or may not) participate in the discussion at the appropriate Chair’s discretion, but will refrain from voting on the specific request.

At the beginning of each calendar year, current STPB members will complete the Annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form. The forms will be given to the Chair and kept on file by the Administrative Assistant of the STPB. This information will be made available to all members of the STPB.

### *Diversity Statement*

The STPB will apply the values of diversity, inclusion and equity in conducting all business including the recruitment of board members, program administration, and consideration of funding applications.

We will encourage participation of diverse populations in all of our funded programs without regard but not limited to the following traits: national origin, language, race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic status.

We will foster a culture of inclusion that encourages collaboration, flexibility and fairness.

We will consistently work toward greater equity to guarantee fair treatment, access and opportunity.

We will encourage all of our partners to ascribe to these values and work within their organizations to promote them.

### *Seat Definitions*

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in selecting new members and could be used in determining eligibility of STPB applicants to represent a given sector. Someone meeting any one of the suggested criteria could be seen as meeting the eligibility requirement for that seat.

- Lodging: Current owner, operator or employee of a local lodging business including hotel, motel, B&B, short-term rental, campground, etc.
- Recreation: Someone who as a current or former business owner, member or staff member of a recreational organization, event organizer, or representative of a landowner on which recreation occurs (e.g. public or not-for-profit trail owner), is involved in producing programming or otherwise supporting outdoor recreation tourism activity in Tompkins County.
- Agriculture: Someone who as a current or former farmer, producer of food, beverage or agricultural product(s), or member of staff member of an organization involved in local agriculture, is either directly engaged in agriculture in Tompkins County or engaged formally in supporting agriculture in Tompkins County.
- Arts/Culture: Current or former artist, or current or former member, trustee, or staff member of an arts organization. This encompasses visual arts (including architecture, ceramics, design, drawing, painting, photography and sculpture), literary arts, the performing arts (including music, theatre, dance, spoken word and film, among others), and other forms of artistic expression.

- College and University Seats: The three seats representing Cornell, IC, and TC3 will be filled by individuals recommended for appointment directly by their respective institutions and in a position to represent those institutions.
- At-Large: Intentionally a flexible category without specific additional eligibility criteria. At certain times in the past, based on the needs of the board, it has been seen as desirable to recruit new members into these At-Large seats with specific skills (legal, financial, marketing, tourism, government administration, etc.), or other specific sector representation not covered by the other seats (such as retail, restaurant/culinary, other travel and hospitality businesses, meeting and conference, etc.)