



ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

10:00am, Wednesday, March 11, 2026

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

MINUTES

1. **Call to order**

Present: Rebecca Kovalich, Park Williams, Barb Bergwerf, Chrissy Lorenz, Margaret Miller, Mike Boykin (via Zoom)

Absent: Rod Turnage

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Director Hamilton

2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Ms. Bergwerf nominated Mr. Williams as Chair of the ATAX Committee. Ms. Lorenz seconded the motion. There being no other nominations, a vote was taken with all in favor of Mr. Williams as Chair of the ATAX Committee.

Ms. Lorenz nominated Ms. Kovalich as Vice Chair of the ATAX Committee. Ms. Bergwerf seconded the motion. There being no other nominations, a vote was taken with all in favor of Ms. Kovalich as Vice Chair of the ATAX Committee.

3. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes – November 12, 2025**

Ms. Bergwerf made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2025 meeting, and Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Presentation of ATAX Applications**

A. **IOP Chamber of Commerce, Zacharry Lary**

Mr. Lary came before the Committee to present the IOP Chamber's request for \$55,000 in ATAX funding. He shared creatives and data from a previous campaign as well as the budget for the project and estimated economic benefit to the Isle of Palms. The Chamber is requesting \$55,000 to replicate and expand on this pilot project. Mr. Lary explained that while the CVB does an excellent job of promoting the Charleston area, the IOP Chamber is solely focused on promoting the Isle of Palms.

Committee members asked if there is a way the CVB can financially assist the IOP Chamber.

Committee members also requested a means by which the Committee could review the use of previously awarded funds. A January meeting will be added to the ATAX meeting schedule to invite the previous year's grant recipients to provide an accounting of ATAX funds.

B. YWCA Greater Charleston MLK Event Application – LaVanda Brown

No one from the YWCA was present to review their application.

C. Lutheran Coastal Retreat Center -- Elliot Cox

Mr. Cox came before the Committee to present the retreat center's request for \$12,000 in ATAX funding. Mr. Cox said their request is for the installation of new and updated reservation software and future subscription fees, noting the last software purchase was in 2012. Mr. Cox said while some of their groups bring their own food, many of them eat at least one meal on the island.

Mr. Williams asked if such software is an eligible expense, and Director Kerr later (after the meeting) provided documentation that it is an eligible expense.

Mr. Cox shared some details of the center's use of last year's grant award.

D. Island School Literacy Events – Mary Alice Monroe

Ms. Monroe and Ms. Polly Buxton came before the Committee to present her organization's request for \$40,000 in ATAX funding. Ms. Monroe said prior ATAX funding has allowed them to take her weekend event "to a whole new level." She has increased the management of the event, allowing for expanded direct marketing. Her weekend event and the other seasonal events are all sold out.

Ms. Buxton shared details of their marketing efforts, stating the event attracted people from 78 zip codes over 50 miles away from 28 states. The weekend event has received a lot of media attention.

Ms. Lorenz and Ms. Bergwerf both said this event is a success story of ATAX grant funding.

5. Financial Statements

Director Hamilton said the fund balance is 3.5% higher than this time last year. Revenues are 2% higher, but interest earned is down due to lower interest rates. Expenses are tracking at 41% of the annual budget.

She noted a few budgeted items will be deferred to FY27. There will be an expense overage for the ATV purchase that will come before the Committee at a later meeting.

6. Old Business

A. Update on BCDCOG Mobility Study

Administrator Kerr reported that BCDCOD is continuing to work on the final report of this study.

Ms. Bergwerf said there are several beach paths that flood. She believes some of them may need some grading for the flood waters to recede. Administrator Kerr asked her to send pictures of the paths that need attention.

7. New Business

A. Discussion of FY27 Budget for State Accommodations Tax Funds

Director Hamilton said the budget requests for FY27 are very similar to those in FY26. She noted increases in transfers out of the ATAX funds to pay for the upcoming beach renourishment project. She reviewed the expenses in the FY27 budget.

There was a brief discussion about safety measures at the marina boat ramp.

6. Miscellaneous Business

Administrator Kerr said the City has solicited proposals for a rebranding effort. The Committee has been asked to grade the proposals. This will likely be on the May agenda. The rebranding effort will be paid for by the CVB.

The next meeting of the ATAX Committee will be Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 10am.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Bergwerf made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Lorenz seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:16am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk