



## ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

10:00am, Wednesday, April 15, 2026  
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

### MINUTES

#### 1. **Call to order**

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

**Absent:** Rod Turnage, Chrissy Lorenz

**Staff Present:** Administrator Kerr, Council Member Cohen

#### 2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes – March 11, 2026**

Ms. Bergwerf made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2026 meeting, and Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 3. **Presentation of ATAX Applications**

##### A. **YWCA Greater Charleston MLK Event Application – LaVanda Brown**

Ms. Brown reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> YWCA Greater Charleston MLK Event held in January 2026 was well received. They were unable to promote staying on the island as early as they had hoped, resulting in 10 overnight stays. Their organization will work on earlier marketing efforts to create more interest in staying on the island overnight.

#### 4. **Financial Statements**

Director Hamilton was out of town and Committee members to send their questions regarding the financial statements to her ahead of the next meeting.

#### 5. **Old Business**

##### **Consideration of ATAX Grant Applications**

##### A. **IOP Chamber of Commerce – Zacharry Lary**

Ms. Bergwerf said the project proposed by the Chamber is one they should be working on with Explore Charleston. Administrator Kerr said their have been conversations about Explore Charleston supporting such an effort. He will report back to the Committee on the results of those talks.

Council Member Cohen said the worthiness of the project itself needs to be addressed. Mr. Williams believes the project to be overlapping with the efforts of Explore Charleston.

**MOTION: Ms. Bergwerf made a motion to approve the grant request. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. All committee members voted against the motion. The motion failed.**

Administrator Kerr will provide clarity to the Committee in May about the “heads in beds” standard used to judge tax grant applications.

**B. Lutheran Coastal Retreat Center – Elliot Cox**

Ms. Bergwerf noted the ATAX money used to improve the parking lot was well used. Mr. Boykin would like to see them continue their beautification efforts. Mr. Williams believes their current request will be helpful in capturing the data the ATAX Committee seeks.

**MOTION: Ms. Kovalich made a motion to approve the request of the Lutheran Retreat Center. Ms. Bergwerf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**C. Island School Literacy Events – Mary Alice Monroe**

**MOTION: Ms. Kovalich made a motion to approve the Island School Literacy Events grant request. Ms. Bergwerf seconded the motion.**

Ms. Bergwerf noted that Ms. Monroe and her team have done an excellent job of bringing visitors from far away to the island. Mr. Williams said their application is the “gold standard” of how an event positions itself and the island for success.

Ms. Bergwerf said that out of an abundance of caution since she is good friends with Ms. Monroe, she will recuse herself from voting on the application.

**VOTE: A vote was taken with all the remaining members in favor of granting the request.**

**D. YWCA Greater Charleston MLK Event– LaVanda Brown**

**MOTION: Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the YWCA’s grant application. Ms. Bergwerf seconded the motion.**

Committee members spoke in favor of the event and would like to help them expand their efforts to increase the number of overnight stays. Ms. Kovalich would like to see more investigation into why their numbers are low.

**VOTE: A vote was taken on the application as follows:**

Ayes: Bergwerf, Miller, Williams

Nays: Kovalich

**The motion passed 3-1.**

**6. New Business**

**Discussion of FY27 Budget for State Accommodations Tax Funds**

Director Hamilton was out of town and asked Committee members to submit their questions regarding the FY27 Budget for State ATAX funds to her prior to the next meeting. Administrator Kerr said he would be able to answer some high-level questions.

Ms. Kovalich asked why the expense for fireworks was so much higher for this year. Administrator Kerr said it was because it is the country's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

The ATAX Committee's role in providing input into the budget of State ATAX funds was briefly discussed. Mr. Williams would like the Committee to have more input and suggested that discussions about FY28 happen in the fall. Administrator Kerr said it would be helpful for the Committee to identify initiatives they would like to support.

**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, May 13, 2026 at 10am.

**7. Adjournment**

Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Bergwerf seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk