

**FLORIDA FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Meeting

September 19, 2019

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**107 East Madison St.**

**Tallahassee, FL 32399**

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| <b>MINUTES</b> |
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**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

Administrative (Chair Nicholas Popp)

Call to Order by Chair Popp at 10 a.m.

Roll Call:

*Committee Members:*

Ana Siegel

Cynthia Angelos

Kevin Ambler

Marc Meisel

Nicholas Popp

Pamela Tuscany

Ryan Neves

Sandy Lighterman

*Members of the Public:*

John Lux

Bonnie King

Kelly Paige

Michelle Hillery

*Office of Film and Entertainment (OFE) Staff:*

Commissioner Niki Welge

Susan Simms

Donyelle Marshall

Allie Pratt

**WELCOME**

Chair Popp welcomed everyone.

Chair Popp said the next FFEAC meeting will be decided via Doodle poll.

**OLD BUSINESS**

### Approval of June 2019 FFEAC Meeting Minutes

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

### Approval of July Subcommittee on Executive and Legislative Communication FFEAC Meeting Minutes

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the subcommittee meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

### Approval of Special August FFEAC Meeting to Approve Letter to Executive Leadership Minutes

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve special August meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Review Updated Letter to Executive Leadership

Chair Popp summarized the approved changes to the letter to executive leadership. Approved changes include adding titles to councilmembers and updating the film and entertainment industry statistical information.

Commissioner Welge communicated that the previous Chair, Gus Corbella, contacted her and asked to have his name and signature added to the letter. Chair Popp called for a motion to add Gus Corbella to the letter. The motion was approved.

Bonnie King brought up grammatical corrections to the letter. Bonnie also asked that a bullet be added to the letter to state the office's desire to have continued partnership with Film Florida. Chair Popp called for a motion to discuss the language that would include mention of Film Florida. The motion was approved. Council discussed where to put mention of Film Florida in letter.

Kelly Paige asked that the minutes note that the bill in discussion is not a Film Florida bill but is Senator Gruters' bill.

John Lux expressed that the letter paints too rosy of a picture of the industry in Florida. John said he thinks the letter needs to reflect the industry in case Ken Lawson is asked about potential legislation regarding the film and entertainment industry. John said he thinks the statistics should be reverted to original film office numbers as they have better justification.

Pamela Tuscany said she thinks awareness of industry challenges should be mentioned in potential future letter and not this letter.

Sandy Lighterman said if the council wants to keep the letter to Ken Lawson focused on budget issues regarding the film office, then she is okay with this. Chair Popp confirmed that it is important that this letter focus on the state film office.

Sandy asked that there be some note in this letter about the challenges of the industry.

Commissioner Welge explained that the purpose of this letter is to support the Office of Film and Entertainment while it is under review within its agency. She reminded the council that there was intention to follow the letter to Ken Lawson with a letter to the Governor's Office. She said many of the concerns expressed in the meeting could be addressed in letter to the Governor.

Cynthia Angelos affirmed that it makes sense to address public comment concerns in next letter.

Kelly Paige asked how the Film Office came up with 32,000 jobs created as result of the STE. Commissioner Welge said that number came from the STE report from fiscal year 18/19. Chair Popp said he will clarify the wording of this statistic as part of grammatical changes to be made.

John Lux suggested that text be added to explain that the film office has worked very hard in the face of massive industry challenges. Chair Popp suggested that the new text say "to continue the office's success and to ensure Florida continues to attract production."

Chair Popp said he would make the proposed changes to the letter to be sent out to the council before the end of the meeting for approval. Sandy made a motion to go ahead with this. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Legislative Update (Chair Nicholas Popp)

Chair Popp said the legislative session will begin in January. Legislative committees are meeting this week. He said the future House Speaker will be Chris Sprowls, and the future Senate President will be Wilton Simpson. 20 of 40 Senate seats are up for elections in 2020. All House seats up for election every two years. There is a current republican majority in both houses. Both houses will be aggressively fought over in 2020 elections. Chair Popp said he feels it is unlikely that majority will change but said anything is possible.

He discussed the targeted rebate program bill introduced by Senator Joe Gruters, Chair of Republican Party of Florida. A similar bill was brought forward last year, though it did not make it beyond committee.

Senate Bill 334 is also similar to a bill filed last year. The bill is sponsored by Senator Stewart. It is a tourist tax bill that would authorize counties to use tourism tax revenues to incentivize film and television productions.

#### Office of Film and Entertainment Team Report

Chair Popp invited the Office of Film and Entertainment to give their respective updates.

### Office Updates (Commissioner Niki Welge)

Commissioner Welge started by giving an update on the office's performance measures. The annual percentage of productions that resulted in business in Florida for fiscal year 17/18, was 1,753 productions, 1,423 of which resulted in business. This is an 81 percent success rate. The office had a goal this year to assist 1,700 new productions and surpassed that goal in May. In FY 18/19, the office worked on 2,021 projects, which is 268 more productions than previous year, 1,661 of which resulted in business and employment in Florida. This is an 82 percent success rate. She said her team has been working incredibly hard to meet and exceed business goals, and she is proud of their success.

She said the office's annual report is due November 1 to the EOG and the Legislature. She noted that the film office is no longer reporting on the financial incentive. The Sales Tax Exemption has had a record year with 1,024 applications approved. She attributed this success to Donyelle Marshall.

She said the agency is gearing up for legislative session. The office and the Sales Tax Exemption program are no longer under the agency and Governor's legislative review. She explained that this doesn't mean that the legislature will not act to remove the film office, as they did in 2017. She said the biggest challenge for the Strategic Business Division this year will be the renewal of the Qualified Targeted Industry program.

She said the "mission critical" travel limits are still in place for the agency as well as some other budgetary restrictions.

She said the office got approval to host another face-to-face FFEAC meeting in December in Orlando. The office is working with the Orlando Film Commission to secure a meeting venue and hotel. Tentatively the location is Downtown Orlando Marriott. She expects the FFEAC meeting will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday December, and the Film Florida meetings and WIFT's Jungle Mingle will be held sometime December 5 and 6. She asked the council to expect more to come out regarding the in-person meeting soon.

She announced that the next Film Florida board of directors meeting will be on September 23 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and it will be held via teleconference. The Board of Director's meeting is open to the public, and she encouraged all to call in.

### Future Business Development (Susan Simms)

Chair Popp invited Susan to begin her report.

Susan Simms started by thanking the local film offices for working with the state film office so well. She said she is always looking for any opportunity to follow up with clients and talk to them to keep Florida on their radar. She said we need the local film offices' help to achieve this.

She said that productions are helping to share Florida's story including OWN and Warner Horizon's "David Makes Man" and National Geographic, Warner Horizon and Appian Way's "The Right Stuff." These productions are an example that it is easier to get someone who already likes you to come back.

She said she believes that commercial season will be huge in Florida.

She said business in Florida is benefitting from Jennifer Lopez's press tour for "Hustlers," as she is talking up the Super Bowl.

She said Toronto Film Festival occurred a few weeks ago and Florida-filmed "Waves" was a big hit there. This film is under the same distributor for "Moonlight" and "The Florida Project."

She said she believes that Florida-filmed "The Laundromat" and "The Irishman" will be a big hit once it premieres. She said these films will be a great opportunity to get a foot in the door for future conversations regarding production in Florida.

She said she will attend Location Managers Guild International Awards. "Versace" was nominated for an award among "Game of Thrones" and "Chernobyl." She said that all the film offices are so proud of this. She will also attend AFM and Produced By New York in the coming months.

#### Spanish Language Production Report (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle explained that Univision is up for sale with no takers. After separating in 2006, Viacom CBS has merged to form a \$30 billion company. Telemundo bought Underground Producciones, a boutique production company based in Argentina.

She said that after years of nagging Viacom team to bring back Unplugged to the US market, a Miami production company has shot "A Tiny Audience." This is an acoustic set in front of an audience of 20. Talent that has participated thus far include Juanes, Draco Rosa, Fonseca and Piso 21. The show has been picked up and will be announced by the network soon.

She went on to say that Telemundo's parent company, NBCUniversal has announced the name of their streaming service is Peacock. Peacock is uniquely positioned to offer the U.S. Hispanic audience premium programming from the number one Spanish-language network, Telemundo. The platform will feature more than 3,000 hours of Telemundo's content, including an original dramedy "Armas de Mujer," a new hit series from the makers of "La Reina del Sur," and popular library titles "100 Dias Para Volver," "Betty in NY," "El Barón" and "Preso No. 1."

She discussed the Areu Brothers Qualified Opportunity Zones platform and explained that the platform will encompass entertainment, technology and real estate through Qualified Opportunity Zones in Atlanta, Puerto Rico, Miami, and Los Angeles. The studio is the first film and television studio to join the program. It was enacted as part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which provide long-term equity investors with significant tax incentives when they re-invest their

capital gains in businesses and real estate located in designated low-income communities. Miami Dade has 67 opportunity zones.

### Marketing and Advertising (Allie Pratt)

Allie opened her report by reviewing statistical information regarding the film office's digital marketing efforts. In August, film office tweets appeared in more than 25,000 people's screens; Film office Facebook posts appeared in more than 102,000 people's screens; More than 6,300 people liked, commented or shared film office Facebook content. She noted that the Facebook numbers are lower than those reported in June because the office is spending less on our paid Facebook ad. because much of the digital marketing dollars are allocated to a social media buy. For now, the office has shaved off some dollars to keep brand awareness circulating on the most engaged platform—Facebook.

She added that filminflorida.com was visited about 1,500 times in August, which is down from previous months. Every week she continues to post three or more times on the social accounts.

She said that there have been 294 app downloads to date. This is largely attributable to a successful app launch campaign, which included ebasts to the office's industry database and paid ads on Twitter and Facebook.

She said with note on the environment's importance to the Governor and the film and entertainment industry, the office is now working to switch to greener promo items.

She said upcoming events involving the office include: F3 on October 12, La Femme on October 17 through 19, and Produced By on November 9. Promotional items will be sent to the latter two events.

She said she is working to redesign the sales tax exemption flier and put together a production business brochure based on a fantastic document that Donyelle created.

She asked the council to look for an email from me regarding interest in attending the December in-person meeting in Orlando December 4th and 5th. She said feedback is crucial because the office is in the process of negotiating the hotel contract.

Chair Popp asked if the office is tracking app use as well as downloads. Allie said she is not sure if we are able to track app usage but will investigate this.

### Sales Tax Exemption (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle said that Fiscal Year 2018/2019 was a record year for the Sales Tax Exemption program. 1,024 applications were approved. To achieve greater numbers for this fiscal year, she is reaching out to rental houses and providing a digital copy of the office's sales tax exemption flier as well as a link to embed on their websites. She has also shared the digital copy of the sales

tax exemption flier with top freelance artists in the state so that it can be included in their project bids. Last year, first quarter numbers were 221. Currently, there are 223 approved applications. With 11 days left in the quarter, she said she anticipates surpassing last year's first quarter numbers by 10% if the average trend continues.

#### Discussion of Letter to Executive Leadership

Chair Popp invited the council to return to the discussion of the letter to Ken Lawson. He asked all members to review the updated letter in their email inbox.

Sandy Lighterman made a motion to review the letter. Motion passed unanimously.

Bonnie King said she did not see the previously discussed mention of maintaining a relationship with Film Florida. Sandy made a motion to include mention of Film Florida in the letter. Motion passed unanimously.

Bonnie King asked if there will be any mention of the challenges in the industry. Pamela Tuscany made motion that the council close the conversation without added mention of challenges. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Popp thanked everyone for their participation and comments. He said the letter will be sent out to all members once it is finalized.

#### Association Updates: (Film Florida, SAG, IATSE, etc.)

Chair Popp turned the discussion over to Chris Ranung with IATSE. Chris was not present.

Chair Popp asked Bonnie King to discuss Film Florida. She invited everyone on the call to join the Board of Directors meeting on Monday, September 23 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. She said anyone interested can get more information by emailing [info@filmflorida.org](mailto:info@filmflorida.org). The next BOD will occur December 5 and 6 in Orlando. She said she believes the Jingle Mingle is set for Thursday, December 5.

Bonnie King said F3 will take place on Saturday, October 12. She said this is a full day of networking, demos, panels and workshops. More information is available at [floridafilmfocus.com](http://floridafilmfocus.com).

She said that some Film Florida members returned from the Toronto International Film Festival. It was a great week of marketing Florida. Upcoming events include NATPE, Realscreen, and SXSW. She said she hopes the OFE will be able to join Film Florida at these events.

She said that Film Florida has held more than 60 educational meetings with legislators.

Bonnie asked Chair Popp if he thought that the FFEAC will read and support Senator Gruters' bill. Chair Popp said the council would certainly discuss the bill and put forth for a resolution.

Ex-Officio Updates: (Enterprise Florida, Inc., VISIT FLORIDA, and CareerSource Florida)

No ex-officio members were present to give reports.

Public Comment

Chair Popp opened the floor for public comment.

Kelly Paige asked about 17/18 tax exemption numbers. Commissioner Welge said that the film office would send her the meeting packet, as those numbers can be found there.

Kelly Paige asked if the state film office would be paying for the planned December in-person meeting, Commissioner Welge said that the office is obligated by statute to pay for councilmembers travel and stay to in-person meetings. Kelly asked if the meeting will take place even if there is not a quorum. Commissioner Welge said she foresees it happening but the office will gauge interest before confirming.

Kelly Paige asked if FFEAC members will meet with respective legislative branch by which they were appointed. Chair Popp said he would defer to the individual members but has encouraged members to meeting with their legislators. Chair Popp said he has met with legislative leaders.

Michelle Hillery thanked the council for hearing the concerns regarding the letter to Ken Lawson. She asked what the timeline for the letter to Governor DeSantis. Chair Popp said another subcommittee meeting will take place once more bills have been filed. Michelle said the council may want to pick one bill to support. She also said that the council needs to state that there is a need in the industry.

Chair Popp encouraged councilmembers to send electronic signatures to Allie and Commissioner Welge.

**ADJOURN 12:15 P.M.**