

**FLORIDA FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

4th Quarter Meeting

December 9, 2021

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**107 East Madison St.**

**Tallahassee, FL 32399**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

Administrative (Chair Ana Siegel)

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

Roll Call:

*Committee Members:*

Ana Siegel

Lisa Scott- Founds

Durand Adams

Kevin Ambler

Aaron Bellamy

Jacqueline McCray

Brooks Timmons

*Ex-Officio Members*

None present

*Members of the Public:*

John Lux, Film Florida

Gail Morgan, Destin/Fort Walton Beach Film Commission, Film Florida

Jesse Brock, Film Tampa Bay

Tyler Martinolich, Film Tampa Bay

Todd Roobin, Jacksonville Film Commission

Meagan Happel, Space Coast Film Commission

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

Commissioner Niki Welge

Susan Simms

Donyelle Marshall

Blaire Bisbee

## **WELCOME**

Chair Siegel welcomed everyone and said the next FFEAC meeting will be decided via Email.

Commissioner Welge introduced the new Marketing and Outreach Coordinator to the Council, Blaire Bisbee. Blaire introduced herself and said she was excited to be here.

Blaire took roll call.

Chair Siegel welcomed new councilmember, Brooks Timmons. Timmons introduced himself and said he is excited to be on the council. He is a Policy Advisor and Aide to Senate President Wilton Simpson. Timmons is a country music singer, and he has performed on “The Voice” TV show and in country music concerts regularly. He is excited to learn about the film industry and bring his knowledge of the music industry to the group.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### 2021 3rd Quarter Meeting Minutes

Chair Siegel called for a motion to approve the September 2021 meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Kevin Ambler and seconded by Lisa Scott-Founds.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Welge thanked the group for joining this morning and circled back to welcoming Brooks Timmons and thanked the Senate for appointing new members. Welge mentioned there are still vacancies on the Council in the House and Senate and welcomed new submissions for appointments.

Welge pointed out this fiscal year, Donyelle has approved 530 applications for the tax exemption, which is record-breaking. Last year 418 applications were approved in comparison. Our goal is to drive the applications and bring large projects to the state said Welge.

### Legislative Update (Commissioner Welge)

The legislative session will begin on January 11th in Tallahassee. The last interim committee meeting was on November 9th in Tallahassee. Film Florida has two rebate program bills that have been filed, HB 217 by Representative Trabulsky, and Senate Bill 946 filed by Senator Gruters. The bills are scheduled for three committees in the House and Senate, none have been heard as of today’s date. An economic development bill was filed in the Senate (SB800) which has an impact on brick and mortar incentive programs and the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

filed by Senator Albritton. It has been heard and passed by Commerce and Tourism, next the bill will be heard by Finance and Tax.

Commissioner Welge opened the floor to councilmember Kevin Ambler for legislative updates on his end. Ambler thinks everything is well positioned and the bills are being refiled. The number of sponsors has increased, and we are getting more people on board.

Commissioner Welge opened the floor to councilmember Brooks Timmons for a legislative update on his end. Timmons agreed with Commissioner Welge's update. He hopes the bills we are focused on move through the process, and that some bills will be on agendas.

### Office of Film and Entertainment Team Report

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

### Office Updates (Commissioner Niki Welge)

Commissioner Welge began her update by speaking on the Special Session and the Covid-19 legislation that was passed prohibiting private employers from Covid-19 vaccine mandates. Welge recommended and encouraged all production companies whether Florida-based or not to follow Florida laws and to hire an attorney if they have further questions. Welge mentioned following the AMPTP Return to Work agreement and believes the current agreement expires in January. She spoke regarding the IATSE strike and was happy to see the strike avoided and resolutions met.

OFE worked with DEP on updating their permits for the 175 award-winning state parks in Florida. DEP does not have major revisions at this point regarding permits. Welge reminds the Council that OFE can help with permitting on state property.

Welge spoke regarding the Broward County film office and stated that Broward County hired a new Film Commissioner, and the information will be released next week.

Councilmember Lisa Scott- Founds mentioned the Winterfest Boat Parade in Fort Lauderdale and the celebrities who will be flown in for the occasion. A 1-hour television show will be produced and aired on Fox.

### Future Business Development (Susan Simms)

Susan Simms began her report by welcoming Brooks Timmons to the Council. Susan relayed information regarding trends around the state, and the resolution of the strike. Regarding the strike, Simms agrees with the fact crew needs adequate rest to do their jobs well. The state is enjoying riches on the commercial front and everyone is busy. Three major markets are breaking records for the number of permits approved, which include Miami and Tampa.

Simms reminded the council of the partnerships with the local film offices and how we all work together. Simms mentioned how much business has been lost in the last 20 years or so and how Australia used to be the biggest competitor to Florida in the industry. Florida was number three many years ago.

The “David Makes Man” TV show season 3 renewal will be announced on December 17th. The TV show shoots at Universal Studios Florida and is produced by Warner Horizon TV.

“Bad Monkey” is a new series being produced in Key West, a Carl Hiaasen series taken from the book starring Vince Vaughn. It will be an Apple+ series produced by the Warner family and HBO and HBO Max. There are 3 -5 productions currently happening in Miami.

Simms talked about the effect on tourism for productions filming in certain areas. Tourism picks up in the states where filming takes place including The Four Seasons Resort in Hawaii due to “White Lotus.” The “Mare of Easttown” house also has seen an influx of tourism. Our priority is to chase big projects to be filmed in Florida, instead of Georgia and North Carolina pretending to be Florida.

Susan noticed production crews outside of her LA home and spoke to them, and a TV show with Miami in the title was being filmed at the Port of Los Angeles.

Simms spoke regarding the 29 episodes of “House Hunters” filmed in Florida. Netflix announced 1,000 productions in the coming year, Apple will produce 800, Amazon will produce 800, and HBO and HBO Max will produce 200, which equals 2,800 productions combined. Florida probably has five of that scope.

Susan closed by saying sooner or later some projects will be forced to go where there is no incentive, but locations must have crew and infrastructure in place to sustain. Virtual production is the future and Florida is in the virtual production business and considered in the top tier states.

#### Sales Tax Exemption Report (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle started by presenting statistics for the Sales Tax Exemption program. To date, 552 applications have been approved. In last year’s first two quarters, the total approved applications were 418. That is a 32% increase and there are 3 weeks left in the quarter. 552 is 57.3% of last year’s final total of approved applications. 51.1% of last year’s final job totals. To date, we have an estimated \$900M in qualified production expenditures. That is 76.3% of last year’s final expenditures, \$1.1B.

The average approved applications per week is 20. With 30 weeks left in the fiscal year, Donyelle projected an estimated total of 600 additional approved applications. There is a possibility of achieving a total of 1,100 applications which would be the largest total in the program’s 20-year history.

Donyelle closed by saying her tax purview keeps expanding. Nowadays it seems network C suites have my office phone on speed dial. Assisting with corporate and sales use taxes,

registering their subsidiaries in Florida, and helping established production companies from other states establish their businesses in Florida.

### Marketing Report (Blaire Bisbee)

Blaire started by saying the short month she has been here she focused on a few things. She created a short marketing slideshow-type video showcasing Florida's diverse environments and attractions for the website and social media channels.

A new partnership was established with the DEO Communications office. Blaire wrote an article to be included in the next internal and external newsletter. There is a lack of public awareness for our office, which could create more support for the industry. DEO will also start posting about the Florida Office of Film and Entertainment on their social media accounts, and include OFE in the next DEO Annual Report.

Blaire has been working on social media engagement on the Instagram account and in the past month, 150 followers have been gained. A 1,000-follower giveaway on Instagram is a goal, and the prize will be an OFE water bottle and tote bag. Holiday-themed posts were created for December.

Blaire closed by reminding members of the council to follow, tag, reshare, and like our social media posts.

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

Chair Siegel asked Gail Morgan to discuss Film Florida. Gail thanked Niki for updates regarding the bills and that they are constantly monitoring the bills as they progress. Film Florida continues Film Florida Fridays which are open to the public. All past episodes of Film Florida Fridays are on their YouTube and Facebook page. The podcasts continue and a new episode will be released every other week, except for the holiday week. The podcast can be listened to on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

The next Film Florida quarterly meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in person in Tampa, March 28-30, 2022.

A group of Film Florida board members visited Tallahassee on November 15th and 16th to attend Legislative meetings. In all, the industry had close to 80 meetings during its time in Tallahassee. Film Florida hosted a reception on November 16th in The Florida Capitol with special guest Bob Layton, the Co-Creator of the Ironman franchise, and Ant-Man. He brought a stack of comic book prints and signed copies during the reception.

Film Florida Executive Director John Lux has been asked by The Florida Chamber to speak at their Legislative Fly-In conference on January 11-12th in Tallahassee. This is the legislative kickoff conference and a great opportunity to speak to businesses outside our umbrella and why

they should care and support our efforts. In addition, John recently attend a Florida Chamber of Commerce small business webinar, they talked about the recent special session and upcoming legislative session, where they noted the film industry as one of their legislative priorities in the upcoming session. John plans to attend the AIF kickoff party during the legislative session on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

After working with Susan and the local film commissions, the lost business map was updated. The map shows the titles and budgets of major films Florida has lost due to the lack of statewide incentives to compete in the industry. The map shows Florida has lost over 100 titles that would have spent more than \$1.5 billion in Florida and would use more than 250,000 hotel room nights, and 125,000 cast and crew roles for Floridians. The map is used in discussions with legislators.

The Florida Emerging Filmmakers Fund awards grants between \$500-1000 dollars for projects made in Florida and is open to receiving new submissions. Another round of films is in the process of being evaluated right now. The Don Davis Finishing fund is also accepting submissions.

Gail closed by thanking the members of the FFAEC who are members of Film Florida. The more collaboration the better. Gail encouraged councilmembers not a member of Film Florida to visit the website to check out the various membership levels offered.

Chair Siegel handed the floor over to Michael Viera of SAG-AFTRA. The Covid 19 Safety and Return to Work Agreement has been renewed through January 16th and will continue to look at it on a month-to-month basis.

Michael closed by wishing everyone a happy holidays.

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

No ex- officio members present.

#### Public Comment

Chair Siegel opened the floor for public comment. Susan mentioned that the final episode of this season's "The Voice" was next week, and Jacksonville local Paris will be performing and to watch that episode.

**ADJOURN 11:07 A.M.**