

**FLORIDA FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Meeting

June 15, 2022

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**107 East Madison St.**

**Tallahassee, FL 32399**

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

Administrative (Interim Chair Ana Siegal)

Call to Order by Interim Chair Siegal at 10 a.m.

Roll Call:

*Councilmembers:*

Ana Siegel

Lisa Scott-Founds

Durand Adams

Aaron Bellamy

Brooks Timmons

Sandy Lighterman

Ryan Neves

Pamela Tuscany

Fred Piccolo

Jacqueline McCray

Ex-Officio Members

John Richards, Enterprise Florida, Inc.

Members of the Public:

John Lux, Film Florida

Kara High, Owner, Set 5 International Models and Talent

Todd Roobin, Film Commissioner, Jacksonville Film & Television Commission

Michele Hillery, Film Commissioner, Palm Beach County Film & Television Commission

Office of Film and Entertainment (OFE) Staff:

Commissioner Niki Welge

Susan Simms

Donyelle Marshall

Blaire Bisbee

## **WELCOME**

Interim Chair Siegal welcomed everyone and said the next FFEAC meeting will be decided via email.

Blaire took roll.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **2022 1st Quarter Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Welge called for a motion to approve the March 2022 meeting minutes.

Councilmember Sandy Lighterman made a motion to approve the minutes.

Councilmember Lisa Scott-Founds seconded the motion to approve the minutes.

The March minutes were approved unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Legislative Update (Commissioner Welge)**

Commissioner Niki Welge stated that not much has happened on the legislative front since our March meeting and the end of the regular legislative session. As she discussed previously, no legislation was passed during session that impacted our office or the industry. The office budget and staff are intact for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2022. There is new leadership coming into both chambers of the legislature this year. The new Speaker of the House will be Paul Renner, from the Flagler, St. Johns and Volusia area and the new Senate President will be Kathleen Passidomo from the Naples area.

It's an election year and official qualifying for legislative races began Monday and ends at noon Friday. As of Monday afternoon, there were 10 Senate candidates and 30 House candidates running without opposition. This could change by the end of the week. This November is the gubernatorial election, with some prominent democrats taking on Governor DeSantis.

Commissioner Welge stated that several members of our council are ingrained in the legislative process, whether as former legislators, staff members to the Senate, or previous staff to the House. She opened the floor for council members to provide their thoughts on legislative items. Councilmember Fred Piccolo said it was an honor being a part of the FFEAC, and he encouraged the incoming Speaker to appoint him to the council. He hopes more members from the House will join. Piccolo stated he had video editing experience and has upcoming projects to create political candidates' videos. His

goal is to help the film and entertainment industry grow in Florida and hopes to learn more by listening to the meeting today.

Commissioner Welge thanked Councilmember Piccolo for the introduction. She mentioned Fred was previously Governor Ron DeSantis' Communications Director and worked under Speaker Corcoran and at the Florida Department of Education. Piccolo has a lot of experience in the political realm and is currently a consultant in the political community in Tallahassee. She mentioned he is an award-winning filmmaker and won an Adobe Creative Award making a farewell film for Corcoran.

Commissioner Welge opened the floor for Sandy Lighterman, Broward Film Commissioner to provide an update on Film Ft. Lauderdale's new film incentive. Lighterman said they have a main tier, alternative tier, and stackable tier for incentives.

In the main tier, the minimum spend is \$400,000, 15% rebate on certain Broward expenditures up to \$175,000 a project. It requires 60% to be filmed in Greater Ft. Lauderdale and 50% of the vendors must be Broward vendors and 55% percent of the cast and crew are Broward and Miami Dade residents as they build their infrastructure.

The alternative tier is aimed at bringing business from Georgia. If its filmed 50% in Georgia and 50% in South Florida, this is a tier for those producers. It's a minimum spend of \$500,000 dollars, with a 10% rebate on certain expenditures, \$100,000 dollar cap, and 50% must be filmed in Broward County.

The stackable tier, the CVB will look at each project's tourism impact on a case-by-case basis. That could mean events that show off Broward County, large rentals of hotel rooms, an influencer that will post on social media a certain number of times. This tier is a subjective call by the CVB.

The incentive program was launched last Tuesday, and 4 applications have been submitted.

Sandy closed by saying they are excited about the new incentive program and bringing more productions to Broward County.

Councilmember Lisa Scott-Founds asked Sandy if she had any updates on the new production studio.

Sandy said the new studio is moving forward and they are negotiating a contract and will be signed the first week of July. LA Center Stages in Downtown Los Angeles is selling their Los Angeles studios and building a studio in Ft. Lauderdale. It will consist of 10 sound stages, a back lot, support space, and they are looking to finalize this quickly.

Lighterman said she has been trying to have studios built in South Florida for years and they are excited. She is working very closely with the Economic Development Department and the City of Ft. Lauderdale on the production of the project.

Lisa asked if Sandy if she had a chance to meet with Greg, interim City Manager. He helped bring this studio to Ft. Lauderdale and is now moving to Georgia. She said she is meeting with Chris next week, who is passing the baton from Greg.

#### Office of Film and Entertainment Team Report

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

#### Office Updates (Commissioner Niki Welge)

Commissioner Welge started by stating that our office sponsored the 2022 Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP) Conference week and awards in New York City last week. AICP celebrates the art of commercial production, and she was able to participate in some of the events as well as attend the awards gala on Thursday. Commercials represent nearly 40% of the productions our team assists over the course of the year. As of last week, we assisted nearly 750 commercials this fiscal year alone. The sponsorship of AICP would not have been possible without the help of Michael Savitz with Shoot Collective in Miami, the past president of AICP Florida which unfortunately, no longer exists and is now a part of the AICP Southeast branch.

Niki restated our office's operating budget and FTEs are intact for next fiscal year starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We are also in the process of planning and asking for our marketing, travel, and sponsorship budget for next year and it's looking like we may have support from our leadership for some additional marketing dollars. There is a direct correlation between the amount of marketing we do and the number of productions that film in the state. We have been able to participate in many industry events recently as things are happening in person for the first time in years. Susan has been representing our office and the state of Florida at several different industry events over the last three weeks and will be updating us on all in a few minutes.

She stated Blaire has been doing great things lately on the marketing front, including sponsored ads on social media and some banner advertising in the trades. Blaire will provide the marketing update shortly.

A new self-submission location library tool was implemented on our website. The LSE function allows property owners to submit photos of their property to be considered as a filming location.

The sales tax exemption program is breaking records this fiscal year. This program's success is the best indicator we have for production activity in the state, as each application represents at least one project being produced here. Donyelle has approved more applications this year than any year in the 21 years this program has been around. And those applicants are estimating they will spend more than \$1.4B in the state.

As the fiscal year comes to an end, our staff go through our annual reporting process. This requires us to determine how many projects we have assisted throughout the fiscal year that resulted in business and employment in Florida. The process is lengthy, as the office has worked on nearly 2,000 projects during the year. The findings will be reported at our next FFEAC meeting.

Commissioner Welge spoke regarding state property permitting. If a project wants to film on a state road, or film in a state park, we work with the corresponding state agency to facilitate the permit. There have been some major rule changes over the last few months with the DOT regarding temporary airports or landing zones for helicopters. The DOT used to take 2 weeks to approve this type of request and are now requiring a minimum of 75 days to issue a permit for a temporary airport. There are several reasons for the change, one of which is the office is down to one person and is overwhelmed with a backlog of requests having nothing to do with the film industry. Our agency has had to step in at the highest level and ask for DOT's help getting a request through the process faster for a major TV series filming in South Florida, and anticipate it being an ongoing issue moving forward.

She stated there are still FFEAC vacancies in the House and Governor's office and if anyone knows someone who would be interested to let her know.

Commissioner Welge opened the floor for questions.

#### Future Business Development (Susan Simms)

Susan stated that COVID pushed back a lot of industry events and they all wound up in the June timeframe. Upcoming events include AFCI Week and the Tribeca Film Festival. Susan virtually attended the Austin TV Festival June 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>. She also attended the Reel Screen Summit from June 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> and Produced By from June 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>.

Susan mentioned the Austin TV Festival had a panel with the cast and crew of the TV show "Justified", which aired for 5 seasons and is back with a season storyline starting in Miami and ending in Detroit. The Florida portion of the show was filmed in Georgia. We spend a lot of time trying to secure projects that are set in our state but end up filming elsewhere. Bill Lawrence, the showrunner for "Bad Monkey," was the next highlight at the Austin TV Festival. The Apple+ TV show, based on the Carl Hiaason novel, is being filmed in the Key West and Miami area.

Reelscreen is a 4-day conference for producers of reality television, with producers meeting with different companies to determine new shows for the next year. Sometimes there is a theme for the buyers such as true crime which get a huge number of viewers and are growing faster than any other segment on television. Susan found out about a new crime show shooting in Florida during the event. John Lux connected Susan with Film Florida members in attendance, and Susan met with the South Walton Beach Film Commissioner. Susan also connected with an attendee from Connecticut who recently

moved to Miami and was there pitching a show about Miami. The attendee was one of five chosen to present his TV show at the next event that Susan was attending. Operation Fishing Freedom was at the event, and they were pitching a Florida version of the show. An underwater discovery show was discussed, and Susan spoke with them regarding Florida as a place to film.

The next event Susan discussed was the Produced By Conference, which we sponsored this year and have every year prior. We sent them 1,000 branded Film in Florida water bottles and 1,000 tri-fold brochures. The water bottles were a huge hit in the welcome bags.

In closing, Susan said her next trip is to Ft. Lauderdale to attend the Film Florida meetings. The last week of June she will be back in Los Angeles for the AFCI Week Annual Conference. There will be film commissioners from 213 countries at AFCI Week.

Susan stated the final project for this fiscal year is calling and emailing all the productions in the previous year to find out if they filmed in Florida or not for our annual performance measures.

#### Sales Tax Exemption Report, LATAM and Sports Report (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle provided the Sales Tax Exemption data as of June 10<sup>th</sup>:

- 21.4% increase in approved applications per last year's final total
- 45.6% increase in total amount of tax exempted
- 9.6% increase in jobs
- 24.7% increase in expenditures
- 14.5% decrease in ROI

#### LATAM REPORT

Donyelle mentioned the press releases from the UPFRONTS were available in the meeting packet to review. Two C-suite changes including Luis Silberwasser, President of US networks for TelevisaUnivision is leaving. He will serve as chairman and CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery Sports. Silberwasser will oversee the company's sports division, which holds NBA, MLB, NHL, and March Madness rights. She mentioned JC Acosta was named President of ViacomCBS Networks International (VCNI) Southern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and Africa in December 2021.

## Sports Report

Sports production content and distribution rights continues to grow for our Spanish language networks. Just this year alone, Telemundo Deportes has covered the Triple Crown, Indy 500 and earned six Sports Emmy Award nominations for 2021. This fall, Telemundo Deportes will air FIFA World Cup 2022.

In April, she met with Brandon Biggs Deputy General Counsel, MANUEL DEL VALLE, Director of Broadcast and Jason Castro, Controller to tour their North Lauderdale InterMiami FC facilities which includes the stadium, broadcast operations, training facilities and academy.

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, with a 4-1 vote, the City of Miami commissioners approved the no bid stadium lease. Campus build-out is expected to be completed for the 2025 season. The Americas are hosting the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the Mayor of Miami Dade lead a team from Miami to Doha, Qatar, the host city of the 2022 World Cup. Miami is bidding on hosting matches.

Marc Weinroth, Senior Director, Assistant General Counsel of the Miami Dolphins/Miami Open. Sean McCarthy, Director, Finance of South Florida Motorsports, LLC. She toured the Miami Grand Prix raceway and grandstands for the inaugural Formula 1 Miami Grand Prix. South Florida Motorsports has a 15-year contract with Formula 1 to sponsor the race in Miami Gardens.

The final economic report by the South Florida Motorsports is expected by the end of our fiscal year. They will be sending the report to me which I will have distributed to the Council. Greater Miami Visitors and Convention Bureau estimates that the Miami Dade economic impact is \$300M.

Donyelle finished her report by providing goals for the next fiscal year which included partnering with the communications office of the Florida Department of Revenue to create a Sports Entertainment Production Qualified and Non-Qualified Expenditures guide. The guide is in your meeting packet.

Lastly, additional outreach to the 33 pro and development league teams in the state will be a future project.

## Marketing Report (Blair Bisbee)

Blair started her Marketing and Outreach update by providing the office social media statistics. Over the past 90 days, our Instagram page reached 12,143 accounts, resulting in a 223% increase of posts seen and an increase of 317 followers for a total of 1,476 followers.

In the last 28 days our Facebook posts have reached 108,990 people. Our page has increased by 29 new followers. On Twitter, we had an increase of 7 followers and 599 profile visits the past 28 days.

The Film in Florida app has been downloaded 18 times in the past 90 days which is an increase of 13%.

Our Facebook advertising campaign is currently running from May 1<sup>st</sup> - June 30<sup>th</sup>. The advertising will run for 60 days targeting film and entertainment industry professionals nationwide and Canada. The tagline used for the advertising was "Florida. And nowhere else." The photos used highlight beautiful Florida filming locations.

Our office ran a Hollywood Reporter digital magazine advertising campaign of "Florida. And nowhere else", with 5 different banner ad sizes rotating for 7 days during June 3-10<sup>th</sup> on Hollywood Reporter's website. The campaign results will be available in the next FFEAC meeting.

Blaire created a Film in Florida Tri-Fold resource flyer detailing our office resources to the film and entertainment industry. The flyer will be mailed to film school professors and industry professionals, used at entertainment industry trade shows and events. Produced By is including the trifolds in their sponsorship bags for attendees and Film Florida's Apples and Oranges party at Tribeca is including 50 of our flyers also.

The summer months seem to be festival and sponsorship season. The events we have sponsored so far include, Apple and Oranges Party at Tribeca Film Festival. Tri-Fold Flyers and Water bottles were included in filmmaker bags. The AICP Awards Show Sponsorship in NYC included a logo on the sponsor introduction reel and website, half page ad, mention in AICP awards public relations materials, and acknowledgement in newsletter and social media. The Produced By sponsorship included 1000 water bottles and tri-fold Flyers in filmmaker bags, and logo on materials.

Commissioner Welge and Blaire attended Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day at The Florida Capitol and handed out branded ear buds, talked with hundreds of children regarding the film and entertainment industry and handed our children's resource flyer for the film and entertainment industry.

A new feature we rolled out on our website is the self-submit your property function on the Reel- Scout location library. For those wanting to list their property as a filming location without sending the local film commissions the photos and information, the new self-submit function can be utilized.

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

IATSE was not present to provide an update.



Michael Viera with SAG-AFTRA said he didn't have a huge update to give but looked forward to seeing everyone in Ft. Lauderdale at the Film Florida meeting next week.

Commissioner Welge handed the floor to John Lux, Executive Director of Film Florida.

John Lux began by welcoming Fred Piccolo to the team. He stated a few of their members are at Tribeca where they hosted a reception for Florida filmmakers co-sponsored by the GMCVB, Destin-Ft. Walton Film Commission, Florida Keys and Key West Film Commission, as well as the Florida Office of Film and Entertainment. The goal for the event is to remind people Florida is open for business and to attract more jobs, projects, and money to our state. As Susan mentioned, several of the local film commissions will be at AFCI Week at the end of June.

John mentioned the LMGI video which has been in the works for about a year now. The video is basically done and Niki did a great job for our intro and close. The contact with LMGI has gone radio silent and have been in a holding pattern. We expect the video to be released this summer. As soon as he has more details, it will be passed along to Niki and Blaire.

This season of the Film Florida podcast has recently been completed. The final episode was with Colonel Glenn Roberts, Director of the United States Air Force Entertainment Liaison Office. In 4 seasons of the podcast, 93 episodes have been produced which are available on Apple, Google, Stitcher and the iHeart Radio app. Season 5 will be back in September. Film Florida continues to host their monthly professional development series, Film Florida Fridays. April featured a discussion about production accounting, May was talent agencies and casting, and June was drone production. They are free and open to the public. All past episodes are available online. The Film Florida Fridays will be back in September.

Film Florida presented an award at the Vero Beach Film Festival, Film Florida member Mo Fitzgibbon was there to represent Film Florida. The award was given to the sons of Myron Waldman, who was a legendary animator with Fleischer Studios headquartered in Miami.

Film Florida's Annual Meeting is June 22-24 in Fort Lauderdale. Industry and Association Council, Labor Council, Film Commission Council, Education Council, Legislative Committee, and Strategic Futures Committee, as well as the Board of Directors will be meeting. Film Florida members are welcome to attend all the meetings and the public is welcome to attend the Board of Directors Meeting on Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. There is a welcome reception event at Brandstar Studios on Wednesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The Florida Emerging Filmmakers Fund and the Don Davis Film Finishing Fund offer grants between \$1,000- \$2,000 and are given to Florida filmmakers and are open for submissions. Films that were awarded funds in 2021 have been very successful on the film festival circuit. 3 more awards were given this year.

John provided an update on the legislative front, they recently reached out to all new candidates for the Florida House and Florida Senate to introduce those candidates to Film Florida as well as ask the candidates to fill out a survey to learn more about their platform and have received 40 responses so far. They will continue to follow up throughout the year and educate them on the importance of our industry in Florida. They are also setting up meetings with candidates and legislators throughout the summer to educate them and discuss lost business in the state.

John highlighted the recent article from Bay News 9, about the local Pinellas chef who said movie crews saved his business because of the recent made for TV movies in the Bay area. We continue to talk about how exponentially larger the industry could be in Florida if we had additional support by the legislature.

John continues to have numerous conversations with producers who moved to Florida and don't understand why we don't have an incentive and must go to Georgia or Louisiana to film. We continue to lose more projects, but we will continue our efforts to stop that as best we can.

John finished by saying he continues to encourage any FFEAC members to join Film Florida.

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

No Ex-Officio members were present to provide an update.

#### Public Comment

Commissioner Welge opened the floor for public comment.

Michelle Hillery, with Palm Beach County Film Commission, asked why the sales tax exemption seemed to break records this year.

Commissioner Welge stated it was a combination of Donyelle's hard work, budgets being larger because of inflation, and the rise of costs of goods and services related to production. Also, as technology changes, production companies are being forced to buy new gear. Another reason is because Florida opened much earlier than other states, and the production activity is significantly higher.

Michelle confirmed Palm Beach County had similar outcomes and saw a surge of production professionals relocate to the area. She mentioned they are marketing the sales tax exemption, and it does help since Florida does not have a statewide incentive program.

Commissioner Welge congratulated Michelle on her new position as Palm Beach County Film Commissioner and thanked them for being a great partner throughout the years.

Michelle mentioned her promotion was not official yet, but she hopes it does come to fruition.

No additional public comment was received.

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