

Regular July Richland Center Tourism Commission Meeting, July 7, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman Ron Fruit at 4:00 pm.

Members present are Ron Fruit, Jayme Walsh, Toni McCarvel, and Karin Tepley. Dennis Fry was absent.

Jayme Walsh made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the May 2025 meeting. Karin Tepley seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

May/June Bill Payment Approval:

The Commission reviewed the listing of bill payments for the months of May and June 2025. Director Richards offered some explanation regarding a couple of new/different payments.

Cross-Currents Heritage Center Grant payment was an event grant at the Tippsaukee Farm during the Muscoda Morel Festival that sponsored the Ho-Chunk Heritage Dancers event through the Eagle Tourism Commission.

The VISA statement had two payments that are annual subscription renewals, one for our QR Code service that supports the QR codes we use on some publications and the Dropbox Renewal which is our warehouse for all of our videos and images.

Toni McCarvel made the motion to approve the payment report for May/June, Jayme Walsh seconded that motion. A roll call vote was held: Fruit-yes, Walsh-yes, McCarvel-yes, Tepley-yes. Motion unanimously passed.

Gray Media Streaming Advertising Discussion and Action. Director Richards explained that the Commission had approved Streaming Advertising with Gray Media for the Chicagoland and Milwaukee areas thru August. Streaming advertising has continued to be a huge driver of visitors to our websites. Since we have utilized streaming advertising visitors to the Greater Richland Tourism website has increased from 20,223 in the full year of 2021, to 80,981 in 2024. It is also one of the identifiable reasons we have seen Direct Visitor spending increase in the Greater Richland Area the past 4 years.

Director Richards made the recommendation that the Commission approve continuing the streaming marketing effort through September at this time, in the amount of \$7,500. This recommendation was also with the understanding that while we are still working on getting complete mid-year budget and fund balance figures, we started the year with over \$53,000 in unallocated funds in the Greater Richland Tourism account.

Karin Tepley made the motion to approve spending \$2,500 to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media in the amount of \$2,500 with the understanding that we started the year with \$53,000 of unallocated funds at the time we developed the budget. Jayme Walsh seconded the motion, a voice vote was held: Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes, Walsh-yes, McCarvel-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Toni McCarvel made the motion to recommend to the Richland Center Finance Committee, to allocate another \$5,000 to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media through the end of September. Karen Tepley seconded that motion, a roll-call vote was held. McCarvel-yes, Walsh-yes, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Department Updates:

Director Richards offered several other updates:

- The Village of Cazenovia is interested in the adoption of the room tax. However, they have had some recent events out of their control that have pushed this effort down the list of priorities. Richards will continue to work that relationship.
- He updated the Commission that Intern Erica Steinmentz is researching and developing a list of short-term rental properties in Richland County so we may communicate with them, offering our support and materials to improve guest access to our experiences.
- Director Richards, Commission Member Fry, public member Derrick Warner, and others have been continuing work to maintain and improve the kayak experience on the Pine River.
- There has been strong participation with events during the early part of the year. The Dairy Days and Rodeo Parade, as well as the rodeo had extremely strong participation. The color guard felt the parade was the best attended for many years, even prior to COVID. The Richland County Dairy Breakfast fed over 5,125 people, more than they ever have in their 40+ year history. The Hub City Dirt Drags also hosted the most that event has ever seen and can see additional growth in their future.

Next meeting and topics.

It was determined that the next meeting is expected to be Monday, September 8, 4:00pm.

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Tepley, 2nd by Walsh. Motion Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 pm.