EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, October 8, 2026 at 9:00 AM

City Hall, 3rd Floor, Committee Room,
1717 E Park Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order by Michael Ditmer at 9:07 am.

2. **ROLL CALL** Board Members: Michael Ditmer, Beth Kowalski, Amanda La Tour, Mike Mathis, Melissa Nyssen, Lyssa Schmidt.
   Excused: Curt Andrews, Cherry Barbier, Erin Dembski
   Staff and Others: Caitlyn Meola, Jeff Sachse

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Approval of the minutes of the August 13, 2026, meeting. Motion to approve by Mike Mathis, seconded by Amanda La Tour. All in favor.

4. **TREASURER REPORT**
   A. YTD 2026 Budget to Actual Report
      - YTD room tax revenue is $191,089.81, which excludes two missing payments from hotels. Room tax revenue is now on track to match or exceed revenue in 2025, despite having a slower spring. Mike Mathis made a motion to accept the budget, Michael Dittmer seconded.

5. **DIRECTORS' UPDATE**
   A. Motorcoach Tour Group & Social Media Influencer Recap
      - Director Meola helped to plan and coordinate with Laverne's Travel, a motorcoach tour operator based out of Minnesota, to bring a group of 104 to several businesses in Two Rivers. Amazing feedback was received from the operator, and she hopes to return to Two Rivers in the Future. Wander in Wisconsin, a social media influencer, contracted with several Two Rivers businesses to create social media content. Many other businesses benefited during her stay as well, as she captured organic material during stops along the way. This influencer reaches over 248,000 followers across social media platforms and has over 1 million likes across her channels.
   B. WASC Conference Recap
      - Director Meola recently attended the WASC (Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers) Conference held in Oshkosh. She had the opportunity to meet with 40 group planners in hopes of bringing more group visitors to Two Rivers.
   C. Explore Member Successes
      - Vice President of the Explore Board, Mike Mathis, filmed a kayaking segment with Discover Wisconsin in Two Rivers this past July, which aired in September on YouTube and live television. Wisconsin Coastal Management identified Two Rivers as a water trails community and fully funded this episode's segment. Melissa Nyssen at the Violet Inn has been successful with creating outreach for Two Rivers. She recently hosted special guests from Outside and Travel Wisconsin, who filmed at the Violet Inn regarding a segment about the Ice Age Trail.

6. **VISITOR GUIDE UPDATE** Director Meola shared that 27 Two Rivers businesses will be advertising in the 2027 Explore Two Rivers Visitor Guide, for a total amount of $18,850. The revenue will cover the

entire cost of the guide, with no leftover revenue or expense.

7. **MAMMOTH FEST – MELISSA NYSSEN** Melissa Nyssen proposed a new potential festival to celebrate the Ice Age Trail, as Two Rivers is 1 of only 29 Ice Age Trail communities, also being 1 of 3 located on the lake. She presented the possibility of the first weekend of October being a potential festival date for Mammoth Fest, to kick off the Mammoth Hiking Challenge. A large and unique piece of this festival would be to somehow incorporate a large Mammoth statue in Two Rivers, funded by fundraising efforts and sponsorships. She plans to hold a planning session for community members who are interested in the near future.

8. **MARKETING PLAN 2027** Director Meola shared general ideas for the 2027 marketing plan, based on the 2027 Explore Board budget amount of $231,700 passed by the Room Tax Commission meeting on October 6th. Ideas included print advertisements in various magazines, billboard advertisements in various locations, TV advertisements, and a digital marketing investment campaign. Director Meola was asked to follow up with other regional DMO's to seek feedback on the marketing investment campaign before any motions would be made to pass the marketing plan at the next Explore Two Rivers meeting.

9. **PUBLIC INPUT** No public input.

10. **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING** Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

11. **ADJOURNMENT** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m. by Michael Ditmer and seconded by Mike Mathis. Motion carried.

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