



**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

**JOINT MEETING EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ROOM TAX
COMMISSION**

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 6:00 PM

**Woodland Dunes, 300 Hawthorne Ave,
Two Rivers, WI 54241**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Explore Two Rivers Board of Directors Chairperson Joy Krieger called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Room Tax Commissioner Rick Carey called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Explore Two Rivers Board Members Present: Rick Carey, Jeff Dawson, Brenda Koprowski, Gina Krahn, Joy Krieger, Mike Mathis, Nancy Nabak, Tonya Prosser, John Wyrostek. Absent and excused: Laura Prellwitz. (1 vacancy at this time)

Room Tax Commission Members Present: Greg Buckley, Rick Carey, Peter Crabbe, Bill LeClair. Absent and excused: Curt Andrews

3. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, JOY KRIEGER

Chair of the Board of Directors, Joy Krieger thanked everyone for attending the evenings special ETR meeting. She stated "that the recent loss of our explore director made it become apparent that our board of directors was left in a state of limbo. The board needed clarity in areas of responsibility, delineation of roles and a clearer chain of command. Transparency to foster trust and communication would be the clear path forward. Explore Two Rivers is a newly formed 501c(6) nonprofit and she feels confident that with additional information and open dialogue it will be back on track shortly. The board will have a stronger understanding of the organization and the collaboration that exists allowing the board to fulfill their role as anticipated when they were nominated to serve. We all deserve a do over, so I declare this our Mulligan moment!"

4. REPORT ON TOURISM DIRECTOR POSITION VACANCY-CITY MANAGER GREG BUCKLEY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ELIZABETH RUNGE

Mr. Buckley reported that Effective October 13, 2023, Brian Dean is no longer serving in the position of Tourism Director. His supervisor, Community Development Director Elizabeth Runge, is working with the City Manager to prepare an updated job listing which will be released this week, requesting applications by Monday, November 20, 2023.

Two representatives, each from the Room Tax Commission and the Board of Directors of Explore Two Rivers, Inc., will be invited to participate in the initial screening of applicants and in interviews. While the hiring authority for the position is vested in the City Manager, input from those Room Tax Commission (RTC) and Explore Two Rivers, Inc. (ETR) representatives will be carefully considered.

Intent is to have a new director on board as soon as possible; exact schedule hard to say, with the holiday season almost upon us. In the meantime, the core responsibilities of the position are being picked up by other City staff in the Community Development Office and City Manager's Office.

Examples: 2024 Visitor Guide marketing, Wisconsin Tourism Directory ad, digital billboard on northbound I-43, Two Minutes with Two Rivers.

The RTC directs spending of Room Tax monies. The RTC is Curt Andrews, Chair, Cool City Brewing Company; Rick Carey, Vice Chair, Two Rivers Hotel Group/Cobblestone; Bill LeClair, City Council Rep.; Peter Crabbe, Hamilton Wood Type and Printing Museum; and Greg Buckley, City Manager. The Room Tax Commission contracts with various organizations for tourism development and marketing:

- City of Two Rivers for Tourism Director, a city employee who provides staff support to Explore Two Rivers, Inc.
- Two Rivers Main Street, for visitor information services at Main Street's Downtown Office
- Two Rivers Historical Society, for visitor information services at Washington House
- Explore Two Rivers, Inc., for development and implementation of marketing and outreach activities.

5. STATUS REPORT ON 2023 TOURISM BUDGET FOR THE CITY—CITY MANAGER GREG BUCKLEY

Mr. Buckley reported the Room Tax Revenue was conservatively budgeted at \$270,000; projected to be \$300,000. Out of that \$300,000, \$90,000 is retained by the City for municipal purposes, as allowed by State Statute. Spending by the RTC for Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development activities was budgeted at \$241,346; actual spending is projected at \$204,813, for a projected year-end operating surplus of \$23,947. This will increase the fund balance in the Community Tourism Fund under the Room Tax Commission's control to about \$145,000.

6. REPORT ON PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET FOR USE OF ROOM TAX FUNDS, TO BE PRESENTED TO ROOM TAX COMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 1, 2023 MEETING, INCLUDING FUNDS TO BE BUDGETED FOR TOURISM MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BY EXPLORE TWO RIVERS, INC.

Mr. Buckley summarized the 2024 draft Room Tax Budget:

<u>Annual Room Tax Revenue</u>	\$300,000
Less: 30% Retained by City for Municipal Uses	(90,000)

<u>Available for Tourism Activities</u>	\$210,000
Cost of Director, Wages & Benefits (Room Tax Commission Contracts with City)	(100,000)

<u>Room Tax Commission Funding Commitments:</u>	(40,000)
Visitor Info. Services by Main Street (\$12,000), Washington House (\$3,000), Memorial Drive Wayside Maint. by City (\$25,000)	

<u>Balance Available for Marketing & Outreach</u>	\$70,000
Activities of Explore Two Rivers, Inc.	

7. DISCUSS FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORE TWO RIVERS, INC., RELATIONSHIP TO ROOM TAX COMMISSION AND CITY, BY-LAWS

Mr. Buckley discussed the RTC and City Staff anticipate that key provisions of an agreement

between the RTC and ETR will include:

-A clear statement that the RTC is providing room tax funds to ETR for purposes of developing and carrying out a tourism marketing and development plan for the community, with an overall goal of increasing overnight stays and increasing the economic impact of tourism in the City of Two Rivers.

-A requirement that, as a condition of receiving this funding, ETR prepare and present an annual work plan and budget for approval by the RTC. (Anticipate the work plan and budget will be presented and discussed at a joint meeting of two bodies.) Also anticipate providing for one additional joint meeting, at mid-year, to review status of work plan implementation and discuss the overall “state of tourism” in Two Rivers.

-Provision that, to assist ETR in developing and executing its annual work plan, the RTC is funding the position of Tourism Director, a City of Two Rivers employee responsible for providing staff support to ETR.

-Provision that, following approval of the annual work plan by the RTC, the funds to be provided by the RTC will be deposited into an account controlled by ETR and that ETR is authorized to expend those funds for activities consistent with its approved work plan and budget.

-Provision that the City of Two Rivers will be fiscal agent for ETR, and as such will hold the room tax funds made available for ETR’s use in a separate fund, will provide ETR with monthly financial statements for that fund, and will handle all accounts payable and accounts receivable processing for that fund.

-Recognition that ETR may pursue grants, donations and other non-room tax revenue for uses that are consistent with its mission of tourism marketing and development for Two Rivers.

8. DISCUSS PATH FORWARD, NOW THROUGH 2023 YEAR-END

Mr. Buckley suggested the RTC will meet on November 1; agenda includes consideration of budget for use of room tax monies in 2024, begin discussion of contract with ETR. The ETR Marketing Committee will begin work on 2024 work plan—may not be finalized until early 2024, depending on Director availability. The ETR Executive Committee will receive and review the proposed contract with RTC. The ETR November Board meeting will be the annual meeting as required by the by-laws, to include election of officers (November 14?), other business to include update on Tourism Director Recruitment. ETR December Board meeting will include consideration of contract with RTC; update on Tourism Director recruitment/hiring.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Explore Two Rivers Annual Meeting, Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 7:30 PM, City Hall

10. ADJOURNMENT at 6:20 pm.