



EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

Violet Inn, Lounge & Spa
1415 16th St., Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at **8:01 a.m.**

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Todd Nilson, John Wrostek, Michael Ditmer, Mike Mathis, Melissa Nyssen, Amanda La Tour, Erin Dembski, Joe Metzen, Kyle Kordell

Absent: Curt Andrews

Guests: Cherry Barbier (STR owner), Lyssa Schmidt (Executive Director, Van der Brohe Arboretum)

3. INTRODUCTION OF INVITED GUESTS

- **Cherry Barbier**, STR property owner, introduced herself and described her properties in Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and the UP.
- **Lyssa Schmidt**, new Executive Director, Van der Brohe Arboretum introduced herself and shared her background in journalism and nonprofit leadership.

4. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES (Action Item)

Motion to approve the August 2025 Board meeting minutes made by **Michael Ditmer**, seconded by **Todd Nilson**.

Motion carried.

5. TREASURER REPORT (Action Item)

a. Budget to Actual Report YTD 2025

b. 2025 Room Tax Year over Year Comparison

Discussion highlights:

- Accrual basis accounting adopted for more accurate month-to-month comparisons.
- **Room tax revenues are down** year-over-year compared to 2024.
- Exploring **geofencing tools** (via state Main Street Program, coordinated with Jason Ring) to measure tourism impact, especially at Neshotah Beach.
- Peer DMOs also reporting declines, though not quantified.
- Shared advertising opportunities are helping reduce costs (example: Fox Cities Magazine full-page ad split with Michicot MAGIC).
- Logo wear sales are strong, but lag in consignment reporting delays recorded revenues.
- Concession stand revenues are positive; 2025 likely to see a record year.
- Variances noted in budget timing: heavy spending in winter/spring, revenues lag until summer.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by **John Wyrostek**, seconded by **Amanda Verhelst**.
Motion carried.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion of Open ETR Board Seat

- Acknowledgement of ongoing recruitment process.
- Guests Sherry Barbier and Melissa Schmidt identified as strong potential candidates for future service.

b. Review of Business Survey and Next Steps

- 49 survey responses received to date (~25% response rate).
- Board agreed to extend the survey for **30 more days** with goal of reaching 60+ responses.
- Results will be reviewed at the October 2025 meeting on the City Hall big screen.

7. NEW BUSINESS AND UPDATES

a. Shipwreck Coast Update (John Wyrostek)

- Presentation on Two Rivers' role within the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary.
- QR-coded buoy project continues to expand; **Continental** shipwreck highlighted as first with a linked podcast.
- Paddlepalooza participation will include distribution of shipwreck maps.
- Long-term goal: brochures and access-point guides for paddlers.
- Board discussed opportunities for STRs to include shipwreck information in guest materials.

b. Proposed Beach House/Concession Stand (Mike Mathis)

- Review of **Neshotah Park Master Plan** goals: restroom upgrades, improved concessions, indoor rental space.
- Proposed pavilion building estimated at **\$2.1 million** (with demolition).
- Features: expanded restrooms, modernized concession stand, 60–70 person rental hall, outdoor shelter, and rooftop deck.
- Funding plan: mix of fundraising, grants, sponsorships, and potential modest city borrowing.
- Alternatives discussed: minimal renovation (\$20–35k for code compliance) or \$500k+ for full concession stand remodel.
- Strong support voiced for full pavilion concept, though community concerns acknowledged.
- Sponsorship challenges noted for Friday concert series; food truck rallies may be introduced to offset costs.

8. TOURISM DIRECTOR REPORT

- Joe Metzen proposed shifting from **monthly to bi-monthly Director's Reports**. Board concurred; casual updates to be shared in off-months as needed.
- Work underway on **2026 Marketing Plan**, with draft framework to be shared in October.
- Room Tax Commission will provide guidance on balancing capital campaign support with sufficient funds for marketing operations.
- **Retirement announcement:** Joe Metzen informed the board he will retire in **April 2026**. Board thanked him for his leadership and contributions.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.**, tentatively at **Woodland Dunes Nature Center**.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by **Joe Metzen**, seconded by **John Wyrostek**.

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at **9:05 a.m.**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Two Rivers will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the City Clerk's office at 920-793-5526 or email clerk@two-rivers.org at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation. For additional assistance, individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can call 711 and be connected to a telephone relay system.

It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no other action will be taken by any governmental body at the above-stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice