



EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, June 11th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

3rd floor Two Rivers City Hall
1717 E. Park Street
Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by Vice President, Mike Mathis.

2. **ROLL CALL:** In person attendees included Curt Andrews, Melissa Nyssen, Cherry Barbier, Erin Dembski, and Beth Kowalski. Michael Ditmer, Cherry Barbier, and Lyssa Schmidt attended remotely. Amanda Latour was absent. Staff attended included Caitlyn Meola. Guests included Kyle Kordell, Jeff Sachse, and Kevin Stoer.

3. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD SECRETARY:** The Board welcomed Beth Kowalski, Executive Director at Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum, as the new Explore Two Rivers Board Secretary.

4. **APPROVAL OF MAY BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 2026 meeting. A motion was made by Curt Andrews and seconded by Erin Dembski to adopt the minutes.

5. TREASURER REPORT

- **YTD 2026 Budget to Actual Report:** Curt Andrews presented the YTD 2026 Budget to Actual Report. Discussion ensued. A motion was made by Mike Mathis to accept as presented and seconded by Michael Ditmer.

6. VISITOR GUIDE UPDATE

- **Range of Cost vs. Ad Sponsorships:** Director Meola provided examples and shared recommendations for the future of the Visitor Guide. The board engaged in discussion about the price of ad sponsorship and strategy in securing ads from local businesses and Sister City partnerships. A motion was made by Mike Mathis to have \$7,500 of expense covered by ad revenue with the remainder from Explore Two Rivers with a request to the Room Tax Board with a second from Curt Andrews. All in favor.
- **VG Timeline:** Director Meola reassured the Board that they are on track to publish the Visitor Guide on time for the year 2027.

7. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- **Positivity Campaign Update:** Director Meola noted that I LOVE TR yard and metal signs are still available for purchase. Other promotional materials ordered include new feather flags and banners, to hopefully be up by the Fourth of July. Curt Andrews mentioned that the next Community Ambassador Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18th at 5:30 in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, which is open to the public.
- **Kiosks:** The "Things to Do" maps in the kiosks were enlarged and updated with the new downtown businesses for the summer.
- **Social Media:** Director Meola shared the results of a viral Facebook reel she created for Lighthouse Inn, noting that the video resulted in nearly 25,000 views on Facebook and over 14,000 views on Tik Tok, with a total of 39,000 views between the two. It was also noted that 85% of these views came from non-followers, showcasing the importance of social media marketing.

- **First Ascent Award for Innovation:** Explore Two Rivers was nominated for the First Ascent Award for Innovation, which celebrates an organization or business that implemented an innovation approach to outdoor recreation through a new strategy, technique, project, program, or product in the past year. Results of the award winner will be presented later this month.

8. GRANT DISCUSSION – MIKE MATHIS:

- **Concession Stands:** Mike Mathis provided an update on the grant application status and if awarded, what the process and possible timeline would be moving forward.
Welcome Center – possible future application: Director Mathis provided an update on a possible future application for a community welcome center in conjunction with NOAA, highlighting Lake Michigan's ship wreck coast and weather patterns.

9. PUBLIC INPUT: No input from the public.

10. NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: Thursday, July 9, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT. Curt Andrews initiated the motion to adjourn the meeting. Beth Kowalski seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Caitlyn Meola, Tourism Director