

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes January 9, 2025

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Conrad Talaga, Cheryl Mitchell, Courtney Krause, Melissa Lampe and Steven Board
Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel and Tourism Director Robin Kaufman.
Carol Quest from the Watertown Health Department, Watertown Finance Director Mark Stevens, and Stepanie Juhl
Programming Coordinator

1. The meeting was called to order by Conrad Talaga at 8:00 a.m.
2. Review & Approve December Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Steven Board and seconded by Courtney Krause. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the December financials was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Melissa Lampe. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Discuss and take possible action on lodging establishments not complying with room tax requirements with guests from the Health and Finance Departments:
Representatives from the Health and Finance departments were requested to attend in order to explain their departments' role in the room tax process for lodging facilities.
*Per state code a lodging facility must pass a pre-inspection administered by the Health Department. An annual renewal is required and there may be inspections throughout the year depending on the facility. Lodging facilities are not allowed to operate without a license and annual renewal of licenses.
*The Health Department informs the Finance department and going forward, the Tourism Director, of the existence of the authorized lodging facilities and will update the Finance Department/Tourism Director throughout the year.
*The Finance Department sends tax collection procedures to the lodging facility. Code requires a report of eligible revenue and payment for city room taxes to be received by the city on the 20th of each month for the prior month's revenues.
*The Tourism Director will send a welcome letter to the lodging facility to offer assistance, introduce the Tourism Commission's mission and explain the use of city taxes for the promotion of Watertown Tourism.
*The Finance Department will contact the lodging facility if they are not reporting or not reporting correctly.
*The Finance Department will contact the Tourism Director if the lodging facility is not reporting monthly or paying taxes to the city by the 20th of each month.
*The Tourism Director will make an initial follow-up when tax room revenue is not collected as described above. The Director will bring it to the Tourism Commission's attention if further action is required.
 - c. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – The Tourism Director is designing the Watertown Main Street page of the guide. It will feature the downtown area to help direct tourists to this area troubled by bridge construction.
 2. Ad opportunities – No new updates
 - c. Review and take action on mural restoration projects – Leadership Watertown is still working on 2 mural projects. They could be presented to the commission in future months as a grant application.
 - d. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Christmas Eve & Day and New Years Eve and Day falling on a Tues/Wednesday reduced occupancy significantly. Much of our business travel chose not to come for a Monday 1 night stay and depart Tuesday or a Thursday arrival with Friday departure. There was no Watertown Highschool basketball tournament between Christmas and New Years. Star reports were delayed several days so no occupancy data is available at the time of this report.

4. New Business

a. Review Manager's report of previous month's task – report attached.

b. Commission members' report.

Discuss past and upcoming events; February 14 there is a synchro skating event in Beaver Dam which will impact Watertown hotels. Maranatha students return 1/20. A new Octagon House manager has been hired. A new Main Street program director is being hired. Bridge construction continues with girders being delivered next week.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9am was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Steven Board

Agenda items:

A reminder from Robin to have all requests for additions to the next meeting's agenda to her by Tuesday, the week before the meeting.

The next meeting will be at 8 am on February 13, 2025, via Zoom or you may attend in person at Watertown City Hall

NOTE: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.

Submitted by,
Cheryl Mitchell, Secretary

Manager's Report – December

Social Media Report

Facebook: 64 new followers (Post reach 162,183)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 1448 Users – 3067 views

Instagram: 1141 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown Tourism, Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake-up Watertown.
- Represented Tourism at Collaboration Group
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee meeting.
- Organized and attended Jingle Bell on the Rock
- Attended Town Square Committee meeting.
- Continued monitoring Watertown Window Wonderland
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com.
- Met with new ownership at Heritage Inn
- Continued work on Dodge County Tourism rebrand w/State Tourism

- Designed and coordinated billboards for Hwy 16/19 and I-94
- Attended Leadership Watertown class.
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
- Jingle Bell on the Rock
- CPKC Holiday Train
- Window Wonderland storefronts