Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes November 12, 2026 8am

The following Tourism Commission members were present at Watertown City Hall: Courtney Krause, Ken Berg, Vick Patel, Steve Board, Melissa Lampe
Also present: Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Watertown Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere, Parks and Rec Director Ryan Schmidt, Resident John Kadisch, Watertown Area Chamber of Director Linden Peacy

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:02 a.m.

2. Review & Approve September Minutes. Motion to approve minutes was made by Ken Berg and seconded by Melissa Lampe. Motion passed.

3. Old Business:
   a. Approve Financial Report: Robin informed the group that they received July and August room tax in November. The amount seemed low, and Robin is expecting a larger room tax check in November from the "online" market. Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve the financials, seconded by Courtney Krause. Motion approved unanimously.

   b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.

   1. Visitor Guides – Visitor Guide ads have begun. Robin will stay connected to the guide designer to see if ad sales are strong enough in 2026 to stay on pace with the earlier deadline. Ad sales typically begin in January each year.
   3. Update on billboard commitment – Commitments are strong in November. Robin is looking for more commitments in December.
   4. Placer.ai usage updates – Robin provided a placer.ai report to Watertown Parks & Rec for Boo Bash.
   5. Review and act on mural restoration projects. – Robin has been working with Mid-State Equipment in Watertown regarding the need for a lift. They decided to offer the lift for the expected 12-week project at no cost. The expectation is the lift will be brought back when not in use, and will be protected from paint splatter. Robin assured strong promotional support to Mid-State Equipment as the project's sponsor. A lot of items still need to be worked through, including fencing for the project, permits with the city, and who is the liable party on all permits and contracts, potentially the building owner of the mural. Work on the project will continue with another update at the December meeting.

   c. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Vick from Best Western provided an update. As of November 11, occupancy is 65.71%, LY 36.59%. The increase is due to full weekends and current construction projects. October 2026 was 62.47% occupancy, LY 56.64%. In 2027, from February – April, the USBC Senior State Bowling Tournament will be held in Watertown. The group expects the need of 15-20 rooms every Friday and Saturday night during that period.

4. New Business
   a. Review and discuss possible action on Park and Rec Grant Request. Watertown Park and Rec is requesting $500 for buss shuttle transportation from Watertown High School to the CPKC Holiday Train at Brandt Quirk Park for its Watertown stop on December 9, 2026. Steve Board made a motion to approve, seconded by Melissa Lampe. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Review and take possible action on Milwaukee Brewers 2027 ad. The group discussed the benefits of being in the guide in the year of the team's first World Series win and feel that the momentum of interest in the Brewers will only grow in 2027. Ken Berg made a motion to commit to a $3,000, ½ page ad, seconded by Melissa Lampe. Motion approved unanimously.

c. Review and take possible action on USA Today Octagon House Ad. USA Today provides a Midwest Travel Guide each year and approached Watertown Tourism to participate. Robin reached out to the Octagon House with their interest in this audience, and they felt it would be a great fit. Between digital and print, tens of millions of readers will receive the publication. Steve Board made a motion to approve the ad at $2,500 for a ¼ page ad dedicated to the Octagon House Museum, seconded by Courtney Krause. Motion approved unanimously.

d. Review and take possible action on META link limitations. Watertown Tourism is part of a rollout from META that restricts Tourism to a limit of two links within its posts per month. Watertown Tourism frequently links to its blog articles, ticket links, and other relevant links outside of Facebook. Robin discussed some workarounds that are in process but informed the group it might be necessary to proceed with a monthly subscription to increase the number of links that can be posted. Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve the base subscription of META to include 8 links per month, costing $50 monthly. The motion was seconded by Courtney Krause. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Review and take possible action on 2027 budget. The budget was tabled to December's meeting with the suggestion that personnel costs be separated from management costs, and to add a new category for discretionary funds to be named Municipal Tourism Development Grants.

f. Review and take possible action on revised 2027-29 Tourism Contract. The Tourism Commission reviewed the proposed revisions to Sections 1 and 2 of the 2027 Tourism Promotion Services Agreement. The Commission expressed concern that the additional language is inconsistent with the intent and requirements of Wisconsin State Statute § 66.0615. Steve Board made a motion to remove the proposed additions to the agreement and to retain the language from the previously executed contract. Ken Berg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The Chamber director will follow up with the recommendation.

g. Review Manager's Report of previous month's tasks. Robin provided the report

h. Commission member's report:
    1. Discuss upcoming and past events
       Pygmalion will be performed at MBU November 11-14. The Octagon House Museum will host its annual Holiday Play on Thanksgiving weekend and will introduce holiday tours December 12-13. They are looking for volunteers to assist in the tours.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:26am was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Steve Board Meeting adjourned.

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 December 10, 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,
Robin Kaufmann, Director of Watertown Tourism

Manager's Report – October 2026

Social Media Report

Facebook: 13,288 followers (Post views 286,383)
Visitwatertownwi.com: 1,175 Users – 2,153 views
Instagram: 1285 followers (6,304 post views

- Regularly created content and posted to social media on Tourism and BFTS
- Created and displayed new wayfinder signs at BFTS
- Created materials for new event – Let it Glow, exterior holiday home decorating contest
- Attended Wisconsin Department of Tourism Update webinar
- Distributed Vietnam Veteran Memorial Wall brochures
- Created and executed Boo Bash marketing campaign
- Solicited for quotes for 2027 budget items
- Continued work on the Willkommen mural restoration
- Attended City Economic Development Lunch & Learn
- Attended Jefferson County economic development event
- Attended Women in Business networking event
- Created and executed Pumpkin Palooza marketing campaign
- Represented Tourism at Wake Up Watertown
- Worked on billboard commitments (including graphic work)
- Visited businesses/events for promotional purposes:
    - City View on Main
    - Bypass Farm
    - Tivoli Island
    - Multiple Downtown Businesses