

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes April 11, 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Aaron David, Cheryl Mitchell, Conrad Talaga, Amanda Kostroski, and Peter Wright
Also, present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board, Tourism Manager Robin Kaufmann, Main Street Executive Director Jody Purtell and Mayor Emily McFarland

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:00 am.
2. Review & Approve March minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Peter Wright and Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Introduction of new Main Street Executive Director, Jody Purtell
Jody is a 1999 Gosling graduate and has been working for Non-Profits and marketing of events for 12 years. The Main Street program holds more events than any other city organization and Jody is looking forward to the collaboration with the Tourism Commission.
4. Discuss Watertown Tourism Commission composition with guest Mayor Emily McFarland
Mayor McFarland is managing the standardization of the appointment structure for City Commissions. The Tourism Commission is unique in that members are appointed on a yearly basis. Committees and Commissions should represent varied and relevant industries and include advocacy of tourism related events and initiatives.
Current structure of the Tourism Commission is 6 voting members and a non-voting alderman representative. Mayor McFarland would like to update the structure to consist of 5 voting members and change the assigned alderman to a voting member to match other city commissions. One current voting member will change to a non-voting member. The Tourism Commission will notify the mayor's office which member's status will change by April 26. The matter will then be discussed at the May 7th council meeting.
5. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the April financials was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Amanda Kostroski. The Commission moved to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – 1500 guides have been distributed in the area. Robin Kaufmann is trying to get our guide placed in Travel Wisconsin's rest stops on the I-94 corridor to Illinois.
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing new to present
 - c. Review and take possible action on mural restoration projects – nothing new to report.
 - d. Discuss and take possible action on Watertown Riverfest objectives - The entertainment launch has begun. Announcements are made at 7pm every night. The event will be heavily marketed between now and August.
 - e. Discuss Hotel stay updates -
Final February occupancy is as follows: National occupancy 58.9% (down 1.8% from 2023). Wisconsin Occupancy 43.8% (down 7.3 % from 2023). Wisconsin South occupancy 39.3% (down 10.7% from 2023). Local hotel market occupancy is approximately 34-34%.
Approximate (not final) March occupancy is as follows: National occupancy 49.46% / Local Market 34.27%
6. New Business
 - a. Robin will report on the 2024 Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism
900 Tourism representatives were in attendance. Panel discussion members included reps from Top Chef, RNC and the 2025 NFL draft in Green Bay. Watertown will benefit from the national exposure of Top Chef, and is on the route to both the RNC and the 2025 Draft. Networking opportunities proved valuable.

- b. Discuss and take possible action on purchase of digital billboard displays.
An opportunity for a digital billboard contract is available on Highway 26 between Johnson Creek and Jefferson or on I-94. A one-year contract is \$693/month. The 8 second ad appears 800 times per day. The contract allows the Tourism Commission to sell/give the space to another entity to promote city events. Robin will present the offer at a future meeting for discussion.
- c. Review Manager's report of previous month's tasks: Attached
- d. Commission members' report.
March Luther Prep tournaments. Maranatha will have a play this weekend. 21 tickets remain available for the Whiskey and Wine Walk. Jefferson Car show is on April 26 weekend. Maranatha Graduation is May 3rd weekend. Wisconsin Aviation will host a Fly-in event on 5/15.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 am was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Peter Wright.

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 8:00 am May 9th, 2024, 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 – March

Social Media Report

Facebook: 80 new followers (Post reach 131,822)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 1360 Users - 2783 views

Instagram: 1102 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County, Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- Attended Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism-WIGCOT
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Committee meeting
- Represented Tourism on WBEV Radio morning show
- Coordinated check passing for Octagon House billboard and BFTS Summer Concert

Series

- Volunteer for Beach Party BINGO
- Continued planning Watertown Riverfest 2024
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - o Ava's Confectionery
 - o Main Street Morning Mixer