

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes June 18, 2026 8am

The following Tourism Commission members were present at Watertown City Hall: Steven Board, Ken Berg, Vick Patel, Melissa Lampe

Also present; Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Watertown Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere, Resident John Kadisch

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:05 a.m.
2. Review & Approve September Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Ken Berg and seconded by Vick Patel. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the financials was made by Ken Berg and seconded by Melissa Lampe. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – Individual requests continue to be mailed.
 2. Ad opportunities – The Green Bay Packers Yearbook offered the same deal as the Milwaukee Brewers Yearbook. Robin did not pursue it but told the publisher that it could be considered in 2027.
 3. Update on billboard commitment – Watertown Tourism renewed its contract for rotating digital space on I-94 and Hwy 26. The new contract runs July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027. Robin announced billboard availability at Wake-Up Watertown and secured five weeks of space. She will be writing a letter inviting last year’s commitments to participate over the next 12-month period.
 4. Placer.ai usage updates – Robin used Placer.ai to create a report for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Dedication event. 3,000 people attended the event from as far away as Minnesota. The data was shared with the American Legion.
 5. Review and act on mural restoration projects. – Robin has been working to revitalize the Willkommen Mural with the building owner. The city has agreed to waive the right-of-way permit fee throughout the process. Robin is working to secure a scissor lift for the project through local connections. Fencing will be needed to secure the area for the duration of the project, but the plaza will be accessible to the public. Robin will keep the group updated as the project proceeds.
 - c. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Vick from Best Western provided an update. As of mid-June occupancy was at 75.95%, up from 67.83% LY. Last weekend was a sellout due to wedding blocks and a large softball tournament. The two-week forecast is slower during the week. There will be wedding bookings on weekends.
4. New Business
 - a) Discuss and take possible action on The BIG Pop-Up funding needs – The organizers received a grant from the RDA and do not have a need for funds at this time. Robin will revisit in July if needed.
 - b) Discuss and take possible action on recognition of long-time commission member – Previous Best Western GM, Cheryl Mitchell, passed away in May. The Tourism Commission agreed it would be appropriate to recognize Cheryl’s contributions in a Facebook post and through a press release.

- c) Review 12-month Placer.ai Domestic Travel and Tourism Report – Placer provides a 12-month overview of local tourism that includes visitor spend, average monthly visitors, visit nights, and more. Robin shared the results from May 2025-April 2026 with the group. Visitor spend in the 12-month period was \$10 million, with 170.1K visit nights. Steve Board would like to present the information at a February economic development breakfast at MBU. Robin will also use the info on LinkedIn and is considering publishing it on the Tourism social media channels.
- d) Discuss and take possible action on billboard requests from outside of district – the group decided that the discounted space should be used by Watertown groups and businesses. Robin will communicate the decision with the Jefferson event organization that made the request.
- e) Review Manager’s report of previous month’s tasks – Robin provided the report to the group.
- f) Commission Members’ report.
 - a. Discuss upcoming and past events – Music at the Museum held its first concert last Monday with great success. Road Crew will be at the Bentzin Family Town Square this Saturday, June 20. Farmers Market After Hours will be held July 12. Beer and Bacon Walk takes place in July along with Christmas in July Sidewalk Sales and another Bentzin Family Town Square concert, featuring Hypnotized by Mac.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 am was made by Ken Berg and seconded by Melissa Lampe. 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 July 9, 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 – May 2026

Social Media Report

Facebook: 12,473 followers (Post views 634,109)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 3482 Users – 3585 views

Instagram: 1233 followers

- Regularly created content and posted to social media on Tourism and BFTS
- Updated events and business listings on visitwatertownwi.com
- Sent letter of support for Hiawatha West Extension Project
- Visited Lumin Terrace Apartments
- Attended Multi-Chamber networking breakfast
- Attended Watertown Main Street Program Board of Directors meeting
- Attended Jefferson County Tourism quarterly meeting
- Attended Licensing meeting discussing potential DORA
- Worked on billboard commitments (including graphic work)
- Coordinated multiple Watertown Tourism grant requests
- Created and distributed press release to Wisconsin media outlets for Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Dedication
- Began work on Willkommen Mural project
- Attended Chamber Marketing meeting
- Visited businesses/events for promotional purposes:
 - Music on Main Street Concert at BFTS
 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Dedication
 - Memorial Day Ceremony
 - Downtown Watertown Art Walk
 - Glenn's Brat Haus
 - EAA Chapter 320 Fly-In
 - Latte Donatte
 - Buffalo Bar Mother's Day Event
 - Watertown Greenhouse
 - Watertown Farmers Market
 - Badger State Hydrate