

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes December 14, 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Aaron David, Kristine Butteris, Cheryl Mitchell, Conrad Talaga, Amanda Kostroski
Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board and Mark Stevens Finance Director.

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:00 am.
2. Review & Approve November minutes. Motion to approve made by Conrad Talaga with the condition to correct the spelling of his name and seconded by Amanda Kostroski. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Financial Report: The November financial report was not prepared for the meeting. Approval for the November financial report will be on the January agenda.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and take possible action on marketing plan.
 1. 2023 Visitor Guides: Nothing new to report
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing new to report
 3. Video production – The video is complete and will be shared on social media in the coming weeks.
 - c. Review and take possible action on Mural Restoration projects: The Pine Hill mural and installation is complete. The check presentation was done, and the information was sent to the Watertown Daily Times.
 - d. Hotel Stay updates; October weather was not ideal which affected overall occupancy. National hotel occupancy was 65.8%. Wisconsin occupancy was 57.4%. The local market was approximately 55%. November numbers are not available as of this date. Approximate national occupancy was 58.1 % and local market occupancy was approximately 40-45%. The Thanksgiving week (Wednesday – Friday) occupancy was better than 2022.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on making a recommendation to increase room tax percentage. A motion to recommend that the City Council hold a vote to increase the room tax from 5% to 8% was made by Amanda Kostroski and seconded by Kristine Butteris. The Commission voted to approve the motion. The resolution will be ready to be sent to the Finance Committee's next meeting on December 19th. If approved, the resolution can be presented during the first City Council meeting in January.
 - b. Discuss and take possible action on Chamber of Commerce Tourism Agreement. The Agreement for 2024 will be changed from 1 year duration to 3 years. All other details remain the same. A motion was made to send the agreement to the City of Watertown by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Kristine Butteris. The Commission voted to approve the motion. The Tourism Commission President signed the agreement.
 - c. Discuss and take possible action on 2024 Tourism Commission meeting schedule. The Commission members and Tourism Manager will discuss two potential meeting days/times for 2024. The meetings can remain on the second Thursday at 8 am or move to the second Tuesday at 8 am. The Tuesday schedule may work better for some of the members. The item will be on the January agenda.

- d. Review Manager's report on the previous month's tasks – See attached report.
- e. Commission Member's report: Tree Lighting on 11/16 at the Town Square. 12/2 Jingle Bell on the Rock / December 9 Watertown Blue Review Dance Competition / Christmas CP Train event in Watertown on December 4th. Basketball tournament at Watertown High School the week between Christmas and New Years Day. Voting on the tree decorations at the Town Square ends 12/15. Window Wonderland voting is ongoing. Parade of Homes is over and had record attendance. Leadership Breakfast at Maranatha will be 2/15. Leader to Leader meetings at Maranatha will be March 7-8. 42 Events at Bentzin Town Square are already scheduled for 2024 including 9 concerts.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50am was made by Conrad Taluga and seconded by Kristine Butteris.

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 January 11, 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 – November

Social Media Report

Facebook: 87 new followers (Post reach 162,690)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 1656 Users - 3943 views

Instagram: 1096 followers

- ☐ Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County)
- ☐ Represented Tourism at Wake-up Watertown.
- ☐ Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Commission meeting.
- ☐ Attended Main Street Promotions Committee Meetings
- ☐ Continued planning of Jingle Bell on the Rock event.
- ☐ Set up Watertown Window Wonderland contest.
- ☐ Created and submitted content and an ad for the Wisconsin Bike Trail Guide
- ☐ Assisted in projects at The Bentzin Family Town Square
- ☐ Continued coordination of Watertown Tourism video
- ☐ Attended checking passing at Pine Hill Farm for mural grant.
- ☐ Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - o Ava's a Posh Boutique
 - o Far Horizons Imports
 - o Draeger's Floral
 - o Run Turkey Run 5k
 - o Watertown Christmas Parade of Lights
 - o Watertown Holiday Tree Lighting
 - o The Chic Boutique