

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes November

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
Also present; Robin Kaufmann Tourism Manager, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board and Jonathan Lampe. Sheri Rohr Deputy Treasurer and Mark Stevens Finance Director.

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:08 am.
2. Review & Approve September minutes. Motion to approve made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Cheryl Mitchell. The Commission voted to approve the minutes. No Tourism Commission meeting in October.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Financial Report: The motion to approve the September and October financials was made by Cheryl Mitchell and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - 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 – Only finishing touches are left to complete. The video will be ready by or before January.
 - c. Review and take possible action on Mural Restoration projects: The Pine Hill mural is complete, and the installation is on-going. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be planned shortly.
 - d. Hotel Stay updates; Local occupancy continues to be flat compared to last year on weekends. Weekdays are 5-10% less occupancy compared to last year. The local market occupancy is approximately 10% below Wisconsin as a whole. Thanksgiving occupancy is forecasted to be higher than last year. The first and second weekend in December are forecasted to be higher occupancy compared to 2022.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on room tax collection. Current challenges to tax revenues include inconsistent occupancy since Covid resulting in lower revenues. All hospitality entities are not all paying on time or on a consistent basis. Less tax revenue over time makes it difficult to complete the Commission's objectives. The maximum City Room tax percentage allowed is 8% which is consistent with other municipalities surrounding Watertown other than Jefferson and Beaver Dam at 5%. The Commission will discuss making a recommendation to the city for a potential tax percentage increase at the December meeting.
 - b. Discuss and take possible action on Chamber of Commerce Tourism Agreement: The current agreement will remain in place and procedures will proceed as normal. The action will be put on the December agenda.
 - c. Discuss and take possible action on 2024 Tourism Guide: The 2024 Tourism Guide will cost \$5520 + tax. A motion to approve the creation of the guide and cost was made by Kristine Butteris and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the motion.
 - d. Discuss and take possible action on Jingle Bell on the Rock grant application. The event will take place on Saturday December 2nd and will have various holiday related activities. A motion to approve the \$1000 grant was made by Kristine Butteris and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the funds.

- e. Discuss and take possible action on 2024 Watertown Riverfest involvement. Concerns regarding the Tourism Manager's number of hours consumed by the planning of the Riverfest event were raised by the Commission. The workload is not sustainable for another year considering the many duties the Tourism Manager must complete for year-round events.
- f. Discuss and take possible action on 2024 Budget Proposal: A motion to approve and send the 2024 Budget to the City was made by Kristine Butteris and seconded by Conrad Taluga. The Commission voted to approve the 2024 budget.
- g. Review Manager's report on the previous month's tasks – See attached report.
- h. 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.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 was made by Conrad Taluga and seconded by Cheryl Mitchell.

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 December 14, 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 – October

Social Media Report

Facebook: 100 new page likes (5832 likes/6560 followers) (Post reach 144,801)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 340 Views by 307 visitors

Instagram: 1 new follower (1001 followers)

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Dodge County, Jefferson County)
- Wrote blog articles for JCATC
- Attended JCATC Exec Committee Meeting and Board Meeting
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee Meeting
- Represented Tourism at Wake-up Watertown
- Worked with web designer on visitwatertownwi.com bid.
- Worked with photographer on tourism video bid.
- Attended Chamber Annual Dinner planning meeting.
- Attended Chamber Board Meeting
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - Blocktoberfest
 - Witch's Brew BINGO
 - Pumpkin Palooza
 - KFC
 - Pizza Hut
 - Riverside Park
 - Chandler House Bakery
- Represented Tourism at Chamber member ribbon cuttings.
 - KFC
 - Pizza Hut
 - Wilder's Plants & More
 - Chandler House Bakery