

## Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes March 12, 2026 8am

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

Also present; Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Park, Rec, and Forestry Director of Senior & Enrichment Services/Office Manager Andrea Draeger, Citizen John Kadisch, Citizen Margaret Jaberg, Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce Director Linden Peacey

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:00 a.m.
2. Review & Approve September Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Steven Board and seconded by Melissa Lampe. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
  - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the financials was made by Courtney Krause and seconded by Steven Board. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
  - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
    1. Visitor Guides – The 2026 Visitor Guide is available for distribution. Robin brought copies for the meeting and has started distribution.
    2. Ad opportunities – Robin would like to see Watertown Tourism partner with the Watertown Daily Times on their upcoming Citywide Rummage. Her goal is to lower the cost for rummage participants, and to receive copies of the rummage map for visitors. Discussions are ongoing with WDTimes, and Robin might reach out to the group for an email vote if an immediate decision needs to be made. The Spring Citywide event is scheduled for May 16, 2026.
    3. Update on billboard commitment – Billboard space continues to be reserved. 3-4 weeks are available from March-June.
    4. Placer.ai usage updates – Robin did some research on area taverns to see where Tourism can support the local industry. She noted that Saturdays were the busiest, and many patrons visited several bars. Many also visited gas stations in the area and some visited local restaurants before/after.
    5. Review and act on mural restoration projects. - No recent updates on murals.
  - c. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Robin received an email from Best Western stating that the month of February was overall good compared to last year in the same month. February 2026 occupancy was 38.88 percent vs 35.53 percent last year in February. Forecast for March is expected slower than the last year March.
4. New Business
  - a. Discuss and take possible action on vacant Tourism Commission position  
Robin is still working with Best Western to designate a hotel representative to the city Commission. She had not heard back from the hotel until the morning of the meeting and is hopeful they will fill the vacancy.
  - b. Discuss 2025 Tourism Recap  
Robin provided information on TY to LY financials, social media, and additions to Tourism amenities in 2025. The list also provided tourism destinations like retail and restaurants that either closed, opened, or expanded in 2025.
  - c. Commission Members' report.  
Maranatha Baptist University will host their spring play, Little Women, on April 8-10. The Octagon House Museum opens for the season on May 2, with a summer music series scheduled, and the Ice

Cream Social scheduled for July. The Watertown Unified School District is facing an upcoming referendum on April 7 and had a successful showing of the High School's musical, Pippin, last weekend. The Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce held their career fair at the Watertown High School earlier in the week, where 77 businesses and nearly 1,500 students participated. They will also hold forums for city council and school board positions in the coming months. The Whiskey & Wine Walk will take place on April 25. Watertown Main Street Program will host Luck of the Irish BINGO this evening, and a public meetup with the mayor next week. Watertown Park & Rec is currently looking to fill their director position as well as programming and seasonal positions. They are planning spring break enrichment events, four day trips (DockHounds game, Lake Geneva, CranFest, and the Fireside). They are getting ready for spring sports, and a March 28 Riverside Park cleanup event.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 am was made by Steven Board and seconded by Courtney Krause. 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 April 9, 2026, 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 – February 2026

Social Media Report

**Facebook: 127 new followers (Post views 372,800)**

**Visitwatertownwi.com: 1729 Users – 2939 views**

**Instagram: 1218 followers**

- Regularly created content and posted to social media
- Updated events and business listings on visitwatertownwi.com
- Worked on billboard commitments (including graphic work)
- Attended Main Street Board Meeting
- Attended Travel Wisconsin Partner Portal training webinar
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee meeting
- Attended Airport Commission meeting
- Created City Connection page of events
- Presented Tourism Impact Award at Chamber's Annual Celebration
- Created and submitted Milwaukee Brewers Yearbook ad
- Completed 2026 Tourism Guide content
- Presented Tourism's Annual Report at Wake Up Watertown
- Guest on WBEV radio show, Hometown Today
- Met with Deb Sybell to discuss Economic Development projects
- Updated Wayfinder signs at BFTS
- Visited businesses/events for promotional purposes:
  - Blue Butterfly Thrift Store
  - The Basket Bar
  - Indoor Farmers' Market
  - The Goose & Gander Pub & Grill