

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes September 10, 2026 8am

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

Tourism Commission member present by phone: Melissa Lampe

Also present: Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Watertown Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere, Resident Margaret Jaberg, Parks and Rec Director Ryan Schmidt

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:02 a.m.
2. Review & Approve September Minutes. Motion to approve minutes was made by Ken Berg and seconded by Courtney Krause. Motion passed.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Robin informed the group that they received another invoice for the website malware cleanup, which was not expected. There is a possibility additional work needs to be done to notify two web vendors that site is clean. Robin will learn in advance before any funds are required. Motion to approve was made by Steve Board and seconded by Ken Berg. Motion passed.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – Robin coordinated the second guide distribution. There were only four boxes left to distribute. She is working with the guide designer to get the 2027 guides out earlier if possible. It could be a challenge because advertisers typically don't commit until after the new year.
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing to present.
 3. Update on billboard commitment – Chamber member JWR committed for eight weeks. Robin didn't realize they were a Johnson Creek business but continued with the commitment since the space was available and they are a Chamber member.
 4. Placer.ai usage updates – The Chamber of Commerce requested a report to determine new hours. The report showed busy times of day and week.
 5. Review and act on mural restoration projects. – There was no update to share.
 - c. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Vick from Best Western provided an update. As of September 9, occupancy is 43.46%, LY was 56.55%. Weekends are sold out the next two weekends. Weekdays are forecasted to be slow. August LY was 66.48% compared to LY 67.29%.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on WHLA membership – Robin met with the WHLA (Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association) to discuss benefits of membership. The WHLA provides advocacy, regulation clarity, legislative updates, access to WHLA events and networking, and marketing opportunities. Melissa Lampe motioned to approve the one-year membership. Courtney Krause seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - b. Review Manager's report of previous month's tasks – Robin provided the report to the group.

c. Commission Members' report.

a. Discuss upcoming and past events – The Watertown Historical Society will host a new holiday event this year, with self-guided tours available on specific days and times. The museum will be decorated for the holiday and Father Christmas will have a presence. Ken shared an update on the Oxbow development. It passed its first reading at Council and could house 150-300 people. MBU will host a golf tournament on September 23. Calvary will host a pastor's convention with an expected 140 pastors. Park & Rec will host a cookout fundraiser on September 15. Boo Bash will be held at the Bentzin Family Town Square on October 31. 25 vendors have signed up. Make Your Business Tree Decorating Contest will be held again this year with 12 trees available to decorate. The Holiday Tree Lighting will take place November 14, with the CPKC Holiday Train date TBD. Main Street shared that Cherry Pie will play on Saturday, September 12. Pumpkin Palooza will take place on October 31 with business trick-or-treat, wagon rides, and music on Main Street. Witch's Brew BINGO will take place October 22.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45am was made by Steve Board 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 October 8, 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 – August 2026

Social Media Report

Facebook: 13,157 followers (Post views 512,087)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 3,109 Users – 1,853 views

Instagram: 1269 followers

- Regularly created content and posted to social media on Tourism and BFTS
- Attended Watertown Main Street Program Board of Directors meeting
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Continued work on Willkommen Mural Project
- Worked on billboard commitments (including graphic work)
- Coordinated Watertown Tourism grant payouts
- Held The BIG Pop-Up with Main Street Program and Chamber
- Met with Jefferson County Communications Director to discuss county tourism
- Created and submitted several press releases for Watertown events
- Attended Travel Wisconsin Webinar
- Completed Tourism/Main Street/Chamber City Connection page
- With with Park & Rec regarding upcoming event season and promotion needs
- Submitted local businesses for holiday PR opportunities
- Attended Chamber's Business After Hours at Berres Brothers Café
- Met with American Legion to discuss approval of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall brochure
- Met with WHLA to discuss membership
- Created and submitted support letter for Legion Baseball AAA 2028 State Tournament
- Visited businesses/events for promotional purposes:
 - Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters
 - Music at the Museum Concert
 - Watertown Farmers Market After Hours
 - The BIG Pop-Up
 - Watertown Autofest
 - Rainbow Valley Rides at Riverside Park