

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes September 12 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Commission Members present; Cheryl Mitchell, Conrad Talaga, Courtney Krause, Melissa Lampe, Steven Board Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel and Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann.

1. The meeting was called to order by Conrad Talaga at 8:00 a.m.
2. Review & Approve July 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 July financials was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – The second distribution is complete and there are only a few boxes left.
 2. Ad opportunities –
Watertown advertisers are purchasing space on the I-94 billboard.
 - c. Review and take possible action on mural restoration projects – Nothing new to report at this time
 - d. Discuss Hotel stay updates – July Occupancy was 68.8% nationally. Wisconsin South hotel occupancy was 66.9%. Local market is approximately 60%.
The RNC produced very few rooms in our market, but we received many rooms from displaced guests. At the 7/11 meeting, local hotels were still not full for the 2nd half of July. The last half of the month ended up being very strong. The 10 days of EAA were strong with the exception of the final weekend. Area hotels still had some rooms left on that Friday and Saturday.
August occupancy nationally was 67% and the local market was approximately 60%. Riverfest weekend including Thursday was almost 100%. Weekend occupancy overall was stronger than 2023. Business included construction, Rail work, overflow from EPIC healthcare convention in Madison, students returning to school and leisure groups.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on board positions.
Steven Board nominates Conrad Talaga for Chair person and Melissa Lampe seconded. The board voted to approve the nomination. Steven Board nominated Courtney Krause for Vice Chair. Melissa Lampe seconded the nomination, and the Commission voted to approve.
 - b. Discuss a recap of Watertown Riverfest 2024 – The Car Show was packed and entries had to be turned away. There was a well attended 60-minute meet and greet. The Craft Fair had 100 vendors. The laser light show was well received with great attendance. The food vendors had great sales and were running out of food. Downtown businesses reported higher traffic from fair goers. The police were happy as there were no significant incidents. Next year, the organizers will try to find more volunteers.
 - c. Discussion and take possible action on 2025 grant program - The Commission will do a review of what entities receive grants. We will evaluate whether to continue to give the grants to the event organizers and/or to Watertown venues to make improvements that will attract more organizations to hold events.
 - d. Discuss and take possible action on Tourism Director’s business opportunity – The Tourism Director may partner with a marketing contracting business aside from her Watertown Tourism position. The

business will not take place during working hours or use the Watertown Tourism resources or email to avoid all conflicts of interest.

- e. Review Manager's report of previous month's task – report attached.
- f. Commission members' report - Events include the September Car show at Jefferson Fair Grounds and Ice Cream social at the Octagon House. The Museum Free day took place in August. Maranatha is hosting a soccer and volleyball tournament.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 a.m. was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Conrad Talaga.

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 October 10 2024, 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 – July and August

Social Media Report

July

Facebook: 74 new followers (Post reach 252,665)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 12,392 Users – 18,922 views

August

Facebook: 95 new followers (Post reach 311,363)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 8427 Users – 10,627 views

Instagram: 1116 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County, Riverfest)
- Presented at Watertown Rotary
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee meeting
- Represented Tourism at Collaboration Group meeting
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- Represented Tourism at Octagon House check passing
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Committee meeting
- Continued planning Watertown Riverfest 2024

- Watertown Riverfest – August 8-11, 2024

- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
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 - Thursday Night Market at the Square
 - Watertown Farmers Market
 - Interurban Trail
 - Octagon House Museum (Museum Free Day)