

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes October 10 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Commission Members present; Conrad Talaga, Cheryl Mitchell, 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 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 September financials was made by Steven Board and seconded by Courtney Krause. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – Will be noted in discussion on the 2025 Visitor Guide proposal
 2. Ad opportunities –
No new updates
 - c. Review and take possible action on mural restoration projects – Nothing new to report at this time
 - d. Discuss Hotel stay updates: August final occupancy nationally 66.9%, Southern Wisconsin 65.9% and local market 54.6%. September approximate occupancy 65.42% and local market 53.7%. September weekends were at higher occupancy than 2023. The first half of October had very good weather and construction business wasn't halted. November is forecasted to be busier than 2023.
4. New Business
 - a. Discussion and take possible action on how tourism can assist the downtown during construction.
Hold city commission meetings at downtown businesses where possible to help raise awareness.
Help downtown businesses with their marketing to potential customers
Continue to highlight the affected businesses on the social media platforms.
Go door to door and ask what can help individual businesses the most
Signage near the detour signs on Hwy 16/19
Adding advertisements for downtown shops on the I-94 billboard

Conrad Talaga made a motion to approve \$1,000 per month for three months, and \$500 for graphics/printing costs, for a total of \$3500 to purchase space on a billboard if one is available near by the official detour signs. Steven Board seconded and the commission voted to approve the funds.
 - b. Discuss and take possible action on 2025 Watertown Tourism Guide proposal
Jennifer Creative proposes a 2025 guide that uses the same concept as the 2024 guide. She will handle advertisers, production and distribution of the guide. A motion to approve the proposal was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Courtney Krause. The commission voted to approve the proposal.
 - c. Discuss and take possible action on 2025 budget. The budget is submitted to the Chamber of Commerce in December. Further discussion is tabled until the November meeting.
 - a. Discussion and take possible action on Jefferson County Tourism commitment – Not all communities are participating equally in efforts to promote Jefferson County tourism efforts resulting in a disproportionate allocation of duties to a few Board members. Until the group evaluates their mission and tourism efforts, the Watertown Tourism Director would like to resign from the Jefferson County Tourism board. The Tourism Commission will revisit the Tourism Director's job description which may need to be updated. Steven Board made a motion to approve the Tourism Director's resignation

from the Executive Board of JC Tourism and Melissa Lampe seconded the motion. The motion is contingent on the potential updating of the participation requirement in the Tourism Director's job description.

- b. Review Manager's report of previous month's task – report attached.
- c. Commission members' report - The play "Mouse Trap" will take place at Maranatha 11-14 to 11-16. Events: Saturday 10/12 "Trunk or Treats" and "Detour Day" to help support Main Street businesses. Jingle Bell on the Rock at Bentzien Town Square 12/7, Play at the Octagon House starting 11/30- 12/1, Downtown businesses will participate in Watertown Window Wonderland.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 a.m. was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Melissa Lampe

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 November 14 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 – September

Social Media Report

September

Facebook: 95 new followers (Post reach 134,297)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 2739 Users – 4682 views

Instagram: 1118 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County, Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee meeting
- Represented Tourism at Collaboration Group meeting
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- Attended Jefferson County Tourism meeting
- Began planning Jingle Bell on the Rock in partnership with Watertown Main Street and City of Watertown
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Committee meeting
- Began marketing campaign for extended bridge closure
- Began Leadership Watertown class
- Began planning Watertown Riverfest 2025
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - o Interurban Trail
 - o Jordy's Steakhouse ribbon cutting