



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Walcott at 6:30 pm. A quorum of commissions included Hammer, Famularo, Roelke, and Walcott. Staff liaison Bennett was also present.

Notice of Open Meeting

It was noted that the meeting was posted according to law.

Approval of Agenda

Hammer motioned to approve the agenda; seconded by Famularo. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1. Consider and take action to approve the Tourism Commission meeting minutes from August 3, 2026

Roelke motioned to approve as presented, the meeting minutes from August 3, 2026; seconded by Famularo. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance for comment and there was no correspondence.

New Business

2. Staff update regarding the 2027 budget

Bennett presented the 2027 budget for Tourism that featured a projected 2026 room tax of a little over \$35,000 which is an increase from 2026. Bennett broke down the \$35,000 2027 budget with allocations based on discussions from the previous meeting. The media line item would be decreased to \$500 to account for a single general fund media line item that funds the City website rather than have each department contribute. \$9,500 for advertising and marketing which will focus on digital ads but would include some print marketing and materials for distribution at larger events. \$10,000 would be allocated for the materials / service line item to assist with additional light pole banners, other tourism materials and to rollover a portion for a designated tourism entity. \$15,000 would be allocated for the City's tourism grant program and serve as a host account for the City's contribution towards the 4th of July festivities. Bennett noted that Tourism can cap its contribution at \$5,000 and additional funds would have to come from other City line items.

Walcott asked about possibly changing web hosting to cut down the cost in the media/web line item. Bennett said the cost could be cut down by monitoring which domain names tourism uses are low-performing and remove them from renewal. Bennett will monitor the domains.

Bennett would like to intentionally go under budget, if possible, to help build up the fund balance to use it for either attracting a large event to the city or as future funds for a designated tourism entity.

The commission made no changes to the proposed budget and liked the idea of building up the fund balance for future use.

3. Discuss and take possible action regarding 2027 contribution towards the 4th of July festivities

The commission discussed capping its contribution to the 4th of July festivities at \$5,000. Any additional contributions can be from other City line items and added to the Tourism Special Events line item. The commission discussed the possibility of recommending how the funds get used and suggested several ideas for improving the parade with additional musical performers, Shriners, and sky divers. There was concern about liability if the City via the Tourism Commission added stipulations to the contribution.

4. Discuss possible partnerships for tourism marketing and distribution

Bennett highlighted partnering with the 4th of July Organization to distribute promotional materials featuring the QR code for the community events calendar at the annual festivities along with possibly partnering with major local businesses to distribute tourism materials during recruitment conferences, etc. Roelke suggested participating in National Night Out and hosting a table to promote tourism and community events.

Adjourn

The Tourism Commission's next meeting will take place at 6:00 pm on Monday, October 5th.

Famularo motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Roelke. There was no additional discussion, and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm.

*A quorum of city committees and/or commissions may be present at this meeting. No action will be taken or considered by those committees and/or commissions.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **