



**OFFICIAL PUBLIC NOTICE**

**MEETING OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024 AT 4:00 PM

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MEETING ROOM OF THE DEPOT VISITOR CENTER AT 397 WEST SEMINARY STREET

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**Microsoft Teams:**

**The public may join the meeting virtually by this link:**

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NjY3OGQ1NTctODM3Yy00MzRmLTlkMDktNWJjNmM1NTE4YWZi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%2214038f70-880a-4544-99f2-5408da444e94%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22de4acf0c-a016-4bef-a777-2688f84b7755%22%7d%3e](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjY3OGQ1NTctODM3Yy00MzRmLTlkMDktNWJjNmM1NTE4YWZi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%2214038f70-880a-4544-99f2-5408da444e94%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22de4acf0c-a016-4bef-a777-2688f84b7755%22%7d%3e) Meeting ID: 225 359 063 388 Passcode: 8Fy34G5u

**AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER** *Roll Call for the meeting, determine whether a quorum is present; determine whether the meeting has been properly noticed.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. [October Meeting Minutes Approval](#)

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

2. Richland Center Tourism Secretary Election
3. [2025 Budget discussion and possible approval](#)
4. Gray Media 2024 November/December discussion and possible action.

**DEPARTMENT REPORT**

5. 2025 Social Media Trends/Greater Richland Tourism Tactics
6. 2025 Travel Guide Update
7. **2025 Greater Richland Tourism Tactics**
  - Pine River Maintenance Plan
  - Social Media Plans/Trends
  - Room Tax Growth
  - Richland County Resilience Group
  - Prosperity Southwest Nomination

**PUBLIC COMMENT** *No action will be taken on any matter originating under this item.*

**SET NEXT MEETING DATE** *Next recommended meeting in January.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Posted this 15th day of November 2024 by 4:30 PM.  
Copy to the official newspaper the Richland Observer.

*PLEASE NOTE: That upon reasonable notice, a minimum of 24 hours in advance, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service contact Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator at 450 S. Main St., Richland Center, WI. 53581*

*or call 608-647-3466. Notice is hereby given that the council members who are not members of this committee may attend this meeting so as to constitute a quorum of the city council. Any such council member attendance will be for information gathering, discussion, and/or related purposes and will not result in the direct decision making by the city council at the committee meeting. The City of Richland Center is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.*

Regular October Richland Center Tourism Commission Meeting, October 7, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Fruit at 4:00 pm.

Members present, Ron Fruit, Dennis Fry, Jayme Walsh, and Karin Tepley.

Dennis Fry made the motion to approve the minutes from the August Richland Center Tourism Commission, member Tepley seconded that motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Director Richards mentioned that past member Candace Fagerlind had resigned from the Tourism Commission as she had moved out of state. The members of the Commission and Director Richards expressed strong appreciation for Candace's support and involvement in the past and wished her the best of fortune in her new endeavor.

#### **Tourism Grant Applications:**

The Driftless Area Deer Classic grant application was discussed. Per their application, this is a repeat event and has grown significantly in that it now encompasses two days and is one of the few of its kind in Southern Wisconsin. They advertise the event in a 3-state area and the potential of overnight stays in our area lodging partners is extremely likely. Jayme W made the motion to approve the 2025 grant application, Dennis F seconded the motion. A voice vote was held, Fruit-y, Walsh-y, Tepley-y, Fry-y.

#### **Gray Media Discussion and Possible Action:**

Director Richards explained that our current contract with Gray Media ran to the end of October and it is time to renew for November-December streaming advertising. There was a general discussion that streaming advertising has been very productive in driving potential visitors to our website. However, we are still awaiting initial room tax remittances from Ithaca, Forest, and Richland Townships that would provide the resources to continue this effort. Director Richards suggested the Commission table this decision until the new remittances were received. The commission members agreed, and this will be brought back for review and possible action in November. There was also some discussion about working on getting a winter 30-second ad produced so we can promote snow cover as it arrives in our area. Last winter we had a 10-day stretch in which SW Wisconsin was the only area to open its snowmobile trails and this provided a nice boost in tourism activity. Member Walsh encouraged us to work on a snow-covered image-led ad to have it ready for that possibility again.

#### **Hidden Valley Magazine Discussion and Possible Action:**

Director Richards brought forward a proposal to support the Richland County submission in the Hidden Valleys Magazine. In the past Richland County was a participant in the magazine. However, in 2021 the magazine had fallen on hard times, did not have an online presence, and Richland County was cutting its budget. At that point, Richland County discontinued their partnership. Since new leadership has joined Hidden Valleys, it has built up the magazine significantly and has a solid online presence. Director Richards suggested Greater Richland Tourism re-join Hidden Valleys for \$1,200 in 2025 as this would increase our exposure in the magazine which now has a bigger distributorship than it did previously. Member Tepley made the motion to approve a \$1,200 expense in 2025 to support Hidden Valleys Magazine, Jamey W seconded that motion. Fruit-Y, Walsh-Y, Tepley-Y, Fry-Y.

Department Updates:

Director Richards explained that we have a new bed and breakfast operating in the former Lewis house. Mary Grell has purchased the home and is now open as a lodging option here in the city.

Director Richards reported back that the Center Colorfest Weekend went off without issue and the events of the weekend were widely attended. There were strong reports of full lodging occupancy, and the Canyon of Lights parade was strongly attended with the most entries we have seen in the parade post-COVID.

Director Richards also reported that we have identified an Intern to help support some of the back-office work remotely during the school year, and in-person during the summer. When remote this will be an unpaid position. However, during the summer, we are considering that it could be a paid position. Director Richards will continue to investigate the paid potential in the summer.

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Tepley, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fry. Motion Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

## Major Notes/Differences of Budget 2024 to 2025

### Revenue

We now have received and can project future room tax revenue from Ithaca, Eagle, and Forest townships. **We only have a partial Richland Township remittance for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, there will be more information developing for Richland Township and funds to come in.** The figures for Richland Township are for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Q of 2024 only, not an annual projection. Additionally, we have been receiving some interest on our bank account and I am seeing that information now and I am adding that to the income.

### Expenses

Travel and Conference Expenses = I had to skip the Governor's Conference on Tourism this past spring due to knee surgery issues. The 2025 Conference expenses will be back closer to the budgeted amount.

There is a Milwaukee Outdoor Sports Show, I am identifying the cost to attend and will likely bring that opportunity to the Commissions.

### Visitor Center-

I split out the different categories as some of those needs increased.

1. Office supplies. Stays the same. Basics of running the office.
2. Volunteer Support. Thank you gift cards for volunteers, name tags, other misc. volunteer items.
3. Giveaways for the office and conventions. Postcards, or some other giveaway item for the office.
4. Intern Pay. The current remote intern relationship is unpaid. However, in the summer there will be a more hands-on effort in the office and we should budget seasonal pay for that effort.

### Marketing-

Print advertising is split out with new efforts highlighted in green shading.

The first 7 months of streaming advertising are included in this budget. We will discuss the second half of the year's streaming advertising in July when we have more information regarding the additional room tax remittance from Richland and other potential new townships.

January thru July, Chicago Designated Area = \$17,500

March thru July, Milwaukee Designated Area = \$6,250

I have an interest in entering the St Paul/Minneapolis area with streaming advertising as we see better how much room tax revenue we may receive from Richland Township. We will also want to extend MKE and Chicago into the fall months.

### 2022 taxes received-not designated:

This is the 2022 room tax received, which has been deposited in the Greater Richland Tourism account and is reflected in the current balance. The remaining undesignated 2025 Room Tax Revenue will be designated as the year progresses and we see more of the new tax we receive come in.

We ended the year 2023 with an account balance of \$54,964. We will end 2024 with a balance very close to that same amount of \$53,722.63. This has been an ongoing question regarding how much balance we should keep in the account. In talking with different financial firms who advise public governmental entities, including Baird Financial, it has been suggested that 25 to 30% of the annual budget is a good figure to carry.

We are currently carrying a balance 56% of our current annual budget. However, as you will note there are some future 2025 expenditures not included in the budget such as reprinted Travel Guides, additional streaming advertising efforts, and potential additional conference opportunities.

2025 Greater Richland Tourism Budget Proposed				
<b>Annual Room Tax Revenue</b>	<b>2025 Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>		
Eagle Township Room Tax Revenue (2025)	\$32,000	\$ 32,380.91		
Forest Township Room Tax Revenue (2025)	\$2,000	\$ 2,354.01		
Ithaca Township Room Tax Revenue (2025)	\$5,500	\$ 5,498.20		
Richland Center Tax Revenue (2025)	\$60,000	\$ 57,956.00		
Richland Township Room Tax Revenue (2025)	\$3,000	\$ 1,025.00		
Interest Income	\$600	\$ 892.74		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$103,100</b>	<b>\$ 100,106.86</b>		
<b>2025 Expenses</b>				
<b>Category -Item</b>	<b>2025 Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>Budgeted 2024</b>	<b>Actual 2024</b>	
Travel and Conference Expenses	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500	1787.39	
Visitor Center- Postage	\$ 200.00	\$ 200	141.2	
Visitor Center- Copier maintenance agreement	\$ 400.00	\$ 400	366.67	
Visitor Center- Office Supplies	\$ 200.00	\$ 2,000	1075.8	
Visitor Center- Volunteer Support	\$ 400.00	\$ -	0	
Visitor Center- Giveaway items	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	0	
<b>Visitor Center- Intern pay for summer</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>			
<b>Visitor Center- Destination Wisconsin Meeting</b>	<b>\$ 1,500.00</b>		1500	
Marketing for Center Color Fest	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500	1385.32	
Marketing- Dairy Days and Rodeo Parade	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500	921.5	
Marketing- Milwaukee Magazine print	\$ 5,400.00	\$ 5,000	3,069.50	
Marketing- Inspired Magazine print	\$ 1,287.00	\$ -	1,930.50	
<b>Marketing- Hidden Valley Magazine print</b>	<b>\$ 1,200.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	
Marketing- Co-op Marketing with Travel WI	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,000	1,000	
Marketing- Online Advertising/Social Media Ads	\$ 800.00	\$ 5,000	4,851.21	
Marketing- Video Production RJB Productions	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	0	
Marketing- Tri-Lite Entertainment/Center Cinema	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500	1500	
Salary & Benefits- 1/2 of Tourism Director	\$ 30,370.05	\$ 29,629.32	\$ 29,629.32	
<b>Annual Operating Budget Totals</b>	<b>63,507.05</b>	<b>51229.32</b>	<b>49158.41</b>	

<b>Annual Basic Operating Budget Totals</b>					
<b>Expected Grants</b>	<b>2025 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>		
Wisconsin HS Rodeo Committee	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000		
Driftless Hunters Weekend	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500		
Wheels of Time Power Show	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500		
Friends of the Pine- River Cleaning Grant	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000		
Muscoda Chamber-Muscoda Historic Mile	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		
<b>Total Grant Amounts Annual</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>		
<b>Additional Marketing Expenditures</b>					
	<b>2025 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>		
Gray Media March thru July 2024		\$18,750	\$ 18,750		
Gray Media August thru		\$11,250	\$ 11,250		
Lamar Digital Billboards May thru August		\$14,400	\$ 14,400		
<b>Gray Media January thru July 2025</b>	<b>\$ 23,750</b>				
<b>Additional Marketing Expenditure Totals</b>	<b>\$ 23,750</b>	<b>\$44,400</b>	<b>\$44,400</b>		
<b>Total 2025 Projected Expenses \$96,257</b>					
<b>Remaining Undesignated 2025 Room Tax Revenue \$6,843</b>					
			<b>Current Balance in Greater Richland Tourism</b>		
			\$53,722.63		
<b>2022 taxes received-not designated</b>					
			Ithaca Township	\$4,388	
			Forest Township	\$1,920	
			City of Richland Center	\$0	



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