

Sheboygan Area Room Tax Commission
November 17th, 2023, 12:00pm
Visit Sheboygan: 826 S 8th St, Sheboygan WI

OPENING OF MEETING

1. Roll Call

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

2. Election of President and Secretary of the Sheboygan Area Room Tax Commission.
3. Appoint individual to serve on the Visit Sheboygan Board.
4. Budget presentation and review from Visit Sheboygan.
5. Discussion and possible action on approval of Visit Sheboygan budget for 2024.

6. ADJOURN

Matt called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm. Confirmed that the meeting was posted at Town of Wilson office, Town of Sheboygan office, City of Sheboygan office and sent to The Sheboygan Press per Wisconsin's open meetings law.

Roll call performed. Present are Matt Fore from Town of Wilson; Jim Schwinn from Town of Sheboygan; Austin Gruenke from City of Sheboygan; Eric Lozano, Chris Kennedy, and Amanda Salazar present via Zoom. Visit Sheboygan staff present are Amy Wilson, Valerie Johnson, Shelly Harms and Janet DeVore; Non-room tax commission individuals present include Mike Froh, Lori Helke, Ann Deuser, Jami Schultz, and Jeremy Udovich.

Election of President and Secretary of the Sheboygan Area Room Tax Commission: Matt is willing to stay on as President pending vote from the commission. A motion to nominate Matt as President made by Eric, seconded by Amanda. Voting Yea: Matt Fore, Jim Schwinn, Austin Gruenke, Eric Lozano, Chris Kennedy – 5. Voting Nay: Amanda Salazar – 1. Motion to nominate Austin Gruenke as Secretary by Eric, seconded by Amanda. None opposed, motion carries.

Matt indicated the commission can strike Item 3 (Appoint individual to serve on Visit Sheboygan board) from agenda as he is already a member of the Visit Sheboygan board.

Budget presentation and review: Amy reviewed Market Performance and ranking for Sheboygan County among the lakeshore communities, room tax history, and budget breakdown with 2023/2024 comparison. Explained carryover from room tax because Visit Sheboygan is always 60 days or more behind in receiving room tax due to timing in the collection process. Explained increases in Salaries & Benefits (+20%), Operating Expenses (+200%; landscaping, removal of blacktop parking lot, building community gardens to

enhance the public river walk, potentially adding a dock, and grant support), Marketing/PR (redesign of Visitor Guide and hiring a 3rd party to perform hotel market research); 4th of July; Retail. Amy asked if there were any questions. Amanda asked about the photo ops, if Visit Sheboygan plans to work with the City. She believes there is a master plan for the riverfront/downtown and wanted to make sure Visit Sheboygan is including the City planning team. Amy confirmed Visit Sheboygan will consult with the City on it, as Visit Sheboygan will need their input and approval on the placement. Amanda asked about the doubling of the landscape costs - was that something that we waited to do and now we're doing it? How much of that expense is for the landscape cost? Amy said we've never had landscape in the budget, and we're doing it in conjunction with the National Marine Sanctuary – taking out the blacktop, adding some gardens, creating a natural learning environment, potentially a dock for a research vessel in the river. There is a grant for the Fund from Lake Michigan that has been designated for that which covers a large majority of the costs, so Visit Sheboygan's portion is only about \$200,000 to go along with that. No further questions or discussion. Jim Schwinn made a motion to adopt the budget as presented, Eric Lozano seconded to approve the budget for 2024. None opposed, motion carries.

Matt reviewed discussion from last Visit Sheboygan board meeting on collecting room tax from 3rd party booking sites (Expedia, Travelocity, etc), and that he is looking into that process and how to make sure each area is properly collecting room tax.

Chris Kennedy asked if he was a voting member of the commission. Matt confirmed that he is. Chris commented that he didn't officially vote, as he wasn't sure, but he appreciated the presentation and is in favor of everything.

Jim asked if there is a proposed next meeting scheduled. Matt said he will send something out. Amanda asked if there is a time Amy will present this to the common council – per statute she believes the commission or Visit Sheboygan will have to present the budget and it would be helpful. Matt asked when they meet; Amanda confirmed it is the first and third Mondays of the month. She believes Visit Sheboygan has to give a presentation or provide some sort of documentation so that it gets filed. Matt will contact the room tax attorney to verify what the requirements are.

Motion to adjourn: Motion made by Amanda, seconded by Jim. Meeting adjourned at 12:29 pm.