



# EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

Committee Meeting Room  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor Two Rivers City Hall  
1717 E. Park Street  
Two Rivers, WI 54241

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## MINUTES

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:02 a.m.

### 2. ROLL CALL

**Present:** Todd Nilson, John Wyrstek, Curt Andrews, Michael Ditmer, Mike Mathis, Melissa Nyssen, Amanda Verhelst, Joe Metzen, Greg Buckley, Kyle Kordell

**Absent:** Erin Dembski, Tonya Prosser

**Zoom:** None

### 3. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES (Action Item)

Motion to approve the July 2025 Board meeting minutes made by **Curt Andrews**, seconded by **Michael Ditmer**.

**Motion carried.**

### 4. TREASURER REPORT (Action Item)

a. Budget to Actual Report YTD end of Q2 2025

b. 2025 Room Tax Year over Year comparison

c. 2026 Budget preview

Discussion highlights:

- Transition from cash to accrual accounting to provide a more accurate financial picture.
- April saw a significant drop in revenues; June was stronger than the same month last year.
- Manitowoc's room tax revenue is down 8% year-over-year.
- Board reaffirmed commitment to maintaining a **\$100,000 reserve**.
- End-of-year STR snapshot will include guest origin ZIP code data for board review.
- STRs are required to maintain a two-year guest register and submit it to the city.
- Michael reported fewer international guests (typical is 7%); Amanda noted most of her recent bookings are from nuclear plant employees.
- Discussion covered the impact of seasonal nuclear plant work, decreased Canadian tourism, and inclement spring weather.
- Logo wear sales remain strong; retailer payment lags will delay recorded revenue.
- Fund 258 variances reviewed in detail.

Motion to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report made by **Mike Mathis**, seconded by **John Wyrostek**.

**Motion carried.**

## **5. NEW CITY MANAGER INTRODUCTION**

Greg Buckley introduced incoming City Manager **Kyle Kordell**, who shared his professional background and expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with Explore Two Rivers.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Discussion of Open ETR Board Seat**

- One current vacancy; a second expected by year-end (Tonya Prosser).
- Amanda Verhelst noted another STR owner, **Sherry Barbier**, is interested in serving.
- Board agreed to begin recruiting immediately. Curt and John expressed support for starting outreach now.
- Joe will contact **Sue Crawley** from Woodland Dunes Nature Center and explore adding a representative from Hamilton Wood Type Museum.

### **b. Review of Business Survey and Next Steps**

- 29 responses received to date; less than 20% response rate from service/tourism businesses.
- Potential next step: in-person canvassing, including outreach to grocery stores, QuickTrip, Schroeder's, and Walgreens.
- Joe will coordinate quarterly STR mailings to all owners/operators regarding new ordinances, occupancy compliance, and marketing support.

## **7. TOURISM DIRECTOR REPORT**

### **a. June & July Director's Report**

- Highlights from *June Tourism Director's Report* reviewed.
- Wisconsin Governor's Outdoor Industry Impact Awards: Willie Bee Charters, Wildflower Outdoors, and Paddlepalooza nominated.
- Nearshore shipwreck project progress:
  - Dedicated webpages with buoy markers.
  - AI-generated two-person podcasts using NotebookLM technology.
  - Evergreen QR codes linked to podcasts, printed on weatherproof stickers for paddlers.
  - First podcast episode: *The Continental Shipwreck*, available at [https://soundcloud.com/exploretworivers\\_54241/the-continental-shipwreck](https://soundcloud.com/exploretworivers_54241/the-continental-shipwreck).
- Travel Wisconsin collaboration ongoing; August 29 deadline for updates.
- Promotion of dog-friendly businesses continues with clings and social media features.

### **b. Mid-Year Marketing Report**

- Destination Wisconsin co-op (\$1,400/year) remains a high-visibility marketing opportunity.
- QR code analytics track scan location, demographics, and engagement, with expansion to STRs and hotels.
- Considering geofencing/data tools for visitor analytics and cost-sharing with TRBA/Main Street.

### **c. STR Owner Updates**

- STR ordinance compliance mailing planned for **August**.

- Compliance site visits scheduled for **September and October**.
- Exploring opportunities to improve STR-owner communication and market visibility.

## 8. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be held in **September 2025 at 8:00 a.m. at Violet Inn and Suites**.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by **Curt Andrews**, seconded by **Michael Ditmer**.

**Motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at **9:32 a.m.**

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*It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no other action will be taken by any governmental body at the above-stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice*