



EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

3rd floor Two Rivers City Hall
1717 E. Park Street

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Todd Nilson, John Wyrstek, Mike Mathis, Erin Dembski, Joe Metzen, Melissa Nyssen, Curt Andrews

Absent: Amanda La Tour, Michael Dittmer

Guests: Kyle Kordell, Jeffrey Sachse

3. INTRODUCTION OF INVITED GUESTS

Introduced Jeff Sachse to the board.

4. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

No changes. Motion to approve: Mike Mathis; Second: Curt Andrews. Motion carried.

5. TREASURER REPORT

Board reviewed year-to-date room tax performance, reserves, and budget-to-actual variances. Discussion covered inventory and logo wear spend vs. sales, billboard/signage one-time items, transfers to Central Park and wayside support, and reserve targets.

Motion to accept Treasurer's Report: Mike Mathis; Second: John Wyrstek. Motion carried.

2026 BUDGET (agenda grouped this with the Treasurer Report)

Board discussed conservative revenue assumptions, anticipated personnel/health insurance costs for a new Tourism Director, and expense reductions/realignments (including reducing wayside support to \$15,000 and discontinuing the \$12,000 Main Street overhead support).

Motion to approve the 2026 Budget as presented: Erin Dembski; Second: Mike Mathis. Motion carried.

During review of the 2026 budget and year-to-date financials, several broader topics were raised for board consideration:

- **Logo Wear and Online Sales** – The board discussed opportunities to reduce inventory costs and expand retail reach. Mike Mathis suggested exploring an e-commerce partner such as [See My Legacy](#) to handle online fulfillment. Additional options included licensing the Explore Two Rivers brand to local merchants and potential collaboration with the Hamilton Wood Type & Print

Museum for online distribution.

- **Community Event Planning** – Mike Mathis proposed setting aside funds in the 2026 budget to convene a community-wide discussion on special-event coordination. The intent would be to bring together groups such as TRBA, Main Street, Explore Two Rivers, the Optimists, and Rotary to address event scheduling, shared resources, and long-term planning in light of the losses of KiteFest and Wayzgoose.
- **Youth and Volunteer Engagement** – Todd Nilson emphasized the importance of involving younger residents and students in local events and volunteer roles. The board discussed ways to partner with TRBA's young professionals, school programs, and service organizations to grow future leadership and participation in community activities.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Website updates & AI focus in 2026 (Board to set priorities)

Brief update and discussion on priorities: shared-calendar feasibility, itinerary builder as a higher-impact differentiator, and a potential tourist-facing chatbot. Next steps: Todd Nilson and Joe Metzen to meet with Dave Dassey to explore calendar integration options; coordination with Ryan (Civic Brand) for guidance on itinerary best practices; scoping possible lightweight tooling for build/automation. No action taken.

b. Internship from Lakeland College

Update: Grant application submitted for a Lakeland University intern (3 credits / ~120 hours at \$16/hour; grant would cover wages). Awaiting award notification. No action taken.

c. Marketing Committee update from meeting on 10/28/2025

Committee reviewed the 2026 marketing proposal in detail; spend is weighted after Q2 to allow course corrections if early-year revenues lag. Discussion included using AI tools tactically in support of the plan. No action taken.

7. TOURISM DIRECTOR REPORT

- Marketing partnerships. Full-page co-op with MAGIC (Michicot) performed well; intent to continue exploring shared placements.
- Ice Age Trail Alliance project. Opportunity Grant support and volunteer week reported; positive coverage and interest in Lakeshore assets.
- Internship grant. Application submitted for a Lakeland University intern (3 credits/120 hours at \$16/hr, grant-funded).
- Sports/tournaments. A sports organization signed a 15-year lease to build a new softball stadium at Vietnam Memorial Park; substantial tournaments are expected to resume after field establishment (targeting 2027).

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. PUBLIC INPUT

None.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 8:00 a.m., 3rd floor City Hall.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Mike Mathis; Second: Curt Andrews. Approved. Adjourned at 9:14 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