



**TWO  
RIVERS**  
WISCONSIN

# ROOM TAX COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 4pm

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

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## MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL** In attendance: Bill LeClair, Rick Carey, Mark Bittner, Curt Andrews, & Kyle Kordell.  
Guests: Michael Ditmer & Betty Bittner Staff: Jeff Sachse, Mike Mathis, Caitlyn Meola, & Joe Metzen.

3. **INTRODUCE NEW TOURISM DIRECTOR**

Joe Metzen introduced new Tourism Director, Caitlyn Meola. Caitlyn thanked Room Tax Commission for the opportunity to serve in this role and indicated she is very excited to represent the community of Two Rivers.

4. **APPROVE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 2025 MEETING** (Action Item)

Motion to approve minutes as made by Bill LeClair, seconded by Rick Carey, Motion carried.

5. **BUDGET REVIEW**

a. **2025 End of Year Budget to Actual showing reserve fund balance**

A review of the 2025 Budget to Actual and the first 2 months of 2026 prompted RTC to do a line-item review of budget expenses for 2026. It was agreed that a financial course correction would be prudent at this time with the slow start to the room tax revenue in the first two months of the year. The RTC set a goal of reaching a total operations budget of \$315,000 as a temporary spending cap until they have more data later in the year. New spending limits were established for expense lines that included Opportunity grants, Print Media, Billboard and Signage, Tavel, Ongoing Education, Membership and Dues, TR Logo Wear, and Professional Services. This modification to the 2026 budget will be presented to the Explore Two Rivers Board on April 9, 2026. Joe Metzen will modify the 2026 budget to reflect these new levels spending and add a note next to each line item indicating it's priority for returning the original 2026 expense budget as revenue goals are met as budgeted for 2026.

b. **2025 ETR operations cash flow revenue vs. expense breakdown by month**

A review of this document showed that expenses are higher for the tourism department during periods of lower revenue. This will be helpful for managing cash flow and the reserve fund in future years as the RTC will have a clearer picture of the timing of expenses and revenue.

c. **2026 YTD Budget to Actual**

Proposal to Include Transient Recreational Sites in Room Tax Ordinance: Rick Crey initiated a discussion about adding transient recreational sites, such as RV spots the existing room tax ordinance, estimating that this could increase the number of taxable rooms by 40%. They asserted that the transient nature of RV tourists creates the same community infrastructure costs as hotel guests, justifying the room tax, which currently stands at a maximum of 8%. Joe Metzen found seven other communities in Wisconsin already implementing this policy and projected that the change could generate an additional \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year.

Legal and Implementation Considerations for Room Tax Expansion: The group acknowledged that the room tax would be charged nightly, weekly, or monthly, but tax collection ceases after 30 days because the stay is no longer considered transient under current law. They agreed that the city's legal department needed to review potential overstepping on federal issues, particularly concerning waterways, which are typically federally controlled.

Motion to Amend the Room Tax Ordinance: A motion was proposed for the Room Tax Commission to formally ask the City of Two Rivers City Council to amend the room tax ordinance to include transient recreational sites by Rick Carey. This would cover RVs, tents, and potentially docks, which would then be subject to the room. The motion was seconded Curt Andrews, and after a roll call vote, it was approved by the commission.

**6. FUNDING REQUEST FOR CIVIC BRAND SITE VISIT**

**(Action Item)**

**a. Review scope of work**

Civic Brands scope of work was outlined by Joe Metzen. The visit by Ryan Short would include being the keynote speaker at the National Travel and Tourism event on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Ryan will conduct three community workshops on brand, advocacy and finding your story on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**b. Cost sharing with Two Rivers Business Development Dept.**

Jeff Sachse indicated the Community Development Department has \$4,000 for a **WIDD Grant** to apply toward the cost of Ryan Short's visit. Rick Cary made a motion that with the \$4,000 provided by the Community Development Department the RTC would provide an additional \$750 to cover the scope of work as outlined in Civic Brands proposal. Motion was seconded by Bill LeClair and after discussion the motion carried.

**7. RTC CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

After reviewing this draft a few more modifications needed to be made before it could be voted on. Rick Carey, Caitlyn Meola and Joe Metzen will work on this draft and have a new one ready for the Q2 meeting of the RTC in June 2026.

**8. CONCESSION STAND FUNDING UPDATE (Mike Mathis)**

Two Rivers Parks and Recreation Director Mike Mathis presented the current funding model for the renovations to the Neshotah Beach concession stand. He indicated that funding is going well, but that several grants needed to be secured to have a clear picture of how the project would be paid for. In addition, the community surveys are going well. Both Mike and City Manager Kyle Kordell are happy with the number of responses and will have data to share with the community in April.

**9. NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK**

**a. Community event by invitation Thursday May 7, 2026, at 5:30pm**

**b. Theme: I LOVE TR**

**c. Featuring Taste of Two Rivers and TR Brand Ambassador Program**

**10. TWO RIVERS WAY FINDING UPDATE (Mike Mathis)**

**11. SUMMER CONCERT SERIES UPDATES**

**12. COMMUNITY INPUT**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Wisconsin's Room Tax Commission Charter (under Wis. Stats. 66.0615 and Chapter 66.0615, Wisconsin.Gov Home, Wisconsin Legislature) establishes local bodies to manage hotel room taxes, primarily for funding tourism promotion and development, requiring at least 70% of revenue for these efforts, with commissions created by joint agreements for multi-municipality "Tourism Zones" or by single municipalities, governed by appointed members and overseen by the WI Dept of Revenue for reporting compliance.

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