



EXPLORE
**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

EXPLORE TWO RIVERS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, August 13, 2026 at 9:00 AM

City Hall, 3rd Floor, Committee Room,
1717 E Park Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Board Members: Curt Andrews, Cherry Barbier, Erin Dembski, Michael Ditmer, Beth Kowalski, Amanda La Tour, Mike Mathis, Melissa Nyssen, Lyssa Schmidt

Staff and Others: Joseph Metzen, Kyle Kordell

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from July 9, 2026, meeting Motion to approve made by Curt Andrews, seconded by Erin Dembski, motion carried.

4. TREASURER REPORT

A. YTD 2026 Budget to Actual Report Motion made by Mike Mathis to approve treasurers report. Motioned seconded by Amanda La Tour. Motion carried.

- Logo Wear Inventory Budget: The budget for logo wear was reduced from \$13,000 to \$8,000. The group decided to pause further orders to liquidate existing inventory and reassess needs for the following year based on remaining stock.
- Visitor Guide Financials: The visitor guide budget was updated to reflect a total cost of \$15,000, ensuring the full cost was accounted for rather than only the difference between revenue and expenses. With \$17,080 in revenue generated, the project is performing \$2,800 in the positive.
- Financial Standing and Budget Approval: The overall financial position shows a net profit or loss of \$56,974, with capital liabilities running around \$80,000. Although the "slush fund" reserve is slightly below the \$100,000 goal, the organization expressed confidence in the financial trend and the management of expenses. A motion to accept the budget was made and seconded.

5. DIRECTORS' UPDATE

A. Inland Seas in TR – Tall Ship Recap

- Tall Ship Partnership: The partnership with the ship visiting Two Rivers was considered a success, with the crew committing to a two-day stay next year. The crew expressed interest in overnight accommodation, and the group felt confident that community members would provide housing, meals, and showers for the six-to-seven-person crew. Marketing efforts for this will include a video montage of this year's events.

B. 2027 Budget/Marketing Plan Joe Metzen reported that once Tourism Director Caitlyn Meola returns from leave, they will be working on the 2027 budget and should have a draft ready for initial review by the October 2026 Explore Two Rivers Board meeting.

C. Explore TR Community Updates

- **Influencer and Media Relations:** The group is actively engaging with influencers and reporters to promote the town, citing successful visits from a CBS reporter and upcoming collaborations with social media personalities. While some influencer packages can be costly—up to \$10,000—the group noted the potential for high-impact promotion, particularly through cross-posted video content.
- **Upcoming Community Events:** The group plans to maintain a presence at Ethnic Fest and Apple Fest. Paddle Palooza is scheduled for September 12, featuring a new approach with a pontoon boat for music and a competition between the police and parks departments to collect inflatables.
- **Zombie Zoom Event:** The Zombie Zoom event is scheduled for October 31, with 40 people currently registered and a goal of reaching 75 participants. The event is tracking out-of-town registrants, which the group hopes will result in hotel stays.
- **Community Ambassadors Update:** The next Community Ambassadors meeting is scheduled for October 20 at 5:30 p.m. in the city council chambers. Efforts are underway to organize the group into eight distinct subcommittees focused on sectors like small business and manufacturing, moving toward a quarterly reporting structure.
- **Snowfest Recap:** Snowfest saw record-breaking success with \$45,000 in revenue and a strong turnout that rivaled events from the 1980s. The group credited the event's success to its focus on family-oriented programming and collaboration with Parks and Recreation.
- **Parking Data and Geo-fencing Study:** A parking study was conducted using zip code data collected by attendants to understand the resident-to-visitor mix at the beach. Findings showed that on slower days, the mix leans toward non-residents, which benefits the business model, and overall parking volume was managed without significant backups. The group also distributed business cards with QR codes to offer discounts at local businesses.
- **Adventure Triathlon Planning:** An adventure triathlon is tentatively scheduled for May 8 of next year, featuring biking, running, and paddling segments with a scavenger hunt-style medallion collection. The event will offer categories for families, individuals, and teams.
- **Bowling Tournament:** Manitowoc is entering a five-year rotation to host a statewide bowling tournament, which will take place throughout March of next year and is expected to bring in 150 teams. The group anticipates this will generate hotel stays.
- **Hamilton Museum Updates:** PBS Kids filmed segments at the Hamilton site for their "Look Back" series, focusing on local history including gas dryers and the wood shop. Additionally, the site served as a polling location, which allowed for unexpected engagement with local residents and former employees.
- **Discover Wisconsin and Rural Economy Workshops:** Discover Wisconsin recently filmed a segment featuring water trails. Workshops regarding rural economies are scheduled for September 1 and 2, with 49 people registered, and the group stressed the importance of local resident attendance to ensure community input.

6. **COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS UPDATE** The next Community Ambassadors meeting is Tuesday August 25, 2026 at 5:30pm

7. WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

- Wayfinding Signage Project: The group hoped to have pads for wayfinding signs installed at the beach in August. Future plans involve applying for grants to fund signage throughout downtown, potentially leveraging WEDC funding to avoid a direct burden on the city's general fund.

8. PUBLIC INPUT

9. NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

Thursday, September 10, 2026, 9:00 AM

10. ADJOURNMENT Motion to adjourn made by Curt Andrews, seconded Melissa Nyssen, motioned carried.