



**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

ROOM TAX COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at noon

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

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 12:07PM
2. **ROLL CALL** In attendance: Bill LeClair, Rick Carey, Mark Bittner, & Kyle Kordell. Attending remotely Curt Andrews. Guests: Bonnie Shimulunas & Will Finrock. Staff: Kassie Paider, Jeff Sasche, Mike Mathis, & Joe Metzen.
3. **APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 2025 MEETINGS**

Motion made to approve minutes for October 2025 by Bill LeClair, seconded by Kyle Kordell, motion carried.

4. **REVIEW 2025 YTD TOURISM & ROOM TAX BUDGET TO ACTUAL**
 - a. **Including year-end forecasting**

Tourism Director Joe Metzen provided a room tax year over year revenue tax chart with corresponding events that may have impacted revenue in the corresponding year. An example was given of the 2025 NFL Draft which when budgeting for 2025 was planned to have a significant impact on the revenue in the month of April 2025. The city of Two Rivers did not see significant bookings in hotels and STRs during the Draft and therefore the budget goals for the month were not met. This is an example of events that are being tracked on an annual basis to more effectively budget in future years.

Joe Metzen, then provided a forecast of revenue and expenses for the remainder of 2025. In net, revenue was down significantly from what was budgeted for in 2025. Of note, Two Rivers began to see the downturn in monthly room tax revenue starting in April 2025. The impact of tariffs and economic uncertainty has had an impact across the state and is not unique to Two Rivers. It was noted that the Room Tax Reserve Fund will end in 2025 with a forecasted balance of \$62,299. This is below RTC's Reserve Fund goal of \$90,000 and action steps will be looked at the Q1 2026 meeting to adjust the 2026 budget based on 2025-year end data and the revenue brought in in Q1 of 2026.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVE FINAL 2026 BUDGET

The proposed budget for 2026 was then presented to RTC for a final vote. Before the vote took place there was a review of each line item with discussion on where there may be savings in 2026. Rick Carey brought up the need for the City Manager position to be a standing position on the RTC and in the case of RTC budget approval the City Manager may need to recuse themselves from a vote of that nature to avoid a conflict-of-interest situation. It was agreed upon by the RTC that a Conflict-of-Interest Policy for the Commission should be developed with a completion date of the Q1 2026 meeting for review. Rick Carey and Joe Metzen will take the lead in developing the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. It was also noted that this policy will be in line with the Conflict-of-Interest Policy Explore Two Rivers Board members sign each year.

A motion was made by Rick Carey that a Conflict-of-Interest policy will be created for the RTC and that until this policy has been approved and adopted by the Room Tax Commission the City Manager shall recuse themselves from voting on any budgetary issues. The Room Tax Commission acknowledges that they are an economic development partner with the City of Two Rivers and operate within separation guidelines and funding restrictions established by state statutes. Motion was seconded by Curt Andrews. Curt Andrews called for a roll call vote. Ayes: Carey, Andrews, Bittner, LeClair Nays: None Abstain: Kordell

After further review of the 2026 RTC budget a motion was made by Rick Carey to adopt the 2026 budget as presented with the stipulation to provide \$5,000 in additional funding to the Wayside and Trails expense line if Two Rivers Parks and Recreation does not receive the Reservation Vibrant Spaces grant that they have applied for. Motion was seconded by Curt Andrews. Curt Andrews called for a roll call vote. Ayes: Carey, Andrews, Bittner, LeClair Nays: Abstain: Kordell

a. Update on funding for Neshotah Beach renovations

Mike Mathis did not have an update.

b. Update on the City of Two Rivers budget for 2026 that may impact RTC and ETR

No Update.

c. Will there be an overlap in Tourism Directors

City Manager Kyle Kordell indicated the goal is to have a couple of weeks overlap between the new Tourism Director and Joe Metzen's retirement date of April 30, 2025. There may be some budgetary impacts due to this overlap that the RTC should be aware of as we begin 2026.

6. TOURISM DIRECTOR HIRING UPDATE

a. Hiring timeline

Kyle Kordel said the Tourism Dirteater position posting will close December 22, 2025. To date there has been strong interest, with a mix of in-state and out of state candidates. The hiring team of Amanda Baryenbruch, Curt Andrews, Rick Carey, John Wyrostek and Todd Nilson will review the candidates and conduct the first round of interviews.

b. Candidate screening resumes

c. Hiring team

- 7. REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2026** Curt Andrews and Rick Carey have agreed to serve in 2026. City Council will need to decide who the two representatives are for the RTC in 2026 as part of their committee review process. Current City Council representatives are Mark Bittner and Bill LeClair. A RTC vote will take place in 2026 to make the City Manager position a standing position moving forward.
- 8. COMMUNITY INPUT** Bonnie Shimulunas spoke to the importance of working together. She appreciated the thoughtfulness and level of engagement the RTC puts into their decision-making process. She emphasizes the need for good communication to help the community better understand the role of the RTC in supporting the City of Two Rivers.

9. 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.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Two Rivers will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the City Clerk's office at 920-793-5526 or email clerk@two-rivers.org at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation. For additional assistance, individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can call 711 and be connected to a telephone relay system.

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.