

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes November 14, 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Commission Members present; Conrad Talaga, Cheryl Mitchell, Courtney Krause, Melissa Lampe, Steven Board Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel and Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann and Finance Director/Treasurer Mark Stevens.

1. The meeting was called to order by Conrad Talaga at 8:00 a.m.
2. Review & Approve October Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Steven Board. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the October financials was made by Steven Board and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – Will be noted in discussion on the 2025 Visitor Guide proposal
 2. Ad opportunities – No new updates
 - c. Review and take possible action on mural restoration projects – Nothing new to report.
 - d. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Final numbers not released yet and will be reported at December meeting. October and November weather has been excellent and construction projects have not stopped. October and November revenue/occupancy will increase over 2023 largely due to construction projects in the area. The last week of November will be slower occupancy due to the Thanksgiving holiday.
 - e. Discuss and take possible action on number of pages in the 2025 Watertown Tourism Guide. Motion to approve 5,000 copies of the 20-Page guide at a cost of \$4950 was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Courtney Krause. The Commission voted to approve the funds for the guide.
 - f. Discuss and take possible action on Tourism Director salary
Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve a Year-End bonus of \$2,000 for the Tourism Director Steven Board seconded and the Commission voted to approve the bonus. Steven Board made a motion to approve the increase in Director’s salary. Melissa Lampe seconded the motion and the Commission voted to approve the salary increase.
 - g. Discuss and take possible action on 2025 budget. The budget is submitted to the Chamber of Commerce in December. Courtney Krause made a motion to approve the 2025 budget with the update to the Tourism Director’s salary. Conrad Talaga seconded the motion and the Commission voted to approve the budget.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on lodging establishments not complying with room tax requirements. Lodging establishments are required to obtain authorization from the Health Department before being open to rent to the public. The Health Department informs the City Clerk when a lodging establishment requests authorization to operate. A document is available for Lodging establishments to complete each month, showing eligible revenue and room taxes that were collected. The lodging establishment is required to report taxes on eligible revenue and pay those taxes to the City by the 20th of the following month.
If the lodging establishment does not send monthly reports and payments, the City Clerk may follow up with the lodging establishment to request the payment of taxes.
 - b. Review Manager’s report of previous month’s task – report attached.

- c. Commission members' report - The play "Mouse Trap" will take place at Maranatha 11-14 to 11-16. Christmas Tree lighting on Saturday 11/16. Jingle Bell on the Rock at Bentzien Town Square 12/7, Play at the Octagon House starting 11/30-12/1. CP Rail Christmas train will stop in Watertown on December 8th. Downtown businesses will participate in Watertown Window Wonderland.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 a.m. was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Steven Board.

Agenda items:

A reminder from Robin to have all requests for additions to the next meeting's agenda to her by Tuesday, the week before the meeting.

The next meeting will be at 7:45am December 12 2024, via Zoom or you may attend in person at Watertown City Hall

NOTE: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.

Submitted by,
Cheryl Mitchell, Secretary

Manager's Report – October

Social Media Report

Facebook: 108 new followers (Post reach 193,778)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 3400 Users – 9096 views

Instagram: 1129 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown Tourism, Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee meeting
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- Began planning Jingle Bell on the Rock in partnership with Watertown Main Street and City of Watertown
- Volunteered at Witch's Brew BINGO
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Committee meeting
- Continued marketing campaign for extended bridge closure
- Attended Leadership Watertown class
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - o Ava's – a posh boutique
 - o Don's Corner Bar
 - o Jordy's Bar & Steakhouse
 - o Zwiag's Grill
 - o Witch's Brew BINGO
 - o White Oak Essentials
 - o Hometown Pharmacy