Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes October 8, 2026 8am

The following Tourism Commission members were present at Watertown City Hall: Courtney Krause, Ken Berg, Vick Patel, Steve Board, Melissa Lampe
Also present: Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Watertown Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere, Resident Margaret Jaberg, Parks and Rec Director Ryan Schmidt, Resident John Kadisch, Watertown Area Chamber of Director Linden Peacy

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:00 a.m.

2. Review & Approve September Minutes. Motion to approve minutes was made by Steve Board and seconded by Vick Patel. Motion passed.

3. Old Business:
   a. Approve Financial Report: Robin informed the group that they did not receive room tax income from the city for September. She was notified that September and October would be sent together.

   b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.

   1. Visitor Guides – The commission considered the 2027 Guide Proposal from Jennifer Creative. Steve Board made a motion to approve a 20-page guide, at a quantity of 5,000. Melissa Lampe seconded the motion. Motion approved.
   3. Update on billboard commitment – Commitments are strong in November. The commission will need to decide if they would like to pursue another annual contract when the budget is discussed in the November meeting.
   4. Placer.ai usage updates – The Watertown Public Library requested a report to better understand where their patrons visited before and after their library visit.
   5. Review and act on mural restoration projects. – A scissor lift has not been secured. Robin will price out its rental for the summer of 2027 so the commission can consider the cost for the 2027 budget.

   c. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Vick from Best Western provided an update. As of October 8, occupancy is 64.01%, LY was 64.74%. September occupancy was 57.98%. Weekends were strong, with weekday corporate travel contributing to the low number. The occupancy was slightly higher than the 56.9% occupancy of the area hotels comparison group.

4. New Business
   a. Discuss regional room tax study. Robin provided the group with the Department of Revenue reports that disclose room tax income and expenses in all room tax-collecting municipalities in Wisconsin. The group studied neighboring communities, noting expenses on municipal development, event and marketing support.

   b. Review and take possible action on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Brochure purchase. Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve a $300 expense for 500 trifold brochures. Courtney Krause seconded the motion. Motion passed.

c. Review and take possible action on 2027-2029 Tourism Contract. The Commission reviewed the contract and the supplemental Management Fee Agreement provided by the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce. A separate vote was taken for each item. Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve the 2027-29 Tourism Contract as presented. Courtney Krause seconded the motion. Steve Board abstained. Motion passed. Melissa Lampe made a motion to approve the Management Fee Agreement. Courtney Krause seconded the motion. Steve Board abstained. Motion passed.

d. Review Manager's Report of previous month's tasks. Robin provided the report

e. Commission member's report:
   a. Discuss upcoming and past events
      Watertown Park & Rec will shut down park restrooms starting on October 15. Parks is looking to the public for its annual holiday tree and has 5-6 more trees available for the Make Your Business Sparkle tree decorating contest. The Bentzin Family Town Square will host Boo Bash on October 31. The city approved a new TID district to support a 275-apartment development. The 40-million-dollar investment could house 700-900 people in low-end market rate apartments. The Historical Society reported a good year at the Octagon House Museum. They will host two more events in 2026, including the annual Christmas play presented by the Watertown Players, and a new Holiday Tour on December 12-13. They are looking for volunteers to support the event and for the public to contribution vintage holiday décor. MBU will host its Leadership Breakfast next week, discussing AI's impact on the human. They will present their fall play Pygmalion on November 12-13. Watertown Main Street Program will host it's final Farmers Market After Hours on Friday, October 9, The Playlist will perform at the Bentzin Family Town Square on October 17, Witch's Brew BINGO is at Turner Hall on October 22, Pumpkin Palooza is on October 31, and WOW Swag Bags will be available on November 2. The Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce will host a Lunch and Learn on October 27 that introduces the city's new economic development plan.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08am was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Steve Board Meeting adjourned.

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 8 am on November 12, 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,
Robin Kaufmann, Director of Watertown Tourism

Manager's Report – September 2026

Social Media Report

Facebook: 13,157 followers (Post views 355,911)
Visitwatertownwi.com: 1,783 Users – 3,057 views
Instagram: 1273 followers (10,544 post views)

- Regularly created content and posted to social media on Tourism and BFTS
- Attended Oconomowoc Interurban Trail ribbon cutting ceremony
- Continued updating Travel Wisconsin business and event entries
- Attended Watertown Main Street Program Board of Directors meeting
- Attended Watertown Main Street Promotions Committee
- Attended Chamber Marketing Committee meeting
- Completed Dementia Friendly Business training
- Volunteered at Cherry Pie Concert at BFTS
- Updated marketing pieces at BFTS
- Attended Johnson Creek Business Breakfast
- Attended City View on Main Preview
- Represented Tourism at Wake Up Watertown
- Worked on billboard commitments (including graphic work)
- Submitted local businesses for PR opportunities
- Created Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall brochure
- Met with consultants for Beaver Dam Sports Facility Study
- Visited businesses/events for promotional purposes:
    - Divots Golf Bar
    - Tietz Family Farms
    - Silver Moon Watertown
    - Rock Point Airbnb
    - Bentzin Family Town Square
    - 9/11 Ceremony
    - Rock River