

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes January 11, 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Aaron David, Kristine Butteris, Cheryl Mitchell, Conrad Talaga, Amanda Kostroski and Peter Wright
Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board, Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann and Programming Event Coordinator Stephanie Juhl

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:00 am.
2. Review & Approve December minutes. Motion to approve made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Aaron David. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the November minutes was made by Peter Wright and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission moved to approve the financials. Motion to approve the December financials was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Peter Wright. The Commission moved to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and take possible action on marketing plan.
 1. 2023 Visitor Guides: The Watertown guide is being edited. The Bike Trail guide is complete. The Jefferson County Guide is on hold until further notice. No information on the Dodge County Guide.
 2. Ad opportunities – Advertising in the Outdoor Wisconsin publication found in Kwik Trip stores remains a possibility. The Tourism Director will continue to look into the matter and pursue possible partnerships.
 3. Video production – The video is complete and has been released to the public. The video is displayed on the main page of the Tourism website. Additional video and images are available for future edits.
- c. Review and take possible action on Mural Restoration projects: Due to ongoing repairs to the bridge, the Willkommen mural will not be repaired in 2024.
- d. Hotel Stay updates: Final November occupancy numbers are: National Occupancy 58.4 %, Wisconsin Occupancy 44.6%, Southern Wisconsin Occupancy 44.19% and Local Market occupancy approximately 33%. Final December occupancy numbers are not yet available. Approximate numbers are National occupancy 51.85%, Wisconsin occupancy 44.6%, Local Market range 30-35%. Christmas and New Years weekend occupancy were below 2023 numbers in spite of better weather than 2023.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and provide update on room tax increase. The City Council heard the first reading of the proposal for the 3% increase to the City Hotel tax during the January 9 meeting. The second reading will take place during the January 16 meeting. The increase will go into effect on April 1, 2024.
 - b. Discuss and take possible action on 2024 Tourism Commission meeting schedule. The same Thursday meeting time will continue into the future. The Tourism Director will suggest actions that can be taken by Commission members that will help advance tourism initiatives. Including but not limited to attending events, volunteering at events, liking and sharing tourism posts and attending all monthly meetings in person or via zoom.

- c. Discuss and take possible action on recommendation for Water Street Closures. The Tourism Commission will table discussion and recommendations on closures of Water Street until the City Engineer completes a study of traffic patterns and other issues.
- d. Discuss Watertown Tourism 2023 Year in Review:
Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann created a 2023 Year in Review document that highlights all of the accomplishments of Watertown Tourism. With Robin's efforts and leadership, Watertown Tourism helped plan, promote and contribute to a record number of events. Our social media presence has reached a record number of visitors and with the new website, photos and videos our reach will continue to grow in 2024.
- e. Discuss and take possible action on WIGCOT attendance.
The event takes place March 10-12. Robin would plan on attending 1 day based on the events/workshops offered. Kristine made a motion to pay for the costs of Robin's attendance and Cheryl seconded the motion. The Tourism Commission voted to approve.
- f. Discuss and take possible action on Jig Jog 5K sponsorship. Motion to approve \$250 sponsorship level was made by Conrad and seconded by Kristine.
- g. Review Manager's report on the previous month's tasks – See attached report.
- h. Commission Member's report: 12/2 Jingle Bell on the Rock / December 9 Watertown Blue Review Dance Competition / Christmas CP Train event in Watertown on December 4th. Basketball tournament at Watertown High School the week between Christmas and New Years Day. Leadership Breakfast at Maranatha will be 2/15. Leader to Leader meetings at Maranatha will be March 7-8. 42. Dance Event on 1/27/24 resulting in hotel stays on 1/26/24. Maranatha has a music festival the same day. Candle light hike will be 1/10/24. The City Open House will be 1/20/24.

i.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 am was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Peter Wright.

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 8:00 am February 8 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 – December

Social Media Report

Facebook: 153 new followers (Post reach 177,298)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 1690 Users - 5630 views

Instagram: 1099 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County, Watertown Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown – premiered video
- Attended Public Safety Commission meeting to share insight on upcoming event permit changes
- Met with consultant for Hotel Feasibility Study
- Began planning Watertown Riverfest 2024
- Volunteered at Watertown Holiday Parade of Homes
- Began work on Dodge County JEM Grant county collaboration
- Held Jingle Bell on the Rock event
- Continued work on Watertown Window Wonderland contest
- Launched Watertown Tourism promo video
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - Jingle Bell on the Rock
 - CPKC Holiday Train
 - Watertown Window Wonderland participants
 - Wreaths Across America at Oak Hill Cemetery