

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes September 14, 2023

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; Robin Kaufmann Tourism Director, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board and Mayor of Beaver Dam Becky Glewen.

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:01 am.
2. Review & Approve July Minutes. Amanda Kostroski made a motion to approve, and Peter Wright seconded the motion. The Commission voted to approve the minutes. The August meeting was cancelled and no minutes were recorded.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Financial Report: Robin Kaufmann reported Month to Date information as of July 31, 2023
The motion to approve the financials was made by Amanda Kostroski and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and take possible action on marketing plan.
 1. 2023 Visitor Guides: The 2nd round of distribution went out to Jefferson and Dane County sites.
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing new to report
 3. Video production – The video is close to being done. 1-2 extra hours of shooting were added to the schedule to record Riverfest activities which will reflect in the budget.
 - c. Review and take possible action on Mural Restoration projects: The First Brigade Band mural is being worked on and will be finished soon. A ribbon cutting date will be set soon. The Pine Hill Farm mural was painted on panels and the artist completed the panels. The owners of the building are working through installation options.
 - d. Hotel Stay updates; July occupancy nationally was 69.1%. Wisconsin occupancy was 68.4%. Wisconsin South occupancy was 69.7. Local occupancy was approximately 65-67%. The first two weekends in July were not at full capacity mostly due to the 4th of July falling mid-week, which disrupts corporate business and leisure business. The last weekends were near or full occupancy. EAA was improved over last year with higher occupancy locally.
August occupancy nationally was 67.3%. Wisconsin and local numbers are not available until next week. All weekends but the 18-19th were near or full occupancy. Thursday Riverfest was near or full occupancy. September weekends look to be near or full occupancy. Labor Day weekend was over 60% occupancy which is a good for a holiday weekend.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and take possible action on Watertown High School athletics grant request. The tournament takes place during the slowest week of the year for hotels – between Christmas and New Years. In the past, there were 3-4 teams at most that required overnight stays or between 20-40 room nights. The room nights do not displace any other business and the teams that do not stay overnight will still use other city businesses and services.
Watertown HS Athletics is requesting a grant in the amount of \$1000. Peter Wright made a motion to approve the grant, Amanda Kostroski seconded, Aaron David abstained, and the Commission voted to approve the grant.
 - b. Discuss Watertown Riverfest Recap: Final numbers have not been released but anecdotally crowd sizes at the events seemed bigger and the opening night Thursday seemed busier. New procedures such as wrist bands and offering more covered areas for people to seek shade were popular. The new location for the

Fireworks worked well. The event proved very safe as little police intervention was required. The Riverfest Committee will have a wrap up meeting to discuss the 2023 event and what worked well and what would need to change for a potential 2024 event.

- c. Discuss and take possible action on Jefferson Couty Tourism changes.
The board of JC Tourism for the coming year will consist of all new members. Jennifer Erdmann resigned from the board. She was the head of Jennifer Creative, which was the company that sold ads for, created, and distributed the Jefferson County guide and website. The Board will have to search for a new vendor to complete these tasks or take them on themselves.
- d. Discuss social media successes and challenges. August Facebook views reached 8.9 million due to 2 videos going viral. We have over 1000 more followers, totaling over 8500 that follow the page. Keeping up with notifications has proven difficult as well as dealing with negative comments.
- e. Review Manager's report: See attached.
- f. Commission Member's report – Discuss upcoming and past events.
The ribbon cutting for the opening of the Bike Rentals at the Interurban Trail will be scheduled.
The ribbon cutting for the new 1st Brigade Bank mural will be on September 21st.
Watertown received the 2023 EPA Region 5 Brownsfield's Success Award for the Bentzin Family Town Square
Jefferson County Fairgrounds hosted the annual Sheep and Wool Festival 9/8-9/10. The semi-annual Car Show will be 9/22- 9/24.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 was made by Peter Wright and seconded by Cheryl Mitchell.

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 October12 2023, 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 – July and August

Social Media Report

July:

Facebook: 213 new followers (Post reach 238,691)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 3213 Users - 6672 views

Instagram: 1060 followers

August:

Facebook: 1368 new followers (Post reach 8,909,068)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 5721 Users – 24,826 views

Instagram: (1085 followers – 25 new)

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County, Watertown Riverfest)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Summer Concert Series events
- Attended Watertown Riverfest weekly meetings
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Commission meeting
- Attended Main Street Promotions Committee Meetings
- Continued planning of Jingle Bell on the Rock December event
- Created marketing materials for the Instapaddle Self-Service Bike Rentals at the Interurban Trail
- Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - July
 - Farmers Market After Hours
 - 4th of July Parade
 - Mercadito La Rosita
 - Summer Concert Series at the Bentzin Family Town Square
 - Downtown Watertown Craft Beer Walk
 - August
 - Watertown Riverfest
 - Osaka Hibachi Ramen Thai Restaurant
 - Fox Music Company
 - Digital Marketing Series Co-Host
 - The Wellness Spa at Pine Hill Farm