



NORTHWEST ITBEC TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 6, 2023

Remote Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mary McPhetridge called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mary McPhetridge, Ashland Area Chamber; Brandi Nelson, Barron County; Mary Motiff, Bayfield County Tourism; Chuck Anderson, Burnett County; Ken Schmitt, Chippewa County; Melissa Copp, Mercer Chamber; Terry Hauer, Polk County Economic Development Corp.; Laura Palzkill, Phillips Area Chamber; Sherry Beckman, Hayward Lakes VCB; Kaitlin Hanson, Washburn County Tourism Assn. **EXCUSED:** Kellie Brown, Rusk County. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Colleen Foxwell, Polk County Info Center and Julie Fox, Travel Wisconsin. **WCA STAFF:** Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Schmitt, second by Hanson, to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

WCA STAFF REPORT: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf reported on the following: passing of Northwest ITBEC Board Chair Tom Mackie, Kellie Brown new Rusk County appointee, and the long-term fiscal condition of the Northwest ITBEC.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf reviewed the fiscal report with committee members. As of 3/2/23, still waiting on dues payments from Burnett and Douglas counties. Total revenue to date in 2023 is \$30,000.43. Total expenses paid in 2023 were \$12,431.89; current account balance is \$59,847.52. The committee also reviewed the approved 2023 budget.

2023 PROJECT WORKPLAN: Tourism committee members reviewed the 2023 budget that contains a listing of the projects approved for 2023. The trails guide is currently in process and will soon be ready for final proofing and review – first draft is with the printer; ad was placed in WI SnoMo Magazine; invoice for the two insertions in Midwest Rider were paid, along with the sponsorship of the Governor’s Fishing Opener. Invoices anticipated in the next few months include web hosting and maintenance fees, Wisconsin Travel Guide ad and the spring Wisconsin Traveler email and Facebook-Instagram insertion. The ITBEC now has its own ISSUU account.

NORTH OF EIGHT WEBSITE PROPOSAL: The current North of Eight contract runs from April 2022 – March 2023. The hosting/ maintenance contract includes five hours of work on the Northwest ITBEC website. The five hours can be used all at once for a larger project. One hour of website work remains on the current contract. Committee members agreed that the remaining hour of work should be spent updating the fishing opener page on the website. Smaller updates can be completed by Kaitlin Hanson and Mary Motiff – both have access to the back end of the website.

There is also a contract with North of Eight for blogging services that runs through the fall. Counties are asked to submit blogs to the blog folder in Google Drive (to be created by Mary Motiff). The next three themes are as follows: March – Hidden Gems; April – Northwest Wisconsin Waterfalls; May – Bird Watching. General guidelines for the blog will be added to the Google drive as well.

NORTHWEST ITBEC SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: Not all counties are consistent with submitting information for Facebook advertising. For counties that do not submit, generic posts are used. Posts can be placed in Google Drive/Marketing/Facebook ads.

A request was made to add to the next agenda discussion on how to use the \$2,000 budgeted for Facebook advertising. Melissa Copp will provide options for the committee's consideration at the next meeting. Melissa also asked for members to add photos to the ITBEC's Google Drive so photos are available when needed for marketing purposes.

2023 GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER UPDATES: As a follow up to the January meeting a proposal was placed before the committee for consideration with regard to a change to the Governor's Fishing Opener manual related to The Warren Knowles Award. Motion by Anderson, second by Beckman, to add the following language to the Fishing Opener manual: Individual nominees must live or work in, or a business that is nominated must be located in, the Fishing Opener's host county. Motion carried.

There will be a fishing opener meeting on Wednesday, March 8. A draft invitation has been prepared for dignitaries. Hotels and destination showcase tours are all set. There is a need for additional sponsorships. Sarah will reach out to Discover Wisconsin to see if they are willing to sponsor the event.

CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE BYLAWS OF THE NORTHWEST ITBEC: Committee members reviewed the bylaws for the Northwest ITBEC and recommended the following changes:

- Require payment of annual dues for membership
- Allow non dues-paying counties to attend meetings
- Board membership one per county (still need to discuss alternates)

- Update tribal member section to include six tribes (still need to discuss financial participation and board seats); invite director of Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW) to participate in meetings
- Tourism Committee to be made up of tourism professionals (interested parties); chair of ITBEC board to appoint two elected officials to serve on the tourism committee. One vote per county; add as a duty of the tourism committee to recommend a budget to the ITBEC board.
- Quorum – majority of members in good standing

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM REPORT: Julie Fox from Travel Wisconsin reported on the following: upcoming Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism; snow report – most popular page on travelwisconsin.com; May 7-13 is National Travel and Tourism Week; DEAI trainings; end of the winter campaign – analytics to come; summer campaign runs April 6 – July 9; Minneapolis closing the gap on Chicago for visitor spending – seeing increases from Duluth, Rockford and Cedar Rapids; “Here’s To Those Who Wisconsin” to focus on summer events; Julie is retiring – last day in the office is April 14.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Sarah to send out a Doodle poll for a meeting in April.

ADJOURN: Chair McPhetridge adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.