

NORTHWEST ITBEC TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 16, 2023

Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Spooner, Wisconsin

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mary McPhetridge called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mary McPhetridge, Ashland Area Chamber; Brandi Nelson, Barron County; Chuck Anderson, Burnett County; Ken Schmitt, Chippewa County; Jim Caesar, Douglas County (The Development Association); Melissa Copp, Mercer Chamber; Sherry Beckman, Hayward Lakes VCB; and Kaitlin Hanson, Washburn County. **ABSENT:** Mary Motiff, Bayfield County; Terry Hauer, Polk County EDC; Laura Palzkill, Phillips Area Chamber; and Cheyenne Makinia, Rusk County. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Kevin Klucas, Burnett County Tourism. **WCA STAFF:** Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Hanson, second by Schmitt, to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

WCA STAFF REPORT: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf provided an update on the Northwest ITBEC board of directors meeting. The board voted to maintain dues levels at \$3,000 per county for 2024. The board also took action to provide the tourism committee with flexibility to use underspending in the 2023 budget for website updates.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf reviewed the financial report with committee members. As of the report dated August 10, 2023: total revenue is \$36,001.47; expenses paid in 2023 total \$37,982.90; the account balance is \$40,297.55; total expenses approved but not paid total \$22,409.78; and total unallocated revenue is \$17,887.77.

UPDATE ON HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FROM JULY 25, 2023 MEETING: Updates from homework assignments discussed at meeting: still waiting to hear back from North of Eight on a new blogging contract; need to get a better understanding of the schedule for Google ad words; ITBEC board agreed to allow underspending to be used for website updates related to golf; Kaitlin to follow up with Laura on final fishing opener revenue – is there revenue to be included in 2024 budget. Updates are pending on other homework assignments – assignment updates to be discussed at the next meeting.

REVIEW OF 2023 PROJECT WORKPLAN: Project updates discussed at the meeting include:

- Printing additional trails guides with the balance remaining in the line item (\$5,391).
- WATVA ads – 2022 invoice was finally received and paid; Kaitlin will contact WATVA to see what can be purchased with the \$628.75 remaining in the account for 2023.
- On Wisconsin Outdoors – Mary McPhetridge will follow up to see when the November/December 2023 ad is due.
- Facebook advertising – plan is to spend no more than \$1,000; an end of summer ad is currently running; a “fall adventure awaits” ad will run from Labor Day to October. A winter promotion plan is in development.
- Blogging contract - term runs from September 2023 – August 2024; still waiting on contract and pricing.
- Ad words – campaign was not run during the summer months. Due to a lot of fall and winter activity, ad words will be suspended through the end of the year. Plan is to increase activity on Facebook. Marketing committee to look at additional options for ad words administration.

MARKETING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Kaitlin Hanson provided the subcommittee report. The subcommittee discussed Facebook advertising, a tentative set of topics for blogs, and a structure for digital and print media. The subcommittee will look into URLs the ITBEC should obtain. Committee members discussed the number of trails guides and maps still available. There are 36 boxes of maps and six boxes of trails guides at NWRPC. The subcommittee and others interested will meet with North of Eight to discuss web hosting and maintenance issues for 2024 budgeting purposes, along with the blogging contract and other relevant topics.

DISCUSSION – 2024 NORTHWEST ITBEC BUDGET: Tourism committee members began work on its 2024 budget recommendations for the board. The committee will continue its budget discussions at its September meeting and submit a proposal for the board’s consideration at its September 27 meeting. The committee also discussed asking the board for budget flexibility in 2024.

2024 WISCONSIN GOVERNOR’S FISHING OPENER:

Updates from Burnett County: Kevin Klucas and Chuck Anderson provided the report. The VIP banquet location has been reserved – Zhashagiin in Siren. A volunteer committee consisting of 20 individuals has been formed. Initial conversations were had with three hotels in Siren for room blocks. A request was submitted to Burnett County for \$3,000 to cover additional staffing needs and \$5,000 as a contingency for fundraising.

Modifications to Fishing Opener Manual: Kaitlin Hanson indicated a few modifications were recommended to the fishing opener manual. The recommended changes will be made to the manual. The manual needs to remain fluid to accommodate different locations, etc.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM/TRAVEL WISCONSIN REPORT: Jeff Anderson was unable to attend the meeting.

REVIEW OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf reviewed the list of homework assignments to be completed prior to the next meeting.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting was scheduled for September 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in Spooner. The group will join the Travel Wisconsin co-op program webinar at 11:00 a.m.

ADJOURN: Chair McPhetridge adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.