

Approved: 04/29/2026

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PEPIN TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

CALL TO ORDER. Sue called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

ROLL CALL. Sue F, Pat S, Jenny B, Denise P, Mary P. Via Zoom: Cheryl H

SECRETARY'S REPORT. A motion was made by Jenny and seconded by Denise to approve the March 4, 2026 meeting minutes. Vote called; motion carried unanimously.

FINANCE REPORT.

- Approval of invoices: One invoice was due to HW Marketing for \$1,012.50 for February billable hours. A motion to pay this invoice was made by Denise and seconded by Sue. Vote called; motion carried unanimously.
- A copy of the invoice for holiday lighting along Hwy 35 was included in the packet. The cost of the 22 lights plus shipping was \$14,768.56; Sue submitted it to Tracy for payment on March 17.
- Financial report review: Current room tax account balance is \$55,236.57.

GRANT PROPOSALS. Dan Lerum was present with a grant request for postage reimbursement to mail the PHS All-School Reunion invitations. The reunion committee funds are low, and Dan felt that paying for postage with room tax dollars would align with PHS alumni using local lodging to stay in Pepin over the reunion weekend; the commission members agreed. A motion was made by Sue and seconded by Mary to reimburse the reunion committee and any personal expenses Dan Lerum incurred for postage, up to \$300. Vote called; motion carried unanimously. Dan will submit invoices.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION EFFORTS. Jenny has performed an SEO audit of our website, which identified high-impact gaps holding back organic growth, and her report outlines strategies to position our site for higher rankings. She also discussed keyword strategies and site structuring, along with a prioritized schedule of high-impact improvements to be implemented over the next 3 months. Gabby stressed that this task will be time-consuming and critical, and she encouraged the tourism commission to contract Jenny as part of the technical team for this work. A motion was made by Sue and seconded by Denise to authorize Jenny and Gabby to begin work on search engine optimization, keywords, and site structuring to maximize destinationpepin.com. The vote was called; Jenny abstained, and all other members voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Jenny will return with a proposal outlining her costs.

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MAPS

- Digital map. Jenny has added the streets and landmarks to the digital map, and she's open to suggestions for additional landmarks. The digital version will be ready as soon as we're satisfied with it.
- Print map. Jenny got pricing from Supreme Graphics in Arcadia for an 11 x 17 document (11 x 5 when folded): 2,500 for \$500 / 5,000 for \$720. There is a 7-10-day turnaround. The print map will have a link to the digital map. Commission members asked for a print deadline of May 1 so the maps can be available on Memorial Day weekend.
- A suggestion was made to print small cards with Pepin's QR code to place in the short-term lodging places. Jenny will get a quote.

SIGN PROJECTS

- Directional Signs. Since the former community club has not made progress in fixing these sign poles by the February deadline, the tourism commission is now taking on the project to complete it by the start of the tourism season. Sue presented a list of local businesses to be included on the directional signposts at Third & Main, Second & Main, and First & Main. Several additions and corrections were suggested. Sue will contact Brenda at Anchor Promotions of Red Wing to get a quote and specs, which will then be presented for approval.
- Welcome to Pepin Signs. Sue will get a quote for two white signboards to be attached to the Welcome signs that read: Shopping – Dining – Waterfront. At the next meeting, we will discuss redoing the Styrofoam sign pillars.

SHRPA. Sue asked for ideas for our last Shrpa content creator visit. Suggestions included a wine tour for Mother's Day weekend or a Laura-themed visit during the May reenactors' weekend at the cabin. Most favored the Laura-themed weekend, as Laura is positioned to gain in popularity with the upcoming new Netflix series. When discussing whether to purchase a second Shrpa contract, Gabby's opinion is that we can move on to more focused content from independent influencers, as we've hired in the past. However, we can always return to Shrpa for a shorter contract in the future if needed. Sue will authorize Jenny to speak with Lisa at Shrpa to determine our options regarding the content and our access to it once our contract is finished.

WATERFRONT CAMERA. Frank Flores of Travel TV contacted Sue about the tourism camera to see if this project would move forward. Frank was told that the camera remains part of the plan for 2026, however, the tourism commission needs more time to research how to create the biggest impact with it. Frank agreed to call again in two months.

OTHER TOURISM COMMISSION BUSINESS. Denise reported that the museum board has signed a contract with a contractor to proceed with the renovation of the museum's front exterior in mid-April to early May. The new Netflix series on the Ingalls family is due to start in July.

NEXT MEETING. April 29, 2026, at 9:30 AM

ADJOURN. There was no further tourism business to discuss, and Sue made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Denise. Vote called, all ayes, no nays. Motion carried.

Sue Fedie