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PEPIN TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

CALL TO ORDER. Sue called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm

ROLL CALL: Present: Sue F, Katie K, Pat S, Anne M; Denise P, Mary P. Guests: Gabby P (via Zoom)
Alan N

SECRETARY'S REPORT. The March 26, 2025, Tourism Commission meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Denise to accept the minutes; seconded by Katie. Vote was called; all ayes, no nays; motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT.

- Invoices to pay include HW Marketing for \$1,431.22. A motion was made by Sue to pay the HW Marketing invoice; seconded by Denise. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, Motion carried.
- At the March meeting, the commission approved a fee of \$8600 per year to purchase Shrpa's Destination Package for 7 content creator visits. There is an additional \$200/month fee to access the Shrpa platform and all of the features found in Inspiration Source, Collaboration Hub, and Content Outpost. Sue asked the commission for approval of this monthly fee at \$200/month for 12 months. A motion was made by Denise to approve the monthly marketing fee; seconded by Katie. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, Motion carried.
- Denise noted that the spelling of Shrpa on the financial reports should be corrected.
- Tourism Account balance: \$58,465.89
- A grant request was presented for Laura Days for \$3500 to cover print marketing materials, social media pushes, and media outlets. A motion was made by Mary to approve this grant request; seconded by Anne. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, Sue abstained. Motion carried.

HWY 35 ENHANCEMENTS. Pat reported that the large curb planters are sourced in Wausau, with a 6-week delivery. The company handles delivery and setup. A motion was made by Sue and seconded by Denise to have Pat contact the Wausau company for color samples and costs, including delivery and setup, and to allow Pat to pick a subcommittee to make a color selection. Pat is still waiting to get more information on the metal sculpture street banners like they have in Red Wing.

WCOW MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES. Alan Nugent was present to discuss several marketing opportunities that have come to WCOW recently, for which shared funding is requested.

- 1) Lost In – currently running on streaming apps like Prime Video and Tubi. Moving to Nexstar TV affiliates, DirecTV and Hulu this fall. The premise is undiscovered food, entertainment &

shopping experiences. They're asking for 8 rooms for lodging plus a fee. Sue proposed \$6000 split between WCOW and the T.C., plus the T.C.'s financial assistance with lodging. Dates still undecided.

- 2) John McGivern's Main Street – currently appears on PBS Wisconsin and PBS stations around the Midwest. On demand on Roku, Apple TV, etc. New episodes are available on YouTube. Their premise is uncovering the uniqueness and charm of communities via lively interviews with locals and civic leaders. They're covering their own lodging costs at a hotel, and they welcome sponsorships. They'll be here July 14-17.
- 3) Morning Blend – Morning TV Show serving Milwaukee audience. During their featured travel shows, the hosts discuss things to do and destinations for Milwaukeeans. The fee is \$1600. Date to be determined.
- 4) Bill Clevlen on the Road – Podcasts on Apple, Spotify, YouTube; Sirius XM Radio, and traditional media outlets across the U.S. The premise is to promote travel trips in small towns and big cities around the world. Requests include 1 room for 2 nights, \$750 cash for the package and \$750 cash for videography. WCOW is covering all the costs of this project. Mr. Clevlen will be here July 29-31.

After discussion, Sue made a motion to split the \$6000 fee for 'Lost In' 50/50 with WCOW, plus \$5000 for lodging costs, with a priority for lodging in Pepin; Mary seconded the motion. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, motion carried.

After discussion, it was decided to table the request for funding the Morning Blend TV show until we could learn more about its viewership. Mary made a motion to table the discussion for now; Anne seconded the motion. The vote was called; all ayes, no nays, and the motion carried.

Alan also reported on a Wisconsin Arts Board grant to commission four pieces of art from four local artists; the art is to be displayed for the first time during the Stockholm Art Fair in July, and permanently displayed in public buildings along the West Coast.

There was discussion on another opportunity presented by Travel TV Live Stream Camera, which will be discussed more fully during the May tourism commission meeting.

Alan reported that WCOW now has 4000 followers on social media.

WEBSITE UPGRADE. With the tourism commission's approval for website upgrades, the current GoDaddy platform must be upgraded to WordPress for enhanced functionality. Gabby provided a budget estimate of \$3000 for setup, planning/gathering content, design, build, SEO optimization, and review, testing and launch. The timeline to finish the upgrade is May 15. Gabby provided a link to view the skeleton draft of the new site, which the commission reviewed on the shared screen. A motion was made by Katie to approve the website upgrade at \$3000; Mary seconded the motion. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, motion carried.

CONTENT CREATORS. Gabby has worked on a draft itinerary for the first content creator we will hire through Shrpa, and we hope to make our creator selection soon so they can cover the Trillium Festival on May 9-11.

OTHER TOURISM COMMISSION BUSINESS.

- Denise distributed samples of the local travel brochures in which the tourism commission purchased ad space. We have not yet seen the ad in Big River Magazine's May/June publication, which should come out soon.

- Mary has purchased a copy of Goran Pesic's book, Once Upon a Lake, to help Gabby with inspiration for website blogs.
- Mary has asked Jan Buntz to review the street corner directional signs at the corners of Main & First, Main & Second, and Main & Hwy 35, to remove outdated signage for businesses that no longer exist. These signs were a PACC project. Jan has agreed to bring those signs up to date.
- Comments were heard about the 'No More Airbnbs' sign posted at the corner of Main & Second Streets. The commissioners expressed disappointment that a local business person would post a harsh and unwelcoming public statement like this in our community. Efforts to discuss it with the business owner were unsuccessful.

NEXT MEETING. May 28 @ 5:30 PM

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

Sue Fedie