

Minutes of Board Meeting – Washburn County Tourism Association
Tuesday, January 11, 2022 | 8:30 a.m.
Washburn County Highway Department | 1600 Co. Hwy. H | Spooner, WI 54801

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Sue Churchill
2. Roll Call:

	Robin Berlin	Sue Churchill	Jill Dunlavy	Steve Janetski	Nikki Janisin	Cristina Masterjohn	Joe McGrath	Sharon Paine	Victor Sacco		
Present		X	X	X		X	X	X			
Absent	X				X				X		

Others present: Lisa Olson, Julie Fox, Michelle Martin, Kaitlin Hanson

3. Masterjohn made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried.
4. Minutes of the December meeting were circulated. Masterjohn moved to approve as presented, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried.
5. The Financial reports were circulated for review. McGrath moved to receive the financial reports for January as presented, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried.
6. Correspondence: DOT letter regarding city banner on visitor center property
7. **DMO Grant Requirements:** Michelle shared the grant agreement contract requirements with the board.
 - a. **Affirmative Action Plan:** Michelle shared that it looks like WCTA would be able to file for exemption due to the fact that there are not 50 employees. She also presented a draft WCTA Affirmative Action Plan for review. Discussion was had on the affirmative action plan. Dunlavy made a motion to file for exemption, seconded by McGrath. Dunlavy made a motion to put the affirmative action plan into place with the correction of the section numbers if the exemption is denied, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried.
 - b. **Federal Compliance Requirements Policies:** Discussion was had on the Federal Compliance Requirements. McGrath made a motion to follow all requirements, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried.
 - c. **Certified Audit:** Michelle shared that we are still waiting on clarification from DOA on the audit, but Anderson, Hager & Moe's initial estimate was roughly \$7,000-8,000 for a certified audit. We're unclear if we need a certified audit, program audit, or another form of audit. Michelle will wait to hear back from DOA for further guidance. Questions were raised on if the audit is required if the money would come out of the grant program or out of our general fund. The board encouraged Michelle to proceed in signing the grant. Masterjohn encouraged Michelle to quote multiple auditors when DOA releases what type of audit is required.
8. **Executive/Personnel Committee Report:**
 - a. **Overview:** Michelle shared the minutes from the Executive/Personnel Committee meeting. Dunlavy made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by McGrath. Motion carried.
 - b. **Visitor Experience & Marketing Representative Position:** The updated job description was presented with an updated wage scale of \$15-17 per hour. McGrath made a motion to approve the job description with a \$15-17 pay scale and a 90-day wage review, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried.
 - c. **Wage Increase:** Discussion was had on the fiscal impact of the recommendation from Executive/Personnel Committee to approve a 5% increase vs. the previously budgeted 3% increase for current full-time staff. Paine made a motion to approve the 5% increase, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried.
9. **Updated Marketing & PR Plan:** Michelle presented the updated 2022 Marketing & PR Plan. Discussion was had on cutting the Arrivist program and participating on an every other year basis as budget allows. Michelle also shared that the \$5,000 grant funds for Meeting,

Sports & Destination Wedding marketing are not included in the total at this time. Masterjohn made a motion to approve the budget with the removal of Arrivalist and addition of the grant funds, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried.

10. **2021 Accomplishments & 2022 Goals:** Michelle and Kaitlin presented the 2021 Accomplishments. (ATTACHED) The 2022 Goals were reviewed. Dunlavy made a motion to approve with the addition of a bullet point to begin the lodging tax process, seconded by McGrath. Motion carried. (ATTACHED)
11. **Outreach Program Development:** Kaitlin shared that she is in the process of working on the program development for outreach. Any input from the board would be welcome and a draft program will be presented at the February board meeting.
12. **WCTA Sponsorship Policy Update:** Michelle presented an updated sponsorship policy. Dunlavy made a motion to approve the updated policy, seconded by Janetski. Motion carried.
13. **Simpleview Update:** The team shared an update on the CRM & CMS launch and that seven website work days are planned to get through the necessary updates before the 30-day punch deadline. Once the updates are done the team will transition into creating all of the training materials for the new system. Michelle shared that the team is concerned about attending the Simpleview Summit due to staff workload and personal reasons. McGrath shared that while the board approved the team to go, it is completely up to each staff person if they choose to take advantage of it. Questions for Simpleview included whether the free registration has to be used in 2022 or if it could roll over to 2023 as well as if WCTA would get access to the content if the team weren't registered for the summit. Michelle will touch base with Simpleview to get those answers.
14. **Marketing Update:**
 - a. Winter marketing is live and doing very well; Winter Video is complete and is being utilized in social media marketing.
 - b. Destinations Bound: Planning will be starting next week; Michelle will be reaching out to 1-2 board members for input
 - c. Earned Media:
 - CBS Duluth covered WCTA's trail conditions page on City by City Wisconsin on 12/30/21
 - Story ran on Milwaukee Journal Sentinel from Paul A. Smith who was on a trip in Washburn County with Dave Zeug.
 - The Big Bundle Up received coverage in the Spooner Advocate and a radio interview by Kaitlin on WRLS's morning show.
 - Namekagon Waters Retreat and the Cabins at Hunt Hill are featured in a November 3 article on Travel Wisconsin.com
 - d. WashCo Compass Winter Edition: Open rate 35% (Industry average: 12%); 219 link clicks
 - e. Website Statistics & Visitor Statistics were shared. New reports will be coming soon.
15. **Outreach Update:**
 - a. Congratulations to board member and now local business owner, Cristina, on the reopening of Masterjohn Realty!
 - b. The Big Bundle Up, a partnership campaign hosted by Travel Wisconsin, wrapped up on Friday, January 7th. This warm winter clothing drive brought in 527 items that WCTA was able to distribute to the Washburn County Food Pantry in Spooner, Birchwood Food Pantry, Comforts in Minong, Lakeland Family Resource Center, and WCTA also gave directly to people coming to the Visitor Center in need. The items collected were jacket, hats, scarves, mittens, snow pants, boots, and other miscellaneous winter items such as sweatshirts, vests, etc. Thank you to other organizations that collected items to contribute to the Big Bundle up!
 - c. Kaitlin delivered the Christmas for Kids items that were collected to the Shell Lake Community Center on Saturday, December 18th. There was great participation and so many generous donations. The WCTA staff hope to continue this partnership with the Washburn County Sheriff's Department for their future Christmas for Kids programs.
 - d. From a recent Facebook post, the WCTA noted that Grumpy's on Long Lake will have new owners in the next month. A business visit will be scheduled after that. Also seen on Facebook, Naturally North has moved from their location on the corner of Walnut Street in Spooner, the team is waiting to hear what their future plans are. Reminder: if you know of new businesses or new owners of an existing business please connect them with WCTA staff or let Kaitlin or Michelle know so they are able to connect with them to update listings & give them WCTA information.
 - e. An Industry Newsletter was sent last week with a soft launch about the new WCTA website, information on the new "Submit Events" process, and to let industry partners know the 2022 Washburn County Guides are available. The team plans to have the currently employed Lumberjacks players out doing deliveries as their schedule allows for them to come in. If anyone would like to pick up Visitor Guides for their business, Kaitlin offered to help with that after the meeting as a pallet of guide boxes is stored at the Highway Department building. Julie Fox shared that the industry news was shared with the team at Travel Wisconsin as an example.
 - f. Kaitlin shared that one of her goals for the next month or two is to be able to attend each of Washburn County's chamber meetings to deliver guides and give an update as to what WCTA has been up to and any plans for the upcoming year.
 - g. Kaitlin is continuing to help Leadership Washburn County with their e-newsletter that will come out approximately each quarter.

- h. Business listings will continue to be worked on for correct information and collecting photos/links if needed. Michelle & Kaitlin have scheduled in website working days to help with getting through the to do list on the new website.
16. **Operational Update:**
- a. The 2022 Washburn County Visitor Guides have arrived! The team has been using the 2022 guide to fill information requests since they came in in December. As previously mentioned, WCTA staff will work on distributing those over the next couple of weeks.
 - b. Kaitlin & Michelle have been working on keeping the front desk operations caught up. The biggest time consumer is the amount of information requests coming in which is great!
 - c. A full gift shop inventory will be started this week. Kaitlin & Michelle plan to streamline what is available in the gift shop based on what is selling the best. 2021 our best-selling items were the sweatshirts.
 - d. End of year building accounting is complete, and the visitor center annual report is in progress
 - e. Michelle researched costs and benefits for Destinations Wisconsin and Destinations International. DW is \$1,250/year and DI is \$1,360. Both have great benefits, some of which overlap. Michelle would recommend joining both, but it isn't built into the budget at this time. She would recommend considering a line item for Memberships in 2023.
 - f. Annual Visitor Center Display: The team has brainstormed a couple different options, Arts of WashCo to highlight the arts scene and the amazing talent throughout Washburn County and Hidden Gems of Washburn County which could tie into pieces of the Destinations Bound.
 - g. Finance & Fundraising Committee will be meeting to discuss Taste of Washburn County Gala as well as organizing a raffle.
17. **Citizen Comment:** Lisa (Best Western) thanked the Board for allowing her to attend the meetings and the work that the group does as she always takes something away from the meeting; Julie (Travel Wisconsin) gave an update from Travel Wisconsin.
18. **Possible Future Agenda Items:** Finance/Fundraising Report, Partnership & Member Program, Health Insurance Options, Destinations Wisconsin & Destinations International, Grant Updates, Outreach Plan Draft
19. Motion to adjourn was made by Masterjohn, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Next Board Meeting Date:

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

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