

Minutes of Board Meeting – Washburn County Tourism Association
Tuesday, September 13, 2022 | 8:30 a.m.
Washburn County Highway Department | 1600 Co. Hwy. H | Spooner, WI 54801

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Sue Churchill
2. Roll Call:

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

Others present: Lindsay Barnes, Joy Melton, Julie Fox, Michelle Martin, Kaitlin Hanson

3. Dunlavy made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried.
4. Minutes of the August meeting were circulated. Masterjohn moved to approve as presented, seconded by Janisin. Motion carried.
5. The Financial reports were circulated for review. Masterjohn moved to receive the September financial report as presented, seconded by Dunlavy. Motion carried.
6. **Correspondence:** Invitation to Canoe & Brew, Letter from Wisconsin Indian Head Country, Insurance Policy from Holden Insurance Agency, Destination Marketing Organization Grant Program Update from Department of Administration
7. **Membership Trade-out Request:** With the change in membership levels, Michelle recommended that trade-outs be reviewed. Currently WCTA offers trade-out memberships with WCEDC and the six Chambers of Commerce in Washburn County. There is also a request from James Netz Photography for a trade-out due to the discounts he's provided over the years. If the board is agreeable, staff recommends that it be limited to WCEDC, the six Chambers of Commerce and vendors on a case-by-case basis. Staff is also recommending that it be limited to the Bronze level only; any upgrades would need to be paid. Dunlavy made a motion to approve Bronze level membership trade-outs with WCEDC, the Chambers of Commerce located in Washburn County, and James Netz Photography, seconded by Paine. Motion carried.
8. **WCTA Board Application(s):** Michelle is still waiting on applications from the last two geographic regions of the county, but would like to leave this as a standing agenda item until the final two board spots are filled. No action taken.
9. **Visitor Center & Staffing Update:** Michelle updated that the team is hiring for the Visitor Experience & Marketing Representative position and that Sara's last day was Friday, September 2nd. Applications have been coming in and the team is hopeful they will have someone hired this round. Deadline for applications is Friday, September 16th. Visitor Center hours have been shortened to 9-3 and if someone isn't hired quickly, the hours will likely be cut to allow the team to catch up on projects. Michelle and Kaitlin reviewed their duties, what has been working and what hasn't. After reviewing, the team switched offices to allow Michelle to be more available for visitor center staff when Kaitlin is out doing outreach. The team met with the Washburn County Facilities Director to review the offices and they will be getting quotes on a sliding window for communication between the offices.
10. **DMO Grant Update:** Michelle shared the correspondence from DOA. Her interpretation is that if any line items come in under budget, WCTA would be able to replace them with other projects that fall into the program guidelines. General consensus around the room was that was the intent of the letter. Michelle also updated on the grant spend and anticipates that the full dollar amount will be spent.
11. **Welcome to Washburn County Signs:** Kaitlin, Michelle & Kiko Murphy met with the Highway 63 landowner for site selection. Kaitlin is working on getting approval for a tree removal since the sign will need to be out of the right-of-way. The team has discussed the Highway 53 sign location, researched potential properties and would like to propose storing the sign until spring so that a good site can be found for the sign. There are very few good options along that stretch of road and due to limited staff time to handle the landowner conversations, unless a board member would like to take it on, staff feel that it's best to store the sign until spring. General consensus was to store the sign and work on a location over the winter and early spring.

12. **Washburn County Official Guide Update:** Kaitlin has been working hard on guide sales and is about \$4,500 short of goal at this point. Ad creative is due this week. Michelle will begin content and design updates on the guide this week. A rough draft of the cover is complete. All design elements are due to the printer on October 14th.
13. **Marketing Update:**
 - a. Fall Campaign Update:
 - Fall Theme on website went live on August 12th
 - The Fall Commercial aired on WKOW (Madison) Packer Preseason Games (August 12, 19, 26) and is also airing on WEAU out of Eau Claire.
 - Social Media ads are performing well
 - August Fall Color Requests were up by 142%
 - b. Earned Media: WI Outdoor News Article Submission; Travel Wisconsin featured Heartwood Resort on WTMJ and WKOW
 - c. The Taste & Treasure and Scenic Routes brochures have been updated.
 - d. The Destination Wedding brochure is headed to print. This will be a small print as the team plans to update it later this fall.
 - e. The Fall Wedding Showcase in Duluth is coming up on Sunday. Kaitlin will be attending and Lindsay (Heartwood Resort) stepped up to help her out that day. Photos have been ordered for the backdrop and Kaitlin has been working with Casey to finalize the Destination Wedding video.
 - f. Michelle and Mary (Bayfield County) have set aside September 28th to update the NorthwestWisconsin.com website.
 - g. The photo contest closed on August 31st. Michelle will send a link out for photo judging by Friday; please respond with your Top 5 (in order of preference) by Wednesday, September 21st.
 - h. Website & Visitor Statistics were shared. (ATTACHED)
14. **Outreach Update:**
 - a. Kaitlin & Michelle participated in an interview style video for WI DOT with a representative from the Spooner Chamber & Spooner BID to talk about the construction project. DOT's goal with the video is to use it as a resource tool for other communities that will also be undergoing larger projects such as Spooner did.
 - b. Kaitlin attended an event at Heartwood for Safe Ride.
 - c. Community Days Recap
 - Birchwood: Michelle & Kaitlin were both able to make it to Birchwood for the community day, the team spent time getting content for creating a Birchwood reel. They met with a resort on Red Cedar Lake, called Gathering Place Resort. It was stunning!
 - Shell Lake: Kaitlin made it down to Shell Lake just before Town & Country Days; people were busy getting ready for the Holiday weekend. Also, while in Shell Lake, Kaitlin was at the ribbon cutting for Hemp & Home - congratulations to our board member Maureen on the opening of her new store.
 - d. Industry News in August covered 2023 guide event submissions, Best of WashCo Nominations, Fall Video preview; upcoming community days, and a welcome to EDC's Director, Joy.
 - e. Kaitlin & Michelle met with the District Lead for Kwik Trip; he let the team know about the progress on the new Kwik Trip location on the south end of Spooner.
 - f. Leadership Washburn County reached out; Kaitlin & Michelle will be helping coordinate the Local Economy Day which will be held in January.
 - g. Area Chamber Outreach: Michelle attended the Spooner Chamber Meeting; Kaitlin attended the Minong Chamber Meeting & the Long Lake Chamber Golf Outing which was a combined effort with WCEDC.
 - h. Membership: 10 out of the 12 Platinum member spots have been filled. Overall WCTA is about \$2500 shy of the membership goal but continuing to share the upgraded membership program. Due to the lack of staff, the team has not been able to send out the membership mailing as planned. Dunlavy and WCEDC offered to help with the membership mailing.
 - i. Best of WashCo Voting will be launched later today! Top Three for each category has been nominated:
 - Best Bites: Lakeview, The Landing, & Laughing Goat Food Truck
 - Best Pour: Klopp's, Corner House Pub & Round Man Brewing Co.
 - Best of the Outdoors: Shell Lake & Shell Lake Beach, Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary & Petit's
 - Best Shopping: Aloe & Jade, Corner of 5th & Spooner Outlet

- Best Lodging: Heartwood Resort, Best Western & Shell Lake Municipal Campground
- Best Event: Town & Country Days, Spooner Rodeo & Spooner Block Party
- Best Attraction: Potter's Shed, Perlick Distillery & Namekagon River
- Best Fish Fry: Track's Bar & Grill, Shell Lake Lunchbox & River Street Family Restaurant

15. Operational Update:

- The Visitor Center signage was installed on Front Street by Ron from Woodland Signs. It looks great!
- Highway 63 is anticipated to open later this week; the team is anticipating that the visitor center traffic may increase due to the road reopening.
- Michelle will be creating the 2023 event for Spooner Rodeo sales; tickets have not arrived yet so a plan has been developed to conduct ticket sales as "will call" only for the month of October to allow time for the tickets to be sorted and inventoried. Tickets should be ready to be picked up or mailed in November. Ticket sales will begin the morning of October 3rd. Michelle and Kaitlin have lined up help from Whitney Korthof who is trained on the ticketing program to assist that morning.
- Cranberry Fest Update: The vendor registration has closed & the mailing for vendor information has been completed. Kaitlin & Sharon will work out the last few vendor placements. Parade, 5K & Crate Box Derby Registrations are still open for a couple of weeks. There are over 250 spaces filled for this year's festival between craft & food vendors.
- The team is keeping an eye on the Campground Moratorium discussion. As the tourism organization for Washburn County, Michelle will likely be reviewing and weighing in on the discussion as needed.
- Michelle and Kaitlin are signed up for the Fall Tourism Conference in Wisconsin Dells on November 10th & 11th. Thank you to Maureen & Cristina for offering to help at the visitor center.
- Michelle and Kaitlin have been attending webinars to further their knowledge in Social Media, Marketing, PR, etc.
- The team is scheduled to train on the Meeting Sales module of the CRM with Simpleview this Thursday and Friday
- The DTN Sales Campaign will launch on September 26th. Final review of the materials should be done this week.
- Michelle will be contacting the Town of Trego to try and assist the DOT with a location for the Namekagon River Historical Sign that was removed during the Trego construction project

16. **The following citizens gave updates:** Julie Fox (Travel Wisconsin), Nikki Janisin (Hunt Hill), Sharon Paine (Stone Lake Cranberry Festival), Lindsay Barnes (Heartwood Resort)

17. **Possible Future Agenda Items:** Fall Campaign Wrap-up (Oct/Nov), 2023 Marketing Plan, Staffing Update, WCTA Board Applications

18. Motion to adjourn was made by Janisin, seconded by Masterjohn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Next Board Meeting Date:

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

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