



## State of Wisconsin

Tony Evers, Governor

Ben Popp, Chair

**Wisconsin Council on Tourism Minutes  
Wednesday, September 13, 2023  
Wisconsin Department of Tourism  
Madeline Island Museum, La Pointe, WI**

### **I. Roll Call**

PRESENT: Secretary Anne Sayers, Senator Joan Ballweg, Darren Bush, Deb Carey, Dr. Natalie Chin, Dr. Bert Davis, Genyne Edwards, A.J. Frels, Nathan Gordon, Joe Klimczak, Mary McPhetridge, Nic Mink, Christian Overland, Ben Popp, Senator Jeff Smith, Denise Stillman, Representative Sheila Stubbs, Representative Travis Tranel, George Tzougros, Krystal Westfahl

EXCUSED: Michelle Martin

### **II. Call Meeting to Order and Welcome**

Ben Popp called the meeting to order at 12:30pm. The Council welcomed recently appointed members Joe Klimczak and Nic Mink.

### **III. Approval of April 12, 2023 Minutes**

Krystal Westfahl made a motion to approve the April 12, 2023 minutes. A.J. Frels seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **IV. Committee Reports**

Committee chairs or staff leads representing each of the seven Department of Tourism committees provided updates on the recent work of the committees. The Council heard from the following:

- Meetings and Conventions Committee report provided by A.J. Frels
- Sports Marketing Committee report provided by Dawn Zanoni
- Joint Effort Marketing, Tourist Information Center, Meetings Mean Business and Ready Set Go! Committee reports provided by Deputy Secretary Maria Van Hoorn
- Office of Outdoor Recreation Committee report provided by Ben Popp
- Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Committee report provided by Krystal Westfahl
- Marketing Committee report provided by Secretary Anne Sayers

### **V. Update on Department Business**

Secretary Anne Sayers shared the following department updates:

#### 2022 Economic Impact

The Department received their official 2022 numbers and officially announced record breaking economic impact. Compared to the previous record setting year of 2019, Tourism's economic impact grew by 7.4%.



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### Budget

As planned, the Department has used nearly all of the ARPA and EDA funds. To help maintain momentum, the legislature provided a \$1m increase to the Department's base budget and an additional \$20 million in one-time funds to be used as needed. Some funds were immediately applied to the summer campaign, which was funded well below 2022 until the new funds could be applied. The Department is also investing deeply in the current fall campaign to make up for lost ground prior to learning the outcome of their budget.

### 2023 Economic Impact

No official numbers are available, but the lay of the land is a little tougher this year. Some factors include decreased advertising spend in the first half of the year due to budget uncertainties and a larger national tourism supply. For example, airline travel was up 12% over July 2022, and Americans traveling abroad in July exceeded pre-pandemic levels by 10%.

### Plan for Continued Growth

The Department will push leisure travel from a strategic standpoint, while opening new revenue streams in meetings, conventions, sports, motorcoach and (limited) international markets. This will be led by the newly created Office of Group Travel, formerly the Office of Marketing Services. Plus, the Department has big plans in place to capitalize on the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented because of the national culinary television show.

## **VI. Election of Marketing Committee Member**

Mary McPhetridge provided a review of the Marketing Committee as established by Council bylaws. Following the recent departure of Missy Tracy from Council, the Marketing Committee had one vacancy to be filled by a Council member, by vote of Council.

The floor was open for nominations. Council Chair Ben Popp nominated Nic Mink. There were no further nominations. Roll call votes were taken for the nominee. Nic Mink received 17 votes and was elected to the Marketing Committee.

## **VII. Next Meeting Topics**

The next meeting of the Wisconsin Council on Tourism will be in the spring, but not connected to WIGCOT. We will host in Madison or another central location.

Mark your calendars for WIGCOT 2024, March 10-12 in Lake Geneva.

Chelsey Bence will follow up with the Council with information on completing the two annual training requirements for appointed members of state boards and commissions.

## **VIII. Adjournment**



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Nic Mink made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Krystal Westfahl. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 2:02pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by Mary McPhetridge, Secretary*  
*Approved by Ben Popp, Chair*