

ROOM TAX COMMISSION

Date and Time: Wednesday, June 26, 2023, at 4:00 pm, Council Chambers

Members Present: Lisa Rasmussen, Michael Martens, Lindsey Lewitzke

Others Present: Maryanne Groat, Andy Lynch, Kaitlyn Bernarde, Tim White, Jodi McGuire

Excused: Tim VanDeYacht, Chad Henke

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order by member Lisa Rasmussen.

Elect Chairperson for the Room Tax Commission

Rasmussen nominated Martens to be chair. Second by Lewitzke. Martens accepted. Motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Martens to Chair. Motion passes 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving minutes of previous meeting (April 12, 2023)

Motion by Lewitzke. Second by Rasmussen. Motion carries 3-0.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding Room Tax 2023 Financial Projection and Room Tax Usage

Maryanne Groat stated the state law on what can use the tourism bucket can use. Rib Mountain is using funds for trail development. Could create a second application process or allocate funds for those activities. Based on the monies and the applications received to date; at the April meeting the Balloon Rally said they would have applied for more funds to be able to match their GEM grant. Groat stated there is an online application process, and she grabbed all the applications that were in the portal and brought them in today.

Martens clarified that the balance listed of \$111,277, but we anticipate \$103,000 balances at the end of the year due to projects not being drawn this year.

Rasmussen stated this was the first cycle that had tourism impact. She noted even if we funded all the projects fully, we would have over 100,000 for events in the fall and the spring 2024. She did not see anything in the requests that would be ineligible.

Tim White, of the Wausau Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau provided handouts on what the organization is becoming. It wants to be a destination marketing organization, a lean organization with the best marketing tools. They want to be a partner to go alongside organizations that the data supports and committed to be a partner.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding Tourism Grant Requests

Groat stated that our policy requires someone to state non-profit status, they did not disclose that. She believes they are for-profit. She included the application in case the commission wanted to adjust the policy.

Lewitzke asked the Balloon Rally group to clarify if municipalities providing 10,000 allowed to match the GEM grant. Nancy Woeller stated the funds from the municipalities is to cover the shuttle. She stated this is a make-or-break year. Lewitzke questioned the numbers provided in the application and the need for the funds.

Discussion continued.

Rasmussen restated the state law, and the City cannot be on record providing funds for a local match grant. Lewitzke stated that she did not like all the loose ends in the application. Jodi stated that they are working with the group to complete the reporting and can show the reports. Lewitzke stated she would like to see reports at the August/ Fall meeting. Rasmussen stated receipted on actual expense.

Rasmussen approve funding contingent post receipting marketing expenses surpassing 20,000. Seconded by Lewitzke. Motion carries 3-0.

Lewitzke motion to approve \$10,000 for Wisconsin Valley Art Association Marathon Art in the Park 2023. Rasmussen second. Approved 3-0

Lewitzke questioned the Willow Springs application that the marketing budget is only \$5,000. Jodi stated that Peggy from Willow Springs is looking for non-for-profit status. It is marketing outside of the 90 miles and she submitted

her current budget. Lewitzke stated her concern of approving applications for for-profit entities will open the flood gates, rather than long term planning of municipal investments. Rasmussen motioned to table on this item and encouraging them to apply in a future cycle once they get non-profit status. Lewitzke seconded. Motion carries 3-0.

Rasmussen stated all three municipal development projects have offer additional amenities when guests are here, sustainable projects to attract visitors. She stated she thought she could fund all three knowing they would be funded in future cycles and the plans are detailed. Lewitzke stated she ranked the CWOC project the highest because it will have impact year after year and get heads in beds. She had concerned about the River Edge Trail West being right by the wastewater treatment facility. Andy Lynch stated it is the same concept of the mountain bike trails at the dump. He stated the north section of the River Edge Trail is one of the better crossings on Thomas Street and can proceed to Adolph Street. He stated it could be a safest, easiest, most scenic path from Oak Island to D.C. Everest Park versus Cleveland Ave or 3rd Ave. Lewitzke asked what other City Parks & Rec or Community Development projects are in the work in the next 3 years to get tourists. Lynch stated the trail will work best once all 4 areas are built out. The other 2 sections are further away and will be more expensive. Lewitzke motioned to fund the full amount except the River Edge South Trail will fund up to, but not to exceed \$100,000, or what CIP would not fund. Seconded by Rasmussen. Motion carries 3-0.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding next grant application period and standard meeting times.

Martens stated we would hear them in the rolling periods. Groat stated we could hold something in July. January, April, July, and October. If there are applications, the commission will meet but otherwise will not. If there is something time sensitive, you could meet again. The next meeting is July 24th if there are applications, otherwise the next quarterly meeting will be September 25th at 4:00pm in the Council Chambers.

Adjourn

Motion by Rasmussen to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 5:13 pm.