

ROOM TAX COMMISSION

Date and Time: Monday, July 22, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., Council Chambers

Members Present: Michael Martens (C), Chad Henke, Lindsey Lewitzke

Members Excused: Tim VanDeYacht (VC), Lisa Rasmussen

Noting the presence of a quorum Chairperson Martens called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes of the previous meeting (04/18/2024).

Motion by Lewitzke, seconded by Henke, to approve the minutes. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding Tourism Grant request applications.

The Ironbull application was discussed. Lewitzke questioned the attendance of the event. It was stated the number of attendees had increased over the years and it was projected to continue that trend. Henke questioned how long the event was supported by tourism grants. It was stated this event has happened with that support since 2021.

Motion by Lewitzke, seconded by Henke, to approve \$14,495 funding. Motion carried 3-0.

The Hope in the Park application was discussed. Lewitzke questioned the granting of funds of \$1,000 to radio ads when the organization itself is a radio station owned by a larger network. It was stated the funds allocated would be spent at other stations as their station is a standalone station. Henke stated concerns with the free admission and if it was sustainable as a free event. It was stated the event has broken even in previous years and this was meant to be an investment in the community. It was stated the event should be sustainable if the investment from businesses continues. Martens stated the lower number of room nights for the previous iterations of this event and that additional marketing outside the immediate area may spur more room nights. It was stated the organizers had conducted marketing to promote the event more widely within the state. Martens stated the potential to help newer events get off the ground.

Motion by Henke, seconded by Lewitzke, to approve \$8,500 funding. Motion carried 3-0.

The Wausau Area Hmong New Year application was discussed. Martens stated with a number of expected attendees coming from Minnesota, there will be an increase in room nights. Martens further questioned if any of the Wausau hotels are being reserved for attendees as it was stated the hotels in Rothschild and Weston that are closer to the event are already booked. Lewitzke stated those municipalities would be better suited to provide larger tourism grant funds and further questioned if the organizers had gone to those municipalities. It was stated Rothschild allocated tourism grants. Lewitzke questioned if the full amount was appropriate for scaling up when the previous marketing budget was small. Martens stated the financials and event itself was good but shared concerns that room nights in Wausau would not be as much as Rothschild and Weston. Henke stated that future allocations may be larger, but data would need to be presented for justification.

Motion by Henke, seconded by Lewitzke, to approve \$5,000 funding. Motion carried 3-0.

The Beer and Bacon application was discussed.

Motion by Lewitzke, seconded by Henke, to approve \$6,000 funding. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourn

Motion by Henke, seconded by Lewitzke, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

For full meeting video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIU03fsMr1I>