

Tourism Commission
April 24, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Jim Arndt, Russ Grefe, Bill Bialecki, Dan Wendorf, Debbe Kinsey
Via Phone: Lauree O'Day
Missing: Chris Malm, Steve Wendland

Meeting called to order at 12:20pm.

Review of Minutes from January 23, 2015 Tourism meeting. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Russ Grefe, seconded by Jim Arndt, voted and carried.

No public was in attendance for comments.

Review of Year End 2014-15 season:

Merrill Ice Drags will receive \$1,800 in reimbursements. The Ice Drags have just turned in invoices to be reimbursed.

Ladies Lifestyle Expo just happen on April 21, 2015, and we have not received any invoices at this time.

Review of 2015-16 Budget:

With the money not coming in all at the same time, reimbursements are getting paid once we receive the quarter check that their event happens. Rodeo was ok with receiving their payments as we could pay them. We still have \$10,000+ in outstanding bills that will need to get paid for 2014-15 season. For the 2015-16 Budget, we would like to under estimate the funding that is given out.

Question about Additional Advertising at \$15,000. This money should be spent the same way that we require our applicants to pay. This is money that is used for our "contract" advertising (Close Publications, 5-Star Publications, WJJQ, American Road Magazine, etc.) We receive a bill from Merrill Foto News, this does not mean the money was spent in the Merrill Foto News, but it was one of their publications that they do (Packer Pride land, Journeys.)

800 # - do we need this number? We have always had an 800#. We have started to phase the number out, and will start to put the local number on advertisements. We will look to see when the contract is over, and revisit this next year to see the use of the 800#.

New Cycle Review – 2015-16 Budget – The only category that was changed was Other Promotions. We will be having Discover Wisconsin here doing a segment on the communities along the Wisconsin River. \$59,450.00 is the budget with the numbers as is. We will need to make some adjustments to get the number down to \$45,000 or so.

Other Promotions – can remove the Other Promotions in this group, which would bring the total down to \$6,500.00.

Contingency – we can remove from this year’s budget.

Conferences – The upcoming conference will be at Ho-Chuck Baraboo, and should not cost as much as before. Amount can be lowered to \$2,500.

Marketing Support – The cost for the 800# has been going down every year. We could reduce it to \$800. Website/Computers can be reduced to \$1,500.

2015-16 Applications

Ladies Lifestyle Expo asking for \$1,000. In the 2013-14 cycles; they did not use the Chamber information that is required on all advertising from grantees. In which they did for the 2014-15 cycle. Numbers were down this year, but weather and other meetings played a role in that. A motion to grant them \$450.00 was made.

Merrill Ice Drags – did not receive an application for the 2015-16 cycle.

Merrill Lion’s Labor Day Car Show is asking for \$2,100. The Chamber currently handles their advertising. A motion to grant them \$1,200 was made.

Barleyfest – Dan Wendorf asked to remove himself from this application process. This event is asking for \$2,500. Great event, and brings people in. A motion to grant them \$1,700 was made.

Lincoln County Fair is asking for \$2,400. Great event. The commission fully supports the Lincoln County Fair. A motion to grant them \$1,000 was made.

Concertina is asking for \$475. This group is happy that we consider them every year. Money is used for postage to promote their event to people. This year the crowd was big. A motion to grant them \$380 was made.

Airport Days is asking for \$2,000. A motion to grant them \$900 was made.

Wisconsin River Pro Rodeo is asking for \$5,000. The rodeo is a huge asset to Merrill. This event does bring in a lot of overnight stays. They will once again be bringing in seating. A motion to grant them \$4,000 was made.

Gleason Mud Bogs is asking for \$125. The Commission would like to see them advertising in something other than the Foto News. In addition, something that would help point the people back to Merrill for overnight stays. A motion to grant them \$100 was made.

Sled Dogs Race is asking for \$950. Commission would like to see the money go outside of the Merrill area for advertising. A motion to grant them \$850 was made.

Pork in the Park Ribfest is asking for \$2,500. This year they did not do any TV advertising. This event has shown every year to bring more people to Merrill and would like to see the event continue to grow. A motion to grant them \$2,000 was made.

Variety Show/Love Me Tender is asking for \$1,000. Friday Night does bring a lot of people. Saturday has a certain following. The group has not applied for some time. They do bring in some overnight stays. A motion to grant them \$400 was made.

Gazebo Nights is asking for \$700. The commission would like to see them advertising outside of Lincoln County. A motion to grant them \$350 was made.

The amount for the 2015-16 Tourism Budget is \$48,130. A motion to accept all amounts that have been in a motion was made by Russ Grefe and seconded by Jim Arndt, voted and carried.

Discover Wisconsin – this segment will be about the communities along the Wisconsin River. We will be sharing our segment with Tomahawk and will re-run for the following 3 years. We will do 2 live interviews on the radio. Discover Wisconsin has made some changes to their format.

Public comment – Mayor Bill Bialecki would like to thank everyone for their time and efforts.

Next meeting will be set via email. A special meeting may come up for the fairgrounds.

A motion to adjourn at 1:39pm was made by Russ Grefe and seconded by Jim Arndt, voted and carried.