

CITY OF TWO RIVERS
Room Tax Commission
Wednesday, March 3, 2021
4:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Commission member Curt Andrews at 4:02 PM.

2. Roll Call

Committee Members present: Curt Andrews, Mark Bittner, Bill LeClair, Jim VanLanen, Jr., and Greg Buckley.

Also present: Manitowoc Area Visitor and Convention Bureau (MAVCB) Director Jason Ring and MAVCB Board Members Greg Vadney and Amy Meyer. New MAVCB Board member from Two Rivers, Peter Crabbe of the Hamilton Wood Type and Printing Museum, arrived at 4:15 PM and left the meeting at 4:47 PM.

Mr. Buckley stated that, if there were no objections, the Commission would first consider, out of order, those matters related to the City's contractual relationship with the Manitowoc Area Visitor and Convention Bureau and City of Manitowoc.

3. Review status of Two Rivers Representation on the Manitowoc Area Visitor and Convention Bureau Board of Directors

Mr. Buckley noted that Jason Ring of the MAVCB would be providing an update on that board's membership.

4. Discuss Status of Services Agreement with City of Manitowoc and Manitowoc Area Convention and Visitor Bureau—Current Agreement Expires December 31, 2021

Mr. Buckley noted that the representatives of the MAVCB were at the meeting to discuss that organization's activities under the current agreement and to address any questions the Commission members might have regarding the services to be provided under a successor agreement. He added that there would be no closed session discussion of this matter.

Jason Ring reported that a second Manitowoc lodging representative has agreed to serve on the MAVCB: Shooter Locke, Manager of the Americinn. In addition, Peter Crabbe of the Hamilton Wood Type and Printing Museum has joined the board as a Two Rivers citizen representative.

Commission member Jim VanLanen, Jr., who also serves as the Two Rivers lodging representative on the MAVCB Board, commented on the importance of the MAVCB's marketing efforts related to conferences and group tours. He noted that he has been busy responding to such group inquiries, as people are making plans to travel and to meet in person again, when the COVID pandemic eases. He also referenced a recent conversation with the City Manager about promoting the meeting facilities at the Community House and Sepia Chapel as part of a "package" for conferences considering Two Rivers as a venue.

Greg Vadney commented on the operation of the Visitor Center on Calumet Avenue/STH 151.

Amy Meyer, who serves as Director of the Manitowoc County Historical Society and Pinecrest Historical Village, commented on the MAVCB's role in hosting upcoming conferences by the Soo Line Locomotive Engineers and a blacksmiths group.

Mark Bittner stressed the City of Two Rivers' desire to continue the collaborative tourism effort with Manitowoc. He also credited MAVCB Director Jason Ring with securing many grants to augment area tourism marketing efforts and serving on the state board that reviews and awards tourism grants. Mr. Ring stated that the MAVCB has obtained Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grants totaling \$440,000 over the past ten years.

Curt Andrews, who also chairs the City's Branding and Marketing Committee, asked several questions focusing on the MAVCB's marketing and communications activities. Those questions included:

1. What does success look like? Mr. Ring responded that success for the MAVCB is most easily measured by local room tax revenues and by visitor spending as estimated by the WI Department of Tourism.
2. How do you measure aided and unaided awareness? A discussion of geofencing and other of tracking and interacting with visitors ensued.
3. Does the organization have a marketing plan for 2021? Mr. Ring responded that there are both marketing and advertising plans for 2021. Mr. Andrews asked that copies of both be provided to the Commission.
4. What are the MAVCB's marketing pieces? Mr. Ring cited the printed Visitor Guide, the organization's website and materials associated with the Coastal Food Trail
5. What do the MAVCB's numbers for various social media platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, look like? Mr. Ring noted that he provides his board with a monthly report on the top ten topics on the MAVCB website, and also monitors the Facebook dashboard for statistics and trends.
6. How does the MAVCB share information with other community business and development organizations, like the Chamber, TRBA, Two Rivers Main Street and Progress Lakeshore? Jason noted his participation at TRBA meeting and at Chamber events, at least pre-COVID, and through MAVCB community outreach events, like the annual Tourism Breakfast.

Following discussion, Mark Bittner moved, supported by Curt Andrews, to recommend that the City of Two River continue its tourism partnership with the City of Manitowoc and the MAVCB, subject to negotiating a new agreement satisfactory to all parties; further, that a joint meeting of the room tax commissions and the MAVCB Board be scheduled as soon as possible to pursue such a successor to the current Services Agreement.

During the discussion that followed, the Commission members identified the following three issues that should be addressed in a new Tourism Services Agreement:

- A commitment by the City of Manitowoc that the Visitor Center can stay at its current location for the term of the new Agreement;
- Recognition that the MAVCB Board of Directors is in charge of the organization's Director and other staff;
- A change in the language of Article II, Section 2, titled "Termination of MAVCB and Disposition of Assets," to provide for sharing with Two Rivers a pro rate share of any cash reserves of the MAVCB in the event the MAVCB ceases to exist, to the extent such reserves have increased since Two Rivers joined with the City of Manitowoc and the MAVCB in a joint tourism partnership.

The motion was approved by voice vote, without dissent.

Mr. Buckley left the meeting at 5:55 PM.

5. Review 2020 Room Tax Revenues and Spending

Commission members agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting.

6. Review 2021 Budget and Consider 2021 Plan for Use of Room Tax Funds

Commission members agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting.

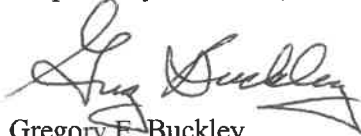
7. Set Date and Time for Next meeting of the Room Tax Commission

Commission members agreed to schedule the next meeting for Thursday, April 1, time to be determined.

8. Adjournment

Jim VanLanen, Jr. moved, supported by Bill LeClair., to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 PM. The motion was approved by voice vote, without dissent.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregory E. Buckley
City Manager