

CITY OF VERONA
MINUTES
TOURISM COMMISSION
April 16, 2019
Verona City Hall

1. **Call to Order:** Charlie Eggen called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.
2. **Roll Call:** Charlie Eggen, Jason Hunt, Charlotte Jerney, and Pat Wehrley were present. Also present: Adam Sayre, Interim City Administrator/Director of Planning and Development; Dayna Sarver, Economic Development Manager; Brian Lamers, Finance Director; Ellen Clark, City Clerk; Le Jordan, Executive Director of the Verona Area Chamber of Commerce (VACC); Halley Jones, VACC Tourism Coordinator; and Sara Hoechst, co-owner of Hop Haus.
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Minutes:** Motion by Jerney, seconded by Wehrley, to approve the March 20, 2019 Tourism Commission minutes. Motion carried 4-0.
5. **Discussion and Possible Action Re: 2018 Room Tax Report submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (Form SL-304)**

Lamers presented the 2018 Room Tax Report. The report includes the amount of room tax funds the City received in 2018, and how much was paid out to Madison Area Sports Commission and Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau (which is now Destination Madison) and the Verona Area Chamber of Commerce. By May 1st of each year, the entities receiving payments from the City's room tax funds must provide the City with a report listing any expenditure over \$1,000, with the exception of payroll. Verona is only one of many municipalities that make payments to Madison Area Sports Commission and Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau from money collected through room taxes. That information is then reported by Lamers to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. These lists are included in Lamers' report to the Tourism Commission.

Eggen stated that tourism entities, such as the Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association and the Wisconsin Restaurant Association, look at these reports to determine if municipalities are using the room tax money appropriately.
6. **Discussion and Possible Action Re: Tourism Commission Reserve Fund Policy**

Sayre explained that City Staff developed a draft policy providing guidelines for the use of excess room tax dollars collected by the City of Verona Tourism Commission. The policy includes the calculation used to determine the amount to be reserved from the

“Excess to be Retained” account balance: \$100,000, which is approximately 25% of six quarterly payments to the Chamber of Commerce.

Lamers stated in Section 3 of the policy, the consensus of the Commission should be to strive to reserve \$100,000, and the reason for the reserve should include “other appropriate uses.”

Eggen stated that as the amount of room tax money increases, the 25% going to the Chamber will increase, as well. It would be a good idea to say we should strive to reserve \$100,000. He would also like to see “assistance in marketing large unplanned events” listed ahead of “tax exempt development opportunities” in Section 4.

Sayre offered to make the recommended changes and bring them back to the next meeting.

7. Reports and Comments from the Tourism Coordinator

Jones presented a spreadsheet listing detailed information on Verona events. The document includes room tax grant awarded to each event, if any, and outcome information based on interviews with those in charge of the events. An outcome interview was first conducted after the U.S. speed skating championships. It is important to understand from an organizer’s standpoint what they like about having an event in Verona, and what we can do to make it better for them.

Discussion followed regarding the American Family Gold Tournament, using facilities at the new high school for some events, setting up hospitality training, partnering with other communities to provide hotel rooms and dining opportunities for their events, requesting follow-up reports from event organizers, coordinating a group of Verona Area High School students to conduct a tourism survey, and working on a tourism book that includes specialized maps of the area.

The Commission thanked Jones for her hard work on this document.

8. Reports and Comments from Staff

None

9. Reports and Comments from Commission Members

Jerney asked for Common Council members to get a copy of the tourism book when it is finished.

Wehrley reported that The 5th Dimension is coming to the VAPAC in November.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Jerney, seconded by Wehrley, to adjourn at 2:57 p.m. Motion carried 4 -0.

