

City of Oconomowoc  
Bureau of Economic Development & Tourism Meeting Minutes  
August 17, 2020

Chairman Duffy called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and the Deputy Clerk confirmed appropriate notice was given.

**Members Present:** Hilary DeVries, Lori Boldig, John Gresely, Cherie Sonsalla and Mayor Magnus

**Members Excused:** Kendel Beardsley

**Staff Present:** Bob Duffy, Paige Brunclik, Kristi Weber, Tina Wallace and Erin Vande Zande

**2. Approve Minutes of February 10, 2020:** Motion by Bolding to approve the February 10, 2020 minutes; second by Sonsalla. Motion carried 5-0.

**New Business**

**3a. Review/Discussion: Website & Facebook Status & Statistics**

Duffy stated visits are down. Last year were around 14,000 and this year we are around 9,800. The difference is events. We have had 26,000-page views and most of the people go to the main page or right to the calendar. Duffy stated back in February of 2020 the Committee approved the website promotion with LegitClick Media. LegitClick Media has looked at our sites and they have identified metadata that we need to reinsert into our website pages. They have advised staff on SEO copyrighting for our pages. They will review any of the content that we rewrite. Staff has optimized google my business and we have integrated google analytics in addition to the analytics staff has already done. Brunclik stated she has been working with staff at LegitClick about once a month. She will share the PowerPoint from LegitClick with the Committee. She stated one thing she learned is that Civicplus is a great organization but it's not setup for what we want to do with visitocomowoc.com which is to draw people to our site. Civicplus likes to use Piwik but it doesn't tell you who is really seeing you in real time where google really does. Staff has created google analytic so you can see where people are coming from. Duffy stated facebook use has increased.

**3b. Review/Discussion: 2020 Accommodations Tax Revenue/Expenditure Status:** Duffy stated with the COVID-19 traveling has stopped. We are currently at 57% of our total anticipated budget. He stated once the marketing plan was approved, staff moved forward with some projects. Currently the budget is at a short fall of \$45,000. Most of the budget is tied up with staff time. He stated we are not going to meet the revenue projections. We are seeing \$2,000 per month compared to the \$17 to \$18,000 per month. In July we ended at \$12,000. Duffy stated Tourism has a reserve fund which we don't want to completely tap into because we still have 2021. He stated we won't be doing any murals, festivals, fireworks or other amenities for the downtown, or the virtual walking tour app. He stated removing these things takes approximately \$80,000 of expenses off the budget. Members discussed Airbnb/Vrbo accommodation tax. Duffy stated this was explored 2 years ago and the decision was not to pursue it.

**3c. Review/Recommendation – 2020 Promotional Initiatives Status:** Duffy stated staff is working on the SEO management with LegitClick Media. He stated right now staff is not doing anything with digital media lab and the email marketing piece. He stated an agreement was signed with Discover Wisconsin to push five videos. Staff is not doing the Journal-topics.com website advertising, Travel Wisconsin events mail program and deals program. The wayfinding signs will be installed in September.

**3d. Discussion/Recommendation – 2021 Budget Review:** Duffy stated he put together the 2021 budget. Finance staff looked at the budget and will be using the June numbers of \$36,000 with a revenue of \$80,000. He stated staff time alone is well over that. He stated we are not going to approve the budget but will still look at the numbers. There will be a conversation with Council on how we want to handle the

shortfall and how do we want to handle some of the initiatives that we are or are not doing. He stated we have a marketing intern which has been a great asset. Can we shift some funds from the promotional line to assist in funding for the marketing position? What level shall we provide for organizations? Should 2021 promotional efforts be exclusively website, social media and online? Are there other opportunities and/or initiatives be explored that are high impact and low investment? Duffy asked if the Members think things will stay the same or what are some other things, we could be doing that are high impact but low cash. The members discussed how much staff is projecting. Duffy stated we have a couple thousand in the reserve fund but how do we find other ways. He stated he needs to have a discussion with Council on whether the 46% accommodation tax the City gets can the Tourism use. Members suggested doing the community guide every other year and focus on Travel Wisconsin, google leads, social media and look at decreasing the amounts given to organizations.

**3e. Review/Recommendation – Proposed Accommodations Tax Ordinance Amendment:** Duffy stated since 1988 the City has had an accommodation tax on lodging room nights. The current ordinance is at 6%, with a 1% credit for prompt reporting and tax payments to the City. He drafted an ordinance change to be effective January 1, 2021 and he included the short-term rental language and lodging marketplace. The tax would be increased to 8%, and elimination of the 1% credit for monthly reporting.

Motion by Gresely to recommend the ordinance amendment to Council; second by Bolding. Motion carried 5-0.

**3f. Discussion/Recommendation – Nalytix Proposal – Model Community:** Duffy stated the City Tourism staff was approached by a Lake Country entity that is building a model to enable digitally connected, omni-channel marketing for communities. He stated a representative from the company would be more than happy to come in and explain share their idea at a future meeting. Duffy stated it's an online marketplace, restaurants and retailer app. This would be no cost to us, and they would work with the restaurants first. They would gather data and share with staff. The company is called Nalytix. Members agreed to have a representative come in and explain the app.

**4. Ideas/Comments from Tourism Members:** Duffy reported a hotel bought property in the Oconomowoc Corporate Center and they plan to build in 2021. The ball diamond is still intending to start construction next spring. Duffy introduced the Marketing Intern, Erin Vande Zande. Magnus commented it seems like the Tourism Commission has a lot of good things but, it sounds like we need a true marketing plan for the next 1- 3 years. He suggested the Members brainstorm the next 12 – 24 months. Duffy stated most of our efforts have been surrounded by activities and events. Magnus suggested holding a 90-minute meeting to brainstorm marketing ideas. Members agreed to hold a meeting on Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:00 PM.

**5. Other Business:** None.

**6. Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn by Sonsalla; seconded by Boldig. Motion carried 5-0 Adjournment occurred at 4:04 pm.

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Tina Wallace, Deputy City Clerk