

## City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: 04-13-2022**


**Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.**

**Time Meeting Ended: 11:00 a.m.**

Members		Also Attended	
Alderman Casey Babel - Chairman	P	Director Melinda Jones	
Alderman Bill Wangelin	P	Admin Assistant Tracy Finch	
Alderman Jessica Devers	P	City Administrator Robbin Blackert	
Brian Tribley	P	Deputy City Clerk Michelle Conklin	
Amy Williamson	A		
Bethany Bland	P		
Tom Rynott	A		

Ordinance/Topic	Discussion	Plan of Action
Call to Order	Meeting was called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Casey Babel	
Approve Minutes	<p>Committee reviewed minutes from the March 9, 2022, Tourism Committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casey Babel moved to approve minutes, second by Bill Wangelin, Viva Voce Vote, 4 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried.</li> </ul>	Minutes Approved
	Bethany Bland was present at 10:02 a.m.	
Tourism Committee Updates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Blackhawk Waterways – Diane Bausman reviewed her report from the BWCVB (copy attached)</li> <li>b. Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce – Bethany Bland updated the Committee on the upcoming Community Events, Tailgate Bingo on May 19th, Community Garage Sales on May 14-16, Summer Splash on June 24-25 and the Farmer’s Market from May – October.</li> <li>c. Tourism Director – Melinda Jones               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Tracy Finch informed the Committee that the Barn Quilt Painting Class has been moved to the Mexicali Rose Banquet Hall</li> <li>ii. Bellson Music Fest – All bands have signed the agreements, we are in need of volunteers for the event.</li> <li>iii. Food Truck Fridays – All bands and Food Truck Vendors are scheduled</li> <li>iv. Jammin on the Rock – Bands are all scheduled</li> <li>v. Independence Day Kickoff - Band is scheduled and fireworks will be provided by the Sterling Rock Falls Jaycees</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	No action on any items
Tourism Grants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. YMCA Tourism Grant in the amount of \$500.00 for Outdoor Adventure Fest on May 14, 2022. Jessica Devers moved to approve YMCA Tourism Grant, second by Casey Babel, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes. 0 nays, motion carried.</li> <li>b. Heritage Woods of Sterling Tourism Grant in the amount of \$100.00 for a Pet Photo Fest on behalf of Happy Tails Humane Society on May 21, 2022. Bill Wangelin moved to approve Heritage Woods of Sterling Tourism Grant, second by Jessica Devers, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motions carried.</li> </ol>	Tourism Grant in the amount of \$500.00 approved Tourism Grant in the amount of \$100.00 approved

	<p>c. Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce Tourism Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 for Summer Splash June 24-25, 2022. Bill Wangelin moved to approve Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce Tourism Grant, second by Jessica Devers, Viva Voce Vote, 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 recuse (Bland), motion carried.</p> <p>d. Bo's Bait &amp; Tackle Tourism Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fishing Extravaganza. After a short discussion it was decided that the Committee would approve the amount of \$500.00 for the event. Bill Wangelin moved to approve the Bo's Bait &amp; Tackle Tourism Grant, second by Brian Tribble, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried.</p>	<p>Tourism Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 approved</p> <p>Tourism Grant in the amount of \$500.00 approved</p>
Façade Grants	<p>a. Z &amp; She's Academy of Dance – Façade Project is complete. Casey Babel moved to approve payment in the amount of \$5,000.00 to Z &amp; She's for the completed Façade Project, second by Jessica Devers, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried.</p> <p>b. Façade Grant request from Stahr Media, LLC in the amount of \$4,706.04. After discussion the Committee agreed to fund the grant in the amount of \$2,000.00. Brian Tribble moved to approve the Façade Grant for Stahr Media in the amount of \$2,000.00, second by Bill Wangelin, Vote 5 aye, motion carried.</p> <p>c. Façade Grant request from Kapp's Banquet – Marty Kapp in the amount of \$4,337.01. After discussion the Committee agreed that ½ would be paid out of the Façade Grant funds and ½ would be paid out of the Sidewalk budget. Casey Babel moved to approve the Façade Grant for Kapp's Banquet in the amount of \$4,337.01, second by Brian Tribble, Vote 5 aye, motion carried.</p>	<p>Approved payment in the amount of \$5,000</p> <p>Approved Façade Grant in the amount of \$2,000.00 to Stahr Media</p> <p>Approved Façade Grant in the amount of 4,337.01 to Kapp's Banquet,</p>
Marketing/Advertising/Promotions	Director Melinda Jones updated the Committee, there has been a 60% increase in visits to the website and Facebook is over 6,000. Planning on doing some TV streaming, magazine and radio advertising.	No Action
New Business	<p>a. Event Permit – Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce – Summer Splash June 24-25, 2022. Administrator Blackert will check and see if the inflatable bounce houses will be allowed. Bill Wangelin moved to approve the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce Event Permit and waive the rental fees, second by Casey Babel, Viva Voce Vote, 4 aye, 0 nay, 1 recuse (Bland), motion carried</p>	Event Permit for the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce approved with waiver of rental fees.
Committee Member Items	Jessica Devers asked if the Billboard could be discussed, the expense is around \$20,000.00 per year and that money could possible be used to fund some of the Façade and other grants. Administrator Blackert stated that we can look at that before the contract is up and bring back to the Tourism Committee for discussion.	No Action
Adjournment	<p>Bethany Bland moved to adjourn, second by Bill Wangelin, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.</p>	

  
 Chairman, Casey Babel

**Report for Rock Falls Tourism**  
**by BWCVB Executive Director, Diane Bausman**  
**April 13, 2022**

**Meetings Attended:**

- March 22 - BWCVB Board meeting via Zoom
- March 30 - Great River Rd Scenic Byway Board meeting via Zoom
- March 31 - National Scenic Byways webinar
- April 12 - Carroll Co Hotel/Motel Brd

**Web Site Update:**

**Visitnorthwestillinois.com** - In the last month we've had 11,990 unique visits to our website (up 86% over last month) and they viewed 1.73 pages per session. 10.66% came as direct traffic (typed in our URL); 40.37% came as organic traffic (searched using keywords that lead them to our site) and 32.53% were referrals and of those referrals 99.45% came from our Facebook posts. There were also 3,518 click thru's to the website from our online advertising spots.

**The top landing pages** were (1) Discover the Great Outdoors (this was a QR code link from our online ads (2) Travel blog on the Forest Inn Restaurant (3) Travel blog on Patchwork Inn B&B (4) What to Do/White Pines

**Demographics:**

Age Range	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	14.90%	19.65%	20.58%	18.94%	17.09%

**Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:**

- Our **Spring online advertising campaign** went live March 1<sup>st</sup> and it's doing **great** so far. Chad Blair, our TDG ad rep, sent the following analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the campaign:
  - Served over 380,000 impressions between Google, YouTube and Facebook in March
  - Generated over 6,400 clicks on our ads.
  - We saw an additional 9,200 engagements on the YouTube video ads.
  - 88 total conversions (request for more information and/or Visitor Guide)
  - Looking at analytics, we see significant gains in this year compared to last year.
- Print ads that have come out in the last month include *Spring-Summer Illinois Travel Guide* and the *Rock River Getaway Guide*. The *Silent Sports* magazine ad just came out & the web ad started April 1<sup>st</sup> and a banner ad on *windycitytimes.com* will run April 1-20.
- **Requests for information:** In the last month we had 394 requests for VG's from our website.
- **Social Media/blog report:** In the last month Jayne posted 20 times on all our social media channels.
- **Results from our top FB posts in the last month:**

	Total Reach	Post clicks	Shares
<b>Blog post on Forest Inn Restaurant</b>	5,700	516	24
<b>Blog post on Patchwork Inn B&amp;B</b>	4,196	349	4
<b>Re-post of Explore Savanna image</b>	3,090	71	20

**-view from Lookout Point**

- **Radio shows:** WRHL 3/23; WLLT weekly; WCCI bi-weekly. *Aroundptown.com* events are submitted weekly for their online newsletter.

**SAVE THE DATE: August 25<sup>th</sup>** - BWCVB Annual Dinner in Rochelle at the Chicagoland Skydiving Center located at the Rochelle Airport.

***Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement***

*To increase the economic impact to the four counties represented through promotions, advertising and providing information to potential visitors.*