



Hotel/Motel Tax Fund
Administration Committee Minutes
Revised



February 24, 2025, 11:00 AM, Council Chamber Meeting Room, City Hall

Hotel/Motel Committee Members Present: Millie Youngquist-Chair, Illa Earnest, Charla Howard, Isabella Santoro, Phil Minino.

Advisory Present: Michelle Redlinger, Joe Gaa, Kathy Kron.

Absent: Diane Gallagher, Leslie Allender

Chair Youngquist called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Motion by Howard, seconded by Earnest, to accept the agenda and minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Discussion on the Financial report was held. Redlinger reported that the final invoice for the Kiosk map is still outstanding, and she has sent another request for that invoice. Also discussed is the outstanding invoice for the Main Street Rebranding for \$4,256.00 and Gaa will contact Sam regarding this.

Discussion on Kiosk map was held. Redlinger has sent a follow up email but has not heard back. She will reach out again.

Discussion was held on the speaker system at Central Park. Redlinger reported no update since she's contacted Nick Gingerich, Joe Nichols, Mike McNurlan, and Nick Pacha. She will follow up and get estimates. Redlinger had discussed a grant with the Riverboat Foundation and it's due March 15th. Many agreed that this committee is willing to fund to have the system fixed. Howard offered to talk to her husband to see if he could check the system or assist in any way in hopes of finding out by next meeting so it can be fixed before the first live event.

Discussion on Tourism was held. Redlinger will try to attend the Iowa Arts Council Regional Forum in Davenport on February 27th, 2025. Redlinger, Howard, Santoro will be attending the Iowa Tourism Conference on March 12 & 13, 2025. Youngquist had discussed a Creative Places Exchange on May 9th, 2025 in Burlington and will pass along more information as it comes along. The First Impressions application is complete, Redlinger will check for an update on the status.

Gaa discussed a variety of activities in Coralville, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids area currently going on with local Restaurants. Ideas were mentioned such as to have a "Burger Battle", "Restaurant week", or something similar during the Winter months.

Discussion was held on collaboration with the City's current Hotels on advertising and providing some type of assistance or locating a grant to assist with simple updates such as fresh paint and carpet as well as photographing and possibly videography. Gaa will put together what a Grant for this would look like. Redlinger will reach out to the Hotel owners on this.

Discussion was held on the Arrivallist Visitor Correlation. Redlinger, Minino, Allender, and Santoro had work on the data provided but the results do not seem realistic. Redlinger and Minino are meeting with an Arrivallist group this week to learn about other ways to get better more realistic results. Redlinger reported that Iowa City uses Placer AI but it is expensive to use and doesn't provide realistic results.

Reports from the Sub-committees:

Drafting Policy for Financial Requests (Youngquist, Minino, Gaa) – Minino reported that he'll update the funding application and project consideration form with re-wording the title to Project Funding Application and adding Kron as the contact to submit applications to and timeline of when application should be submitted. Motion to approve final application forms made by Minino, seconded by Howard. Motion carried.

Researching Ad Agencies (Gallagher, Allender, Redlinger) – Gallagher has received feedback from similar sized cities that they recommend and do currently use a local person. Redlinger recommends Rachel Fishback and provided her quote sheet from November. Her rates range from \$1,200.00 to \$6,000.00 per month. Santoro discussed the "This is Iowa Guide" and suggested that we should do this. Santoro will do more research on this.

Billboard Collaboration (Howard, Santoro, Earnest) – Howard reported no updates, waiting until an opening for a billboard comes up.

Discussion on the FY26 Budget update was held. Motion made by Santoro, seconded by Earnest to approve the FY2026 Hotel-Motel Funding Split but with \$25,000 vs 25% to support the Welcome Center operations at the Chamber. Motion carried.

New Business items included discussion on a trail head and sun sculpture on the Kewash Trail. Minino and Santoro will be meeting the YMCA to discuss location. Minino will see if Bazooka can donate the display signs for each location.

Also discussed were the meeting results, which were provided, Santoro had with the U of I Library on Exhibit loans for Washington Local History Exhibit/Museum. Location of a museum/exhibit was also discussed.

Next meeting will be March 24, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. Future meetings will be held at 10:30 a.m.

Motion by Minino, seconded by Howard, to adjourn at 12:22 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Kron
City Clerk