

Kosciusko County Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission, January 17, 2024

The Kosciusko County Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission (KCCRVC) met for a regular meeting on January 17, 2024 at 9:00a.m. in the Courtroom on the third floor of the Courthouse, 100 W. Center St., Warsaw, IN.

Those present were:

Mark Skibowski, President
Lyle Schrock, Vice-President

John Hall, Treasurer
Doug Shoemaker- Arrived to the meeting at
9:05a.m.
Kathy Ray ABSENT

Jessica Hartman-Secretary
Matt Metzger

The meeting was called to order by Mark Skibowski.

IN THE MATTER OF SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS:

Mark Skibowski, Lyle Schrock, John Hall, Jessica Hartman, Doug Shoemaker, and Matt Metzger were sworn in as 2024 board members.

Grant Request

IN THE MATTER OF ENCOURAGING EVENTS-FOLLOWERSHIP CONFERENCE:

Encouraging Events producer and co-host Sherri Lynn presented a request via zoom in the amount of \$10,500.00 for an event coming to Grace College from April 12th to the 14th called the Followership Conference. It is the opposite of a leadership conference and will be faith based. The Followership Conference is about how to be a disciple of Jesus and how to follow Jesus. Encouraging Events is part of their radio show called the Brant Hansen Show, it is heard on 200 plus stations across the country. Registration was opened for the Followership Conference approximately a month ago and their goal is to have between 750-1000 attend. For sponsorship they are looking for assistance with digital ad marketing and for food truck vendors to be there throughout the weekend from Kosciusko County. Sherri stated they have also reached out to local hotels for rates. There will be some free time where people can experience what Kosciusko County has to offer. Lyle stated they could help with the digital advertising according to what the KCCRVC bylaws read. Sherri advised the digital marketing will be very helpful to bring people to the area. Mark stated it is good marketing for our community to have a nationally syndicated show here and \$3,000.00 for advertising will help promote the event.

Motion: John Hall
Second: Jessica Hartman
Ayes: 6 Nays: 0
MOTION CARRIED

To: Approve the Followership Conference
grant request in the amount of \$3,000.00, as
presented.

IN THE MATTER OF 2024 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Mark Skibowski verified with the Auditor that the officers being selected are for President, Vice President & Treasurer which was confirmed. Mark then opened the floor for nominations of themselves or others. Secretary Jessica Hartman nominated John Hall as Treasurer and John Hall accepted the nomination. Mark Skibowski opened the floor for nominations for President. Due to the lack of participation; Skibowski nominated himself for President. Skibowski stated he has acted as president in the past and that he and current president Kathy Ray have alternated. Member Lyle Schrock stated he was willing to step into the role of Vice President with John Hall then nominating Lyle Schrock to serve as Vice President. Skibowski advised there was a slate with the nominations and asked if there were any other nominations. He advised a vote would be taken for the three positions as follows:

- Mark Skibowski as President
- Lyle Schrock as Vice President
- John Hall as Treasurer

All members were in favor of The Slate. The 2024 Officers were approved unanimously.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

To: Approve John Hall as Treasurer, Mark Skibowski as President, and Lyle Schrock as Vice-President, as presented.

****After review of the minutes there will be clarification of the vote at the 3-13-24 KCCRVC Meeting.*

Grant Request:

IN THE MATTER OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY VISITOR'S BUREAU AND VISITORS CENTER:

KCCVB Executive Director Cori Humes presented a request in the amount of \$25,096.98 for Visitor Center Capital Improvements. Humes stated the visitor center was built in 1999 and is considered a welcoming site on US 30. The visitor center is a destination for information, visitors to have an outdoor picnic, restrooms, picking up local resources, things to do in the area, and travel information for the state of Indiana. The visitor's center is in need of a couple of capital projects. The roof has been inspected and it has approximately 1 to 2 years of life left. The laminate flooring in the back entryway kitchen and staff bathroom is cracking and becoming an issue. The Masonite double door in the back for staff and loading is 25 years old and is in need of replacement. The visitor's center does operate as the staff's convention and visitor's bureau offices. Humes stated they did get multiple quotes for the roof and wanted to rely on Millwood because they are the original builders who put the roof on 25 years ago. Matt asked if the other quotes came in similar priced. Humes stated yes, they were all about the same but they wanted to stick with the builder that did it about 25 years ago and they are still in the area. The current roof is a shingle roof with a single layer, Millwood will remove that layer instead of layering it. Hartman asked how urgent the flooring is, Humes advised urgency for the laminate, the carpeting is in pretty decent condition. Humes advised they would like to get it replaced this year.

****After the motion was made a discussion was brought up by John Hall to see if grant funds could be used from the 2023 grant funds. Rhonda Helser, Auditor was asked to confirm what year the grant funds could be used from. An amended motion was made to pay this request from*

the 2023 remaining grant funds if applicable, if not, then it will be paid from the 2024 grant funds.

MOTION: Lyle Schrock
SECOND: Jessica Hartman

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0
Motion Carried

TO: Approve the Visitor Center Capital Improvements in the amount of \$25,096.98, as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF CVB UPDATE:

KCCVB Executive Director Cori Humes presented the CVB update.

- The digital message board sign is up and they are working on getting all the marketing on it
- The 2022 annual audit should be completed soon and given to KCCRVC for review
- Visitor traffic had an improvement of 27.3% from 2022 to 2023
- They have completed about 13 of their incentives for their strategic plan for 2024-2026 3-year plan with the board and should be approved by March
- The sports and events calculator will be continuing
- First quarter hotelier meeting will be February 15, 2024
- Increasing their digital marketing efforts
- They have created an annual report to showcase what tourism is doing for our county as well as the KCCRVC contribution
- The most viewed video in 2023 was the Lake City Skiers National Tournament
- The rebranding will be launching in February

IN THE MATTER OF CHAUTAUQUA WAWASEE-SHANNA ZOLMAN MAHALEY'S FAITH STORY:

Advisor for Chautauqua Wawasee Sally Mahnken presented a request for a publicity grant in the amount of \$500.00 for Shanna Zolman Mahaley's Faith Story. Shanna Zolman is a very highly well-known and respected young women who graduated from Wawasee High School and went on to play national basketball. She is going to talk about her faith and how it brought her through the time in national basketball. This will be a free event for those coming in. There will be advertising in Fort Wayne, South Bend, and the local area.

Motion: John Hall
Second: Lyle Schrock
Ayes: 6 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the Shanna Zolman Mahaley's Faith Story publicity grant request in the amount of \$500.00, as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF CHAUTAUQUA WAWASEE-PURDUE VARSITY GLEE CLUB PERFORMANCE:

Advisor for Chautauqua Wawasee Sally Mahnken presented a request for a publicity grant in the amount of \$500.00 for the Purdue Varsity Glee Club. Every other year the Purdue Varsity Glee Club come to Kosciusko County. This year it will be at the high school and they are expecting approximately 300-400 people. We hope some of them stay the night.

Motion: John Hall
Second: Lyle Schrock
Ayes: 6 Nays: 0
MOTION CARRIED

To: Approve the Purdue Varsity Glee Club
Performance publicity grant request in the
amount of \$500.00, as presented.

**IN THE MATTER OF CHAUTAUQUA WAWASEE-WAWASEE FINE ARTS
FESTIVAL:**

Advisor for Chautauqua Wawasee Sally Mahnken presented a request for a publicity grant in the amount of \$500.00 for the Wawasee Fine Arts Festival. This will be the 10th year for the Wawasee Fine Arts Festival. Right now, there is 35-45 vendors and hoping to get approximately 50. This event will happen during Memorial weekend.

Motion: John Hall
Second: Lyle Schrock
Ayes: 6 Nays: 0
MOTION CARRIED

To: Approve the Wawasee Fine Arts Festival
publicity grant request in the amount of
\$500.00, as presented.

**IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 8, 2024
MEETING:**

Minutes from the November 8, 2024 meeting were presented for approval.

Motion: Lyle Schrock
Second: Jessica Hartman
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Mark Skibowski- Abstained (absent for the
11-8-24 meeting)
MOTION CARRIED

To: Approve the November 8, 2024 meeting
minutes, as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF KCCRVC FINANCIALS:

Treasurer John Hall presented the financial report, stating at the end of the year they collected \$844,000.00 compared to \$902,000.00 last year. The Innkeepers tax was down about \$100,000.00 from the hotels. The state did come up from \$263,000.00 compared to \$219,000.00. Hall stated overall it was a good year and all the hotels are up to date.

Motion: Jessica Hartman
Second: Matt Metzger
Ayes: 6 Nays: 0
MOTION CARRIED

To: Approve the financial report as
presented.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mark advised the Commission that the KCCRVC ordinance (ordinance that created the Commission) was provided to all members as well as the grant applications (forms) that are used. Mark advised he had received feedback in regards to the grants being reimbursable; and that the grantees must come up with the funds in advance and then submit paid receipts for

reimbursement. He shared information what the City Council of Warsaw is doing with an amendment to their ordinance for capital projects in which they will fund 50% in advance so that it doesn't have to be a reimbursement. Mark requested assistance from the Auditor to review and research this to see if this is something that they can do legally. He added that it may not be feasible for a non-profit to come up with a large amount of funds and suggested that this be looked into for capital expenditures; not for operations expenses. He stated that once the grant amounts are sorted out; he encouraged the Commission to get the message out about grant availability and grant opportunities.

IN THE MATTER OF CLAIMS:

Mark Skibowski stated the Auditor's office has reviewed the claims that have been received and the claims are being presented to the Commission for approval. The claims that were prepared to be paid were briefly discussed and will be signed by both president and vice president.

Being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

***After the meeting was adjourned, CCAC Executive and Tournament Director Mike Hagy thanked the Commission for all their support and wanted to address Skibowski comments above concerning reimbursable grants and their willingness to look further into the possibilities of providing an advanced grant. Hagy spoke of his recent experience of a grant that the CCAC was looking further into an advanced grant for nonprofits, and that any percentage for capital projects would be helpful.

Hagy gave an update on the CCAC stating they have started to turn a corner over the last 2 years. Hagy thanked Mark Skibowski and Jo Paczkowski for all their help. The CCAC added an adult indoor soccer league this year, they have gone from 105 kids in their indoor soccer program to about 150, and they have partnered with Kids Market who is sponsoring the soccer program. Hagy stated they got approved for a grant for 18 new soccer goals and from Warsaw City ARPA they got approved for 8 new scoreboards. This year will be their 30th year anniversary and they plan on having a celebration for the community. The new board elections will be on Monday 1-22-24.

Kosciusko County Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission March 13, 2024

The Kosciusko County Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission (KCCRVC) met for a regular meeting on March 13, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Courtroom on the third floor of the Courthouse, Located at 100 W. Center St., Warsaw, IN.

Those present were:

Mark Skibowski, President

John Hall, Treasurer *Via ZOOM*

Lyle Schrock, Vice-President
Jessica Hartman, Secretary

Doug Shoemaker-Absent
Kathy Ray- Member
Matt Metzger-Absent

Also Present was Rhonda Helser, Kosciusko County Auditor

The meeting was called to order by Mark Skibowski.

All Voting was done via Roll Call voting as John Hall was not present in person, he attended via Zoom.

In the Matter of Clarification of 2024 Elected Officers:

President: Mark Skibowski

Motion: Kathy Ray
Second: Lyle Schrock
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Nominate Mark Skibowski as the
President of the KCCRVC for 2024

Vice President: Lyle Schrock

Motion: Mark Skibowski
Second: John Hall
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Nominate Lyle Schrock as the Vice
President of the KCCRVC for 2024

Treasurer: John Hall

Motion: Jessica Hartman
Second: Kathy Ray

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Nominate John Hall as the
Treasurer of the KCCRVC for 2024

Secretary: Jessica Hartman

Motion: Lyle Schrock
Second: Kathy Ray
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Nominate Jessica Hartman as the
Secretary of the KCCRVC for 2024

Clarifications of Grant Funds from the Prior Year:

Clarification of Motions made during the January 17, 2024, meeting when approving grants. It was mentioned that the grants approved would be paid for with 2023 appropriations. This is not allowable by the State Board of Accounts. All grants approved at the January 2024 meeting will be paid from 2024 appropriations. Any grants approved in 2023 but not paid until 2024 can / will be encumbered.

Motion: John Hall

Second: Kathy Ray
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion
Carried

To: Correct / Clarify motions made at the 01/17/24 meeting. All grants will be paid from the 2024 appropriations and not 2023 appropriations.

Grant Requests

In the Matter of Echoes of the Past Request for Publicity Grant:

Chris Morehouse, Marketing and Public Relations Manager presented a grant request for \$500.00 for radio advertising. Echoes of the Past is celebrating its 30th anniversary, a major milestone for the group. Morehouse explained that the group was applying for the grant for out-of-county advertising due to budget restraints. "The majority of the advertising they do is through Facebook," Morehouse said, through Facebook groups and Echoes of the Past's page, and their website is how they currently advertise for the group. Past events have drawn people to Kosciusko County from Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Wisconsin and the group believes with radio advertising outside of Kosciusko County there could be more out-of-county and out-of-state attendees.

Motion: Lyle Schrock
Second: Kathy Ray
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

To: Approve a \$500.00 Publicity Grant for radio advertising for the 2024 Summer Festival.

Motion Carried

In the Matter of Echoes of the Past Request for Tourism Grant:

Chris Morehouse, Marketing and Public Relations Manager presented a grant request for \$8,186.00 for portable bleachers. To be used at their free public events. This request also includes the cost of a concrete pad for the bleachers to sit on at the Claypool Summer Festival. These bleachers would be located as the main viewing area for the tractor pulls in Claypool. Morehouse, went on to explain the Summer Fest Event and other events that they do over the year. "We have a huge event that we do in August called our Summer Fest," Morehouse said, which she estimated hosts 300-500 guests a day. Morehouse reported that for the Summer Fest, guests have used chairs from the dining area to view entertainment such as the tractor pull and children's events. The portable bleachers would provide seating for 54 people.

The bleachers would also be used for other events such as Cookies with Santa, which includes a sleigh ride. Morehouse, said last year 150 children took part, and there was a three-hour wait time for sleigh rides.

KCCRVC President Mark Skibowski clarified the request was \$6,186.00 for the bleachers and asked about the additional \$2,000 for cement. Morehouse said the area for the tractor pull was a "grassy, sandy area," and that they wanted to lay cement for patron safety. Member Kathy Ray asked about the bleachers' use at other locations, and Morehouse clarified the other areas were flatter, and would not need to have a concrete base. Lyle questioned the cash balance that the group currently has.

Morehouse explained that the group is also trying to save funds to build a pavilion at the Claypool location. Skibowski encouraged the group to return and ask for Grant Funds when they were ready to start the pavilion project. The group was encouraged to use the CVB event tracker. After the motion, more discussion about the bank balance was held between Morehouse and the KCCRVC Board. The board was informed that the bank balances of the group are always more at the beginning of the year as they have not had any of the 2024 events yet.

Motion: Jessica Hartman

Second: Kathy Ray

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

Motion Carried

To: Approve the grant request for bleachers for \$6,168.00 and \$2,000.00 for concrete, as presented. For a total of \$8,168.00

In the Matter of The ASK BEN FRANKLIN “In his own Words” Publicity Grant Oakwood Foundation Inc. Chautauqua Wawasee:

Mark Knecht President of the Oakwood Foundation Inc presented a request for a publicity grant on behalf of Chautauqua Wawasee Organization. This event is held in conjunction with the 4th of July holiday. Barry Sanders is a professional actor who portrays Ben Franklin. The group has already started advertising and has advertised in the Visit Indiana e-newsletter for the June issue and that cost is fairly expensive according to Mark. The event is free and open to the public.

Motion: Lyle Schrock

Second: Kathy Ray

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

Motion Carried

To: Approve the Publicity Grant for \$500.00 for Ask Ben Franklin

In the Matter of The Plein Air Program Publicity Grant Oakwood Foundation Inc. Chautauqua Wawasee:

Mark Knecht explained that this event/program was held 5 to 6 years ago and there is interest to start it again. This is a two-part program. There is a one-day event “The Paint Out” that will be held on May 25th in conjunction with the fine arts festival. The 2nd event is a three-day art workshop that will be held starting May 29th to 31st. They are partnering with the Northern Indiana Plein Air Association which has a vision of an art colony in the Syracuse Wawasee and Papakeechee area which could be a ten-year journey.

This publicity grant money would be used to advertise the above-mentioned events.

Motion: Lyle Schrock

Second: Kathy Ray

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

Motion Carried

To: Approve the Publicity Grant for \$500.00 for Plein Air Program

In the Matter of Advertising in the Annual BusinessWomen Directory of Northeast Indiana Publicity Grant Oakwood Foundation Inc. Chautauqua Wawasee:

Mark Knecht presented information for this request. He said that 80% of programs that the foundation conducts are driven by women. This directory goes to 8000 businesswomen and can track the ad with a QR code within the ad. The cost of the ad is \$600.00 and will include an article about all the programs that the Oakwood Foundation conducts throughout the year.

Motion: Lyle Schrock
Second: Kathy Ray
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the Publicity Grant for \$500.00
for Advertising in the Annual
Businesswomen Directory of Northeast
Indiana

**In the Matter of Advertising in the Hamilton County Community Guide & Online Journal
Publicity Grant Oakwood Foundation Inc. Chautauqua Wawasee:**

Mark Knecht explained that the Hamilton County Community Guide is a glossy high-quality publication published once in May. The online Journal is published 6 times a year. These ads will target the Carmel, Fishers, Zionsville, and Noblesville areas and the goal of this ad is to attract people to visit the “largest natural lake in Indiana”. These ads will also have the QR code and an online link to the chqw.org website to track the ads.

Motion: Lyle Schrock
Second: Kathy Ray
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the Publicity Grant for \$500.00
for Advertising in the Annual
Businesswomen Directory of Northeast
Indiana

In the Matter of The Lake City Skiers Sponsorship Tourism Grant for Boat Motors:

Chuck McLaughlin presented a request for \$7,703.28 for 1 quarterly payment on their boat motor purchase. Chuck said his request was for an ongoing grant which started some time ago. There were added 2023 expenses with four major tournaments being hosted. The Lake City Skiers will be holding tournaments again in 2024. Chuck also shared that most of the team was able to attend an annual awards event in Wisconsin in March of this year, the Lake Cities Skiers members received several individual awards. The group was awarded The Best Host in the Nation award, and they were asked to bid on the 2027 World Tournament. They were also recognized as the group with the largest membership. In, 2023 the group held four major tournaments which included state and national tournaments, along with several other local ski shows about every other week. After Chuck was done with his update Mark Skibowski added several comments about the Lake City Skiers organization and that several of its members have gone on to ski professionally at popular attraction areas around the United States.

Motion: Kathy Ray
Second: Jessica Hartman
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the Sponsorship Tourism Grant
in the amount requested \$7,703.28 for
1 quarterly payment for the Lake City Skiers
boat motors.

IN THE MATTER OF CCAC UPDATE:

Mike Hagy, CCAC Director, presented an update about the upcoming season and other information as it related to the operations of the CCAC.

- Eighteen new soccer goals. These were purchased with grant fund from K21.

- Eight new score boards. These were purchased with ARPA funds from the City of Warsaw.
- In June of 24 the CCAC will again host a girl's fast pitch softball tournament that 63 teams will take part in. This is expected to bring an influx of people into the city, for approximately 3-5 days. Mike has a list of food truck vendors that he is sorting through for this weekend event.
- Mike said that he has a good board of directors that are active. He mentioned that Mark Skibowski and Jo Paczkowski are on the CCAC Board of Directors, and that Mark serves as the President.
- The hiring process for summer staff has begun.
- Mark spoke as the president of the KCCRVC board, on behalf of the CCAC board about the CCAC's current funding. He explained that the City of Warsaw removed \$20,000 from the 2024 budget that the CCAC had been receiving. The KCCRVC agreed to give \$20,000 more to accommodate this change. Mark recommended that the KCCRVC think about increasing the funding for the CCAC for 2025.
- Mike Hagy also added that 2024 is the 30th year of operations of the CCAC and that many things around the complex need repair.

In the Matter of CVB Update:

Cori Humes, KCCVB Executive Director, presented an update on the following information. Cori introduced a few of the CVB's board members who attended the meeting.

- She thanked the commission for funding the CVB projects.
- January and February occupancy report numbers are better than it was in 2023.
- Encouraged the use of the Sports & Events Calendar for economic and data collecting
- 1st quarter hotel meeting had a decent turnout. The sports organization of Kosciusko County attended the meeting to discuss upcoming events.
- 2024 Visitor Guide is completed and being distributed. The newly branded website is up and running. She encouraged all members to visit the site.
- The audit of the CVB results was shared with the Auditor's Office. No issues were found with the accounting procedures.
- She invited the Commission to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony that will introduce the new branding of the CVB. It will be held on March 20th, 2024, at 1 pm at the Visitors Bureau.
- All the reports that she provided to the KCCRVC commission were quickly reviewed and that the strategy planning was completed.
- She reported that the roof project was completed last month and thanked the commission for the help provided with the project.
- Overall, it was a busy 1st quarter, and many goals were achieved as planned.

In the Matter of The KCCRVC Meeting Minutes from the January 17th, 2024, Meeting:

Mark Skibowski presented the January 17, 2024, meeting minutes for approval.

Motion: Jessica Hartman
Second: Lyle Schrock

To: Accept the meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

In the Matter of The KCCRVC Financials:

John Hall presented the financial report, stating that Innkeeper's receipts have increased a little compared to this time in 2023. The commission is in good shape financially.

Motion: Kathy Ray
Second: Jessica Hartman To: Accept the Financial Report as presented.
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

In the Matter of the KCCRVC Ordinance / Grant Applications Review:

Mark Skibowski attended a City of Warsaw Council meeting, and they discussed the distribution of capital project funds. Mark explained that they are considering paying the vendors 50% at the time of the award and the rest of the project cost once the project is completed. He requested Rhonda to ask her Attorney if this was something that could be done. The Attorney recommended that the commission should wait to see what develops with the city then the commission could revisit and consider following suit.

In the Matter of The Limitless Park of Winona Lake:

Mark Skibowski read a thank you letter from Holly Hummitch, Winona Lake Limitless Park Director. She thanked the commission for the grant awarded in June 2022. The letter stated that the boat rental revenue for the park district increased 98% in 2023.

In the Matter of the 2025 KCCRVC Budget:

Mark Skibowski & John Hall have worked on the 2025 KCCRVC budget. Mark distributed a proposed 2025 budget to the commission to review. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.