

Mission Statement: To Promote & Protect the Camping Experience

Antitrust Statement – It shall be the policy of the Association to be in strict compliance with all Federal and State Antitrust laws, rules and regulations.

WACO Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Tuesday, December 17, 2024 | 10 am Moosejaw Pizza & Dell's Brewing Co. 110 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy S, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

If unable to attend in person, Zoom is available:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86264218319?pwd=Ilixkg2kxbSj7psdg7jiEA4ZY5ROoX.1>

Meeting ID: 862 6421 8319 | Passcode: 603095

Lori Cell: 608-792-5915 | Tina Cell: 608-386-3673 | Danielle Cell: 608-386-0752

1. **Call to Order – at 10 am;**
2. **Attendees:** Mike D, Rob B, Deneen P, Kristi M. Eric Anderson, Sky High – guest, Sarah K, Scott K, Danielle T, Lori S, Tina S; via zoom: Ben Stefan, Christina K, and Julie M.
3. **Motion to approve December agenda** - Sarah motion to approve, Mike 2nd, all in favor, approved.
4. **Packet review** - any questions?
5. **Committee review & assignments – need to know who's going off the board, elections, etc.**
 - ACTION ITEMS: Tina to review annual meeting minutes to review positions/board terms and confirm back for who's open. Send back ASAP to give people ideas/help.
 - ACTION ITEMS: Rob to send for updating changes to bylaws
 - ACTION ITEMS: At least 90 days to membership for new bylaws tweaks
6. **President's Report – Scott Kollock** – Attended both OHI & COE; doesn't feel like we're getting a lot of information from OHI – interesting to see what their membership will look like with less state assistance; looking for true numbers to see that impact; budgeted for 900 less from what Lori heard. Pulling away from states and state exec relationships and not sharing information – don't provide CAMP a room for meeting anymore (so now switched to COE); discussed with Bert re: membership a couple years back as they should be including them as a direct link to membership, but everything in place since then reflects they are pulling away.
 - OHI sued Hospitality Connections re: music license. OHI's exclusive ends on 2025. Music license is very complicated, and it's nice to know we have way more options than what OHI initially pitched to our groups. Can now select the events you're using vs. the entire year, or for a cheaper option and tell the group to only play from those select bands/songs. A few of our members did renew through OHI because they weren't sure what to do or what we'd have access to.
 - As a state association, we were forced to look for other benefits due to the change of OHI no longer working directly with our associations at the state levels.

- Mike – is there a concern from OHI that others may do more National associations – such as COE, such as RVIA? Could OHI stop that from happening? Not from what anyone is aware of. RVIA hosts Campground Coalition – bringing us more information through CAMP and a ton of data for economic impact. Eric – is it the goal of COE to get rid of OHI or compete directly? Lori – no, absolutely not; we’re here to give them representations with CAMP to help those states that don’t have associations in place. COE true and honest goal was to get owners with no state representation some help – MN, IA, IL they don’t have any solid guidance. Connected IL with Donnie as a new client. If not ED, could at least help the presidents of their boards to get them education and other assistance. Such a struggle for those little guys if you have no one leading. Scott – it's expensive to attend National, and the point was a smaller version that's cheaper. Now it's grown, and OHI went away from CAMP having a room/collaboration – COE offers that because we’re already paying for that room; so this year, 5 associations had their meetings there this year. Scott – I am a member of OHI, and I’m not going against them, but our job is to provide the information to our membership and let them determine what’s best for them – I will share what our state is doing. Lori – we encourage people to attend whatever they can – if you happen to be in the state when they are having their convention, then go! The big difference for COE is the behind-the-scenes and the information we gather there is huge. Mike – it feels like a lot of people look at OHI changing their name and abandoning their core membership.

7. **OHI Update – Jim Button** – not in attendance in person or via zoom; New OHI Chairman; Jeff Sims retiring in 2025 – will be a great loss for the industry.

8. **Mark Hazelbaker, legal update**

- **COE Meetings Comments** – hunger out there in these states that don’t have associations; WACO members are probably a little spoiled because they have an established association. I talked to Kansas, Arkansas, and Indiana – they don’t have anything; 90% of things that impact campgrounds are state-specific, not federal laws/rules. We need OHI, but COE is not a threat – we need it. It will be interesting to see what happens with Jeff Sims. Value what OHI has done, but need to understand they cannot do it all.
- **Washburn Litigation** – will get a decision from the courts tomorrow if not further delayed. Never confident about how the courts decide issues, so we’ll see. Not sure what the judges will do – judge was very skeptical about whether or not our group had standing.
- **Legislation:**
 - **Re: Removal of Units** - Looking to potentially include some legislation similar to the state of MI here. The state of WI and many counties are still confused about the landlord/tenants vs. guests. Police to escort off and similar to what’s done for self-storage businesses – Tina sent these comments to Sen. Jacques's office to start. Could potentially get the support of the Governor. Parties are much closer in numbers and gives the parties an incentive to put

some interest groups. Value in introducing an educational way in one session to adopt in the next session. Think we could explain this proposal to the Governor and could get some assistance from the Tourism bureau or at least ask them to not get in our way.

- **Christina K** – have to give appropriate 30-day notification; once concluded, we can have it demoed, we have to pay for that and show proof before we can get any kind of reimbursement and file small claims. It's a lot of tedious steps for people just walking off and leaving stuff at the park. Erik A – switched to putting on the front end in their agreement if the unit is more than 10 years old and holds a \$2000 deposit for situations just like this. Sarah – saw some guest comments about how that was a good thing. Eric don't see park models being abandoned or worthless in our parks. Christina – some are so old we don't want them left or remodeled – between sheds and everything else, vendors are charging about \$4K/site to demo and clean up.
- **Mike** - what would call a deposit upfront but not security deposit – Mark, call it a normal deposit. Sarah – our campers get confused between deposits and regular payments. Erik – we have a \$500 security deposit and \$2000 on campers older than 10 years. Mark – would encourage people to adjust to incidentals deposit; Ben used "performance deposit."

9. Executive Director Report / WACO Office Updates

- **Membership**

- **Counts/Numbers** – 229 total members; 197 paid members & 32 unpaid members. As an average within the industry – most states are flat, some are losing some with economics of things – everyone looking at ROI and what works and what doesn't.
- **Webinars for Benefits** – looking at a music license webinar with Jason this Thurs at 12:30 pm.; want to make sure we can help our members understand the music license and what they need for their park. Lori – I can try to pick through one a week and do a zoom training on it as she will be going through in depth training at CAMP. Saving as videos to replay and allow people to look when they can vs. always attending in person.
- **Potential Winter Zooms** – potential for additional member benefits reviews as our calls and follow up with directory and membership led us to believe that members are still very confused about OHI and what WACO has to offer as well.
- **Newest Educational Benefit** – Sarah can describe educational option; years ago dropped the CPO online – can earn credits for what you know; go through 15 min clips do a quick review and gain credits. Will be great for work kampers and how to greet people, keeping your attitude in check – hard to

give people away for in person credits. 19 modules as online management course – Eric, we’ve been talking about creating our own. Sarah is creating this new to share with all our members. Sarah is part of that CAMP Coop and you can leave with a certificate – so more financially reasonable. Can include the history and knowledge in these courses. \$475 with unlimited access for a year with 1 person getting

- **Winding Rivers** – Need some assistance – all in and really struggling; John tried to talk them out of buying based on income sources and they are in a tough spot – could use some assistance with coaching and help them out any way we can. Have no rentals of any kind. Dealers connected with RVIA have additional inventory that they would love to clear out and Lori has been talking with Kurt there – can the dealers fund it and we’ll have the site as the skin in the game from the WACO side, then a potential maintenance / percentage program. Mfg may help put in stipends for this – maybe an option to buy for the campgrounds.
- **Directory Update** – to printer 12/16/24 and will be delivered to offices by Jan 4th. Appreciate those who got their updates to us in a timely fashion. Lori mentioned the numbers may look less based on some changes. Mike – could we look at doing a 25% discount for the 2nd year? Lori – need to really look at that tomorrow because it may not pay with the sponsorship piece. Inside front cover is Champions this year because no one else took the space.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Compare 2024 to 2025 and make sure we’re aware of the differences and what adjusted, as well as the sponsorship pieces.**
- **WACO Convention Update**
 - **Current Registrations:**
 - 28 campgrounds and 63 total people registered so far.
 - Trade Members: 63 total with 71 booths signed up for the Convention
 - **Speaker/Program Update** – Tina: our initial speaker that we’ve been connecting with Scott Grennon on fell through, checking into other options for the Friday night entertainment; Danielle: will have a program review by our January board meeting.
 - **SARAH** – sending Tina TikTok HR Humorist
- **Website/FB/Instagram Update** – Tina: Packet includes Oct/Nov and seeing typical trends for winter months even though due to the changes in Google Analytics, we can’t compare month over month in their new app. Danielle: Seeing a dip in followers, but only showing lifetime followers; will be highlight RV shows and gift certificates in the next weeks to hopefully boost that back up.
- **GBF Updates** – In 2024, WACO members raised \$223,582 total for GBF – this is amazing, but it's an 18% decrease from 2023. Lori – This program will be changing as far as appearances go. No more “drive-bys”. Those just make us all look bad – we need to be sure that if you are using the raffle license, you are using it to raise some \$ for GBF and

that it's truly a WACO charity. We need to develop a number folks have to raise so it becomes more valuable, as an asset – it's like any other benefit – 20% of the group does the work. GBF is working more with the Tavern League and we are going to be setting schedules more for 2025 – more than likely won't have many spots open in March.

- **RV Shows** – only have 8 currently in place. Another show for Kunes could happen if our directory gets here on time, as their other show takes place while we already have (2) shows in place; working with them to ensure we get materials out in that market still based on the advertising information sent to membership! Working on a Scheels & Dicks deal for the camping season so area campgrounds can get involved and offer WACO coupons to add value to their advertising – also great advertising for us. Carla mentioned so many times, people want to do the coupon giveaways and bring them to the show the last day or at the show. Send them in early so they can fill it in their bag. Sarah – had quite a few people redeem them during the week and Lori mentioned those are easy ancillary sells. Strategic marketing will be really important this season as demand may not be the same as it has been in past seasons. Unlike the demand for our board meeting minutes easter eggs, which were huge, so they are back.

- **ACTION ITEM: Let Carla know Wausau show is incorrect for the dates.**

- **Legislative Updates**

- Property Tax Thoughts – haven't heard any other updates from folks other than Vista Royale and Lake Arrowhead. Have learned the municipalities did have to opt for the grant funding back in 2024 to receive the full difference in real vs. personal property taxes and now would be a pro-rated option from DOR. A big change with personal property tax from DOR – we've been following it since last year, in the March convention we've continued to see a variance between those who are seeing no change and those who are seeing huge changes. Scott – we put out surveys and got that same 50/50 – how much do we say and poke the bear? Jim and Scott have had multiple meetings – Jim didn't feel WACO was doing enough; hired a seasonal tax attorney who did work for him and Bob Welsch as a lobbyist. Over the past 6-8 months there have been several meetings and conversations. WACO has said since day 1, we'll have to adjust with legislation – the whole summer, Jim has been talking with several people. DOT presented the opportunity to municipalities that were losing out on the funds could be reimbursed in June, no one knew about it, and those not submitting would now be prorated. Jim went to his open book as we all suggested be done. Those who were already being charged for the seasonal sites taxes saw the increases, those who weren't really seeing much. More specific to the Assessment firms and how they are interpreting things. The state has reimbursement and should go after that, not the campgrounds – so any campground being assessed by this specific company (he has thrown out a number in the 50s a few times) will now be held to this conversation. Associated Appraisal. These are all campgrounds that were getting charged anyway – anyone else wouldn't have

been getting processed. In Sept Jim mentioned have a piece of paper that needs to be signed and will get that to us all – still have not done anything. WACO hasn't seen this legislation. Kevin Pedersen will sign, and WACO has inquired and still are not getting the information from legislation and not from WACO. When you bring in something that looks like you're just helping yourself vs. a group of people, legislation doesn't like that. And this is a state issue, not a federal issue. So wouldn't it make sense for our State Association to sign on/assist? Scott's assessor doesn't even want to do this work – but does have to come out with a list and will discuss with the assessor before going out. So this is for the future years – 2026. Sales tax on their fees, so how can we tax for the assessments? Sarah also got a letter for River's Edge – brand new taxes for them both. Duck Creek, Pride of America, and Sky High were all being taxed in the past – so it's so different between the membership. The assessor needs to create another tax parcel and bill it directly to the owner of the property, not on the tax bill for the campground. Need to get the clarification of what's not your intent – can't call it real vs. personal. Christina has both examples in her parks – one saying the township will have no personal property tax; then 2 others that have parking permits are still being charged. So what's the difference? Scott – the parking is usually associated with the mobile license, which then you're exempt or have been in the past. Confusing as it's up to each township. "Jim hired an attorney through OHI and hired his seasonal guest attorney (Amy). Now 54 campgrounds won't be paying personal property taxes."

- Eric feels we should be just doing our own legislation aside from OHI. If they aren't going share the information with us, we should do our own.
- Mike – should WACO send a letter to Jim requesting the information? Deneen – it should be from the board, with this potential legislation, we can assist you with support, but if you're not sharing the information, we cannot assist. Erik – yes we should do this and then move forward if he doesn't share.

a. ACTION ITEM: WACO office to draft letter to present to Jim from the board requesting an update on the information.

- Adjustments to Legislative/Lobbying Assistance – Jason is taking on a new role and will still be available for advice but will no longer be doing lobbying in his day-to-day role. Investigating another option from CAMP that we learned about at COE. Discussing the options and search functionality with Susan Benton, AZ state exec and will keep the board posted – would include additional funding and may make more sense vs. Wheeler – OR – be used in conjunction with it.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Mention to Jason/Bill and see if there are some up and coming lobbyist that would work for our industry and the association.**

- **ACTION ITEMS: Reach out to Bob W, Kathy from previous firm**
- Lori – Spoke with Susan today – she says the value of this one is that you hear all the committee reports – any spoken or written word on the legislative event – She is very willing to work with Tina on it – they have a 60k lobbyist (mobile homes 90%) but this software catches more than they do. \$3700 – with a possible discount if 10 states get it. They are still working on the discount. Tina does currently get a lot of support from Bill Cosh in Sen. Jacque’s office. Also, RVIA has a data base that reports all the states, counties and drills down to townships on Economic development. They have purchase Placer – it’s a super expensive Ai – software that can tell you which customers at your resort spent money where - like at the grocery store in your town, at the gas station, bakery etc. along with your resort. It all comes from credit cards and phone data. Used to pay almost \$17K back in the date for a lobbyist.
- **ACTION ITEM: Sarah motion to approve to purchase State Affairs (online lobbying portal) 2nd from Deneen, all approved and in favor.**

10. Committee Reports:

- **Financial Committee** – Scott K, Julie M.
Duties: Budget & Dues, Audit, Insurance, Executive Director
 - Approve expenses
 - Review financials – included in packet
- **Advertising Committee** – Patricia L, Sarah K, Deneen P
Duties: Directory, Shows, Website, Publicity
- **Governance/Planning & Development** – Rob B, Bud S, Mike D
Duties: Bylaws, Standard operating procedures, Strategic planning, Historian, Nomination; Past President precedes over the nominating subcommittee
- **Membership Services** – Ben S., Tiffany, Kristie, Christina K.
Duties: Education, Membership Development, Convention, Awards, Scholarships

11. Secretary’s Report: Review/Vote to Approve Oct Board Meeting Minutes – Sarah motioned to approve the meeting Minutes, Mike 2nd, minutes approved.

12. New Business:

- **3rd Party OTA’s – LeaAnne Gieck** – AirBnb & Spot2nite seems to be the best; HipCamp is not used by KOA and neither the people at the meeting as they have unlicensed businesses. Airbnb does require linens – so if you don’t offer that or don’t normally

make the beds, they have are forcing them to do that. Sarah advises that we work directly with a sales person and can avoid some of that.

- **ACTION ITEM: Reach out to Airbnb to be a vendor/sponsor and connect with us on better rates/association discounts.**
- Why is OHI allowing HipCamp with unlicensed campgrounds on their website to be a vendor?
- **Next meeting:** Monday, Jan 13th 10 am – The Dells *(This was rescheduled due to conflict to Jan 22 at Monk's in Lake Delton).*

13. Adjourn – Rob motioned to adjourn, Mike 2nd and all in favor, meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm.

DEC MEETING ACTION ITEMS:

- ACTION ITEMS: Tina to review annual meeting minutes to review positions/board terms and confirm back for who's open. Send back ASAP to give people ideas/help.
- ACTION ITEMS: Rob to send for updating changes to bylaws
- ACTION ITEMS: At least 90 days to membership for new bylaws tweaks
- ACTION ITEM: Let Carla know the Wausau show is incorrect for the dates.
- ACTION ITEM: Compare 2024 to 2025 and make sure we're aware of the differences and what adjusted, as well as the sponsorship pieces.
- ACTION ITEM: SARAH – sending Tina TikTok HR Humorist
- ACTION ITEM: WACO office to draft a letter to present to Jim from the board requesting an update on the information.
- ACTION ITEM: Purchase CAMP legislative search functionality software – Cody – see CAMP message
- ACTION ITEM: Mention to Jason/Bill and see if there are some up and coming lobbyist that would work for our industry and the association.
- ACTION ITEMS: Reach out to Bob W, Kathy from previous firm
- ACTION ITEM: Reach out to Airbnb to be a vendor/sponsor and connect with us on better rates/association discounts.