

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 MINUTES

Monday, Sept 9, 2024 | 1 pm

Beach Harbor Resort

3662 N Duluth Ave, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

If unable to attend in person, Zoom is available:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84944427451?pwd=TMLjXPB0ZoFSnrze0F2TTOEdbzhPV.1>

Meeting ID: 849 4442 7451 | Passcode: 657836

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

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Attendees** – Scott K, LeaAnne G, Sarah K, Rob B, Ben S, Tiffany P, Lori S, Danielle T, Tina S present; Deneen P, Mike D with Mark H and Jim B attending via Zoom; Kristi M, Tricia L excused absent; Julie M absent
3. **Motion to approve Sept agenda** - Sarah K motioned to approve the agenda, Rob 2nd to approve – all in favor, none opposed.
4. **Packet review** - any questions?
5. **Committee review & assignments**
6. **President's Report – Scott Kollock**
7. **OHI Update – Jim Button** – been pretty quiet with summer season in the Associations, all working on their campgrounds, not much going on that he knows about to share with the group. Will meet prior to OHC. OHI had 8 board seats open, 37 candidates/nominees applied for the board – one of the questions asked “Why so many people running for the positions?” 4 comments positive on the new direction that OHI is going from the people running. All across the county, voting is online. If you haven't gotten the membership renewal or the OHCE – can renew and get all the information online.
 - **Disaster Relief Fund Board** – Jim sits on this and they have seen some real relief go out to the campgrounds experiencing issues – if you have any extra funds, pass through to these funds – money available if YOU ever have issues as a member.
8. **Mark Hazelbaker, legal update**
 - (TINA) Property Tax Assessment Manual hearing was in August, Tina was the only one in attendance and her and Scott Shield from DOR had a solid conversation about campground owner concerns and the lack of consistency between municipalities and how to understand the differences between real and personal property. Discussed how some assessors may not be getting access, some may be “drive bys” to make their assessments – its on the owners to fight for their property and determine if the effort is worth the difference in the assessment. Open books in April and May will be crucial for

some areas. There is in fact grant funds available for ALL municipalities in perpetuity, meaning forever until the Act changes, for those seeing a decrease in revenue from Personal to Real property tax income being collected, so there's no reason the municipalities should be looking to offset whatever they feel they are losing out on. Mark is creating a document to outline how an owner can express clearly and communicate effectively if their seasonal sites are NOT attached and therefore should not be considered Real Property.

- Intent under owner – gives assessor carte blanche to determine if something is affixed/permanent; instead of looking at the deck, look at the RV/trailer – are these decks/porches taxable when there is no question that the RV itself is not taxable – if its on wheels and the towing bar is under the RV, it can be re-attached really quickly – if its not permanently affixed to the ground. So to argue that decks have little to no value.
- Mark provided a document that discusses how to; can use aerial photos or just drive by and have the power of “doomage” – much better to let the assessor come in and review; vs. us trying to allow them to make their own assumptions.
- Last year, legislation adopted the Act 12, Personal Property Taxes are to sunset, but here we are having to argue what is Personal vs. Real – its just pennies they are arguing about; they also have the right to get those funds back from state funds in perpetuity, meaning forever- not just today.
- We've always stressed as an office that we should have
- Fair market value is really important to know – pallets are not worth \$1000; assessments seem to very inconsistent.
 - From room: One member went from none to being assessed so not really seeing a ridiculous change/adjustment
 - Jim Button: 54 parks impacted by this new tax policy - \$20 M in assessment and just shy of ½ million dollars – won't see this until they do get an assessment; Targeted looking at Associated Appraisals out of Appleton – b/c of what we did out of Springwater – Jim has a whole list of the state of WI that they couldn't get to; Wilderness and River's Edge – will know it at the end of the year when they don't get a personal property tax but increase in real; had over \$10M in assessment increase in 1 park alone – Jim is just waiting for a couple documents, would like to share the rest with WACO, but is unable to at this time. Group asked why he couldn't share the information – feels he needs to have all the pieces in place before he can share. Jim feels he has a really good plan moving forward – has a “big ol'” file of paperwork and really focusing in on this.” Feels Association will be a lot better off once we get this finalized. Will also want Mark's advice – feels he has a solid plan moving forward, but can't share the details.

- Can't tax someone twice for the same thing – doing it for years and knowing the right people, saying the right things at the right time; excited to unless it, but needs more documentation before he can share details. ½ million in savings – hopefully the customer gets the savings back.
- Shared Rev Act of 59 – as noted for any and all townships, they can all get reimbursed as noted above.
- Mark – what Jim is referring to is to appraisal companies that have municipal clients, if you educate them to issues on ONE property, then they get education on all the properties. Over 170 appraisal offices in the state of the WI – Appleton only had 54 parks; Jim couldn't get data/list of appraisals from any others.
- There are associations that if we partner/connect with them, then that makes it easier. Towns and Counties are looking at increasing revenue, so would be willing to bet, they are already having meetings as we speak about this.
- Scott – what happens when the DOR comes back and says, "This isn't the way it is intended to be interpreted to the appraisal firm?" Mark – DOR doesn't review individual assessments – only if you file a complaint against the assessor or specific assessment. Mark – DOR really only writes the guidelines, on the back end they review the amounts vs. fair market value and if the total valuation in the Township slips below a certain threshold, then DOR would order to conduct a reassessment.
- The only way this will ever permanently get fixed is through legislation. Jim spent 10's of thousands of dollars with a tax attorney – attorney works very well with DOR and has "been up against them many of times" – they'll make them understand the logic we're going with; really excited and feels this will be a game changer for the future.
- Jim has sponsors lined up for proposed legislation.
- In between legislative sessions – possible at this point in the session; legislators being asked for bill drafts and can be ready to go for the 2025 session. Mark would like us to consider for some of our friends to address a couple issues/drafts and then find some sponsors:
 - State Statutes made clearer that campground guests are NOT tenants and able to be removed at pleasure – and if removed, law enforcement has to assist in removing them. Jim already has sponsors in the background available/ready to assist WACO. Waiting for a huge piece.
 - Abandoned RV's and units – obtain title as pleasure; already using a MV2881
 - MV2881 was successful – needed to go to court, file a lawsuit, thousands of dollars to the campground still – campground owners can't continue to do it this way.

- Need to find ways to remove RVs with the storage/unit – Tina/Jason C are meeting with DMV/DOT.
- Sponsors would be important to have in place and Andre Jacque has already offered to assist with some of these.

9. Executive Director Report / WACO Office Updates

- Membership:
 - Campgrounds: currently at 101 with 86 members paid; typical for this time of year, Labor Day usually triggers renewals.
 - Trade members: 35 paid so far
- Directory Quotes – (TINA) Advertising Committee to review and get back to the group for approval
 - Printer – received quotes from 7 printers, 8th one still on its way
 - Designers - Received quotes from 6 designers, previously paid a mere \$3500 with Henry, extremely fortunate to get such a low rate. Amenities icons were brought up to get rid of some of the text in the very text-heavy directory, allowing for more graphics – icons in place of common 6-8 amenities. Ideas on that? What about removing the line that mentions “nearby” in everyone’s listing and replacing it with a spotlight for each region which includes everyone’s “nearby” listings...would people be ok with that?
 - Group is comfortable with WACO reviewing Capital News and CPC w/ Tria Designs – will try to get the best pricing with the best distribution options. Capital News seems to have more data/information available with placers and racks – offering additional emails/details.
 - Tina to circle back and work with ED to finalize.
- 2025 WACO Convention Update
 - Theme ideas review with the Membership Committee and get back to the group for approval – list in packet folder – Group determined to go with “Adventure Awaits” for the theme.
 - Current Registrations –
 - Campgrounds – 19, 44 attendees
 - Expo - 41 booths, 5 sponsors
 - Classes – Pool CPO: (4) attendees, 2 campgrounds
 - Speaker Update – DSPS is able to send us people again from any areas we’d request – do we need Amusement Rides to come back or good on that? Plumbing, POWTS, Electrical, UDC – those cover it or need others? Would like to try to include a speaker based on the theme we choose and match the entertainment to the survey #1 choice. Would like to see the 4 listed above here come to convention – don’t feel we need Amusement Rides come back.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Tina to schedule POWTS, electrical, plumbing and UDC speakers for WACO Convention**

- RVIA/RVTI? LORI – update on what we’re doing with them, potential for Convention, additional trainings at Campgrounds. Texas and North Carolinas did a 1-day preview for owners, but they also offer a week of RVTI training – doing their first week long training associated with a convention at COE – Women based group. Their RVIA convention is in Arizona this year. Their committee with campgrounds put together really good information for county specific and video can be used for showing what camping is vs. what it isn’t. Looking to drill down economic impact with townships.
 - WDRVA – Lori nominated for award and possible recipient in Chicago
- WCA Convention – Sept 22-24 at La Crosse Center, doing another hospitality hosting event on Sunday evening again with Gilbert Brown, Eugene Robinson and Santana Dotson. Had to do unique trading usage – very strict rules at Lax Center, have to drop alcohol off with no sale value as a donation so it’s a \$0 invoice at time of drop off – LeRoy will get us free liquor. Trivia game went well in the past – will redo and keep it fun/light!
- Legislation Update – Property vs. Real Tax, Amusement Ride, Abandoned RVs: Discussed Property vs. Real in the Legal update, Amusement Ride – thoughts on pushing for legislation to remove Jumping Pillows/Jumping pads as amusement rides – need to just be aware this could push them to review full code – which Dep Sec Garrett did confirm we can be included in their review committee; Abandoned RVs – review plan outlined from Jason (see notes)
 - Amusement Rides: O’Neil did get an inspection that the group is aware of, as did Stoney Creek and Champions Riverside Resort with later information.
 - ACTION ITEM: Will move forward with the amusement ride (removing jumping pillows/jumping pads), set meeting with DOT/DMV, (put together legislation to get titles in hands easier for Campgrounds – discuss the costs of court, loss of revenue right now) putting something together to readily remove seasonals / guests and getting assistance from the law.
- Website/FB/Instagram Update – Packet includes May, June, July, Aug – Danielle is still seeing a lot of changes in the back end. Adjusted to G4 Analytics which is interesting – different way to review data but we would need to pull up previous year/month and physically compare now as the platform is not the same – not lost, but just not readily available for comparison, so if you want that, just let me know and I’ll pull it.
- GBF Updates – at \$101,029 (at \$120K last year this time); thank you to all those who continue to support the GBF foundation; some campground will be bringing their donations to Fall Workshops; may cut back on # of appearances that Gilbert does – its become time consuming, 20 years may have been too many? Need to look at events already created and been in place – we’d bring in the talent then vs. bringing the talent and MAYBE having an event in place. Jordy Nelson – some talent like this is now getting more comfortable to do appearances again and will be able to provide signed merch for the members to purchase if they want to.

- Fall Workshops Review
 - Sept Schedule included in your packet – starting off at Frontier Wilderness and there all day; note that a couple of these spots don't have the best parking, so if anyone can ride/pool together that would be helpful. Could use some help with making sure food is stirred/filled at the Lunch on Tues. Thank you to the membership committee for all their hard work on this and Ben for securing water/soda again!
 - Oct Schedule to be finalized end of this week/beg of next week with membership committee – Sent out final confirmation email to all campgrounds that we originally reached out to/expressed interest. Jason Culotta, POWTS (DSPS and DNR) are confirmed speakers so far.
 - Watch your crab cakes as there are hungry pups all around!

10. Committee Reports:

- **Financial Committee** – Scott K, Julie M.
Duties: Budget & Dues, Audit, Insurance, Executive Director
 - Approve expenses – biggest thing to touch on is Convention – those numbers are pretty right on for projected numbers. \$152K, so another great convention; really lucky to come out that good with the food expenses – costs are just increasing left/right. lowest time of the year – not all the dues in yet, in the past, we've had to dip into savings, so looks good right now.
 - Can we get 5 campgrounds sponsor a dinner/meal at Convention? To help increase the food – Tiffany like the food truck; maybe going back to Bullheads for the Wed night dinner option – a bus?
 - **ACTION ITEM: Send out email asking if anyone would be interested in pooling together with other campgrounds to sponsor a meal and help offset convention costs in 2025.**
 - Review financials – included in packet
 - **ACTION ITEMS: Holiday Shores – over 90 days; Stand Rock will be an issue – sold/transfer and then both parties didn't want to pay; review AR report and have it more solid for Oct/Nov.**
- **Advertising Committee** – Patricia L, Sarah K, Deneen P
Duties: Directory, Shows, Website, Publicity
 - Directory printing quote review
 - Directory design quote review
- **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;
 - Make sure bylaw change is ratified by membership – need to have them 90 days prior to membership voting.

- **ACTION ITEM: Pull together to send to the committee to be sent to membership**

- **Membership Services** – Ben S., Tiffany, Kristie, Christina K.

Duties: Education, Membership Development, Convention, Awards, Scholarships

- Convention theme review – suggestion to the group

1. ADVENTURE AWAITS – Theme for 2025 Convention

11. Secretary's Report: Review/Vote to Approve May Board Meeting Minutes: Sarah motioned to approve Sec report, Rob 2nd, none opposed, motion carried.

12. New Business:

- **Next meeting:** Monday, October 7th at 1 pm in Central WI to coordinate with the Fall Workshop – details and Zoom option to follow.
- **LeaAnne** – lots of issues with campground flooding – 3 overnight tenters wanted to sue them for - terms & conditions and liability / waiver was updated and it really helped them with the lawsuit – may still be a civil suit but

13. Summer Status:

- Great year at Kinney – no more drama for your mama; 6 really great workkamps from Cavic Stan. Several weekends we didn't fill up at River's Edge; 16 open sites out of 65 in Oasis and still working on filling 10 more (all seasonal); River's Edge still has a great wait list, only has 5 openings. Kinney still has open sites, but a crazy high number of 360 sites. Even there only got a small handful of 3 non-renewals. Had some hot tub clean up/fill-ins (was in original brochures) but otherwise; minor issues with some injuries.
- Grand Valley – good occupancy until mid-August, compared to pre-COVID still up, but going back to the regular numbers, seeing lots of campers for sale. Still go until Nov 30th there.
- Merry Mac – terrible weather at the beg of the year, down 7% on campsites, back to pre-COVID number, record number of campers for sale for seasonals (17); half came in during COVID, so getting back out now. Competed seasonal waiting list, does have open sites.
- Lenwood – down a little bit from last year
- Skillet Creek – lots of flooding in the beg of the year, trying to monitor weather closer in future years, broke records for capacity, not hitting records – doesn't know what pre-COVID might look like
- Indian Trail—rentals are up, daily sites are about flat, and spring is crazy with rain and weather. Three Halloween weekends are coming up, and we switched to StayList with online reservations—my favorite thing to happen this year.
- Insurance and food costs; Cost of everything is really cutting into the bottom line
- Champions – hearing 20% down, WI parks aren't near that nationwide number, so that's good

14. PAC funds available – would like to entertain some potential money to who we haven't given to yet and who is tourism minded.

- Kevin Peterson – Jim/Scott's region, suggested
- ACTION ITEM: Tina & Jason to connect with the right people on the

15. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn, Rob and 2nd from Mike, all in favor, none opposed, meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.

SEPT MEETING ACTION ITEMS

1. Schedule POWTS, electrical, plumbing and UDC speakers for WACO Convention
2. Tina: Connect with Jason/Bob on PAC funds being used
3. Bylaws with latest changes to be sent to membership in proper timing to approve at Convention.
4. Send out email asking if anyone would be interested in pooling together with other campgrounds to sponsor a meal and help offset convention costs in 2025.
5. Tina/Legislative: Move forward with the amusement ride (removing jumping pillows/jumping pads), set meeting with DOT/DMV, (put together legislation to get titles in hands easier for Campgrounds – discuss the costs of court, loss of revenue right now) putting something together to readily remove seasonals / guests and getting assistance from the law.
6. Lori: Review AR report and remove those that aren't going to pay: Holiday Shores – over 90 days; Stand Rock will be an issue – sold/transfer and then both parties didn't want to pay; review AR report and have it more solid for Oct/Nov.