

Room Tax Commission
March 11, 2025
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order at 9:31 am
2. Roll call – Sue Saxhaug, Ron Van Dusen, Vic Washelesky, Crystal Loppnow, Robin Ginner, and Peter Anderson.
3. Review and Approval of Grant Program Funding Applications
 - i) **Eagle River Fire Dept**, \$24,600 was initially requested for the Eagle River Ice Castle, but an amended request was submitted for \$38,283. Ron Van Dusen felt it was a good grant request because it attracts a lot of people to the area. Crystal Loppnow confirmed from a hotel perspective this is an enormous draw for out-of-town visitors. In their amended application, they removed maintenance, which the commission doesn't fund, but added additional equipment for replacement. The Commission approved funding the application at the original ask of \$24,600.
 - ii) **Eagle River Revitalization Program**, \$50,000 Highway 45 (Railroad St) Bike/Ped crossing at Spruce Street (Riverview Park). This is a critical piece of the River Trail construction, and will also help with the farmers market. Cycling brings in over 100,000 cyclists and the \$26m in revenue to Vilas County. Peter Anderson, from the Chamber's Ad/Promo Committee, mentioned that it wasn't funded in the past because it was first dollar. Now this is the balance needed to see the project forward. The Commission approved funding the application at the full \$50,000.
 - iii) **SnoEagles**, \$12,500 for the purchase of two (2) Verkaba Outdoor Remote Live Feed Cameras. The Commission didn't feel this would directly contribute to putting additional heads in beds, so they did not approve awarding the sum requested.
 - iv) **United Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission**, \$24,000 for Eurasian Water Milfoil hand harvesting. The grant application would allow the lake commission to increase efforts by an additional 12 days of hand harvesting. This is for the long-term health of the chain and if the lakes are filled with milfoil, the boaters won't come. They are trying not to use chemicals and haven't done so since 2014. Crystal Loppnow argued that this should not fall on the shoulders of hotels to pay for the milfoil. Sue Saxhaug noted that the hand harvesting gets to the plant roots and is more effective at stopping spread of the AIS. Ron feels it should not be funded, but others feel perhaps it should be partially funded. The Commission approved funding the application at \$5,000.
 - v) **Vilas County Economic Development Corporation**, \$10,000 for Riverside Park Development. The Commission felt the ask was premature as the committee to review the park has not yet been formed. The commission did not vote to grant the sum requested.
 - vi) **Warehouse Arts Center**, \$7,729.22 for courtyard improvements. The Commission didn't feel this would directly contribute to putting additional heads in beds, so they did not vote to grant the sum requested.

Motion/Second, Van Dusen/Loppnow, to fund grant applications as follows: ER Fire

Department at their original ask of \$24,600; ER Revitalization Program at \$50,000, and Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission at \$5,000. Motion Carried.

The grant request for the ER Historical Society will be discussed at the June meeting.

4. Adjourn

i) Motion/Second, Robin/Crystal, to adjourn at 10:29 am. Motion carried.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2026 at 9:30 am.