

Room Tax Commission  
December 10, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

---

- 1) Call to order at 9:30 am
- 2) Roll call – Sue Saxhaug, Ron Van Dusen, Crystal Loppnow, Robin Ginner, Vic Washelesky, and Kim Emerson.
- 3) **Motion/Second, Sue Saxhaug/Vic Washelesky, to approve the meeting minutes from the October 2025 Room Tax Commission meeting. Motion carried.**
- 4) Discussion and possible action on the following agenda items
  - a) Treasurer’s Report, presented by Sue Saxhaug. General account balance at the beginning of October was \$248,319.61; Grant account balance \$25,177.79 for a total of \$273,497.40. Receipts of \$385,141.85 received from the three municipalities. Disbursements in the amount of \$5 for the annual Ripco membership fee, no vouchers were submitted for payment from the Chamber since June. Balance as of November 30, 2025 in the general account is \$633,456.46; grant account balance is \$25,177.79 for a total of \$658,634.25 under Room Tax Commission control. **Motion/Second, Crystal Loppnow/Washelesky, to accept the December Treasurer’s report. Motion carried.**
  - c) Kim Emerson reported that she was unable to complete the vouchers for October and November, but expects they will be finished and available next week. As a result, there are no vouchers available for approval at this meeting. Approximately six months of Room Tax vouchers are currently outstanding to the Chamber. For reference, total voucher payments in 2024 amounted to \$375,000 for the October/November period (in addition to the approximate amount of \$213,000 for the previous period). Given the delay, once Emerson completes the most recent vouchers for payment, Chair Van Dusen and Treasurer Saxhaug will go to the Chamber office to review and approve the vouchers and issue the check directly. **Motion/Second, Loppnow/Ron Van Dusen, to authorize Van Dusen and Saxhaug to act on behalf of the Commission to review, approve, and sign the vouchers for October, and issue payment to the Chamber. Motion carried.**
  - d) The Room Tax portion of the revenue requested for 2026 remains at \$700,000, with no increase proposed for the upcoming year. Washelesky inquired about the \$8,500 budgeted for influencer expenses. Kim explained that influencers are sourced through the advertising agency (Belter & Lincoln), and campaign reach is measured by post “likes” and “shares.” Three influencer engagements are planned for 2026. **Motion/Second, Crystal/Ron, to approve the \$700,000 funding for Ad & Promo. Motion carried.**
  - e) Discussion on funding Grant Program for 2026. Three organizations are waiting for the grant program to re-open in 2026 (ER Fire Department, Upper ER Chain of Lakes Assn, and the Historical Society). Room tax revenue is roughly the same on average as the past three years. **Motion/Second, Van Dusen/Saxhaug, to fund an additional \$75,000 to make the account balance \$100,000 available for 2026 grant awards. Motion carried.** First round applications will be due 3/31/26.

- f) Discussion on Chamber Grant Program leadership for 2026. Emerson is back in the office 3-4 days/week, but working full time in a combo remote/in-office capacity. She feels she's able to, and would like to, continue with her role on the grant committee. The Commission agreed that with her position with the Chamber, she remains the best point person to lead the grant program.
- g) Washelesky encouraged members of the Room Tax Commission to inspire local businesses to reach out to the Eagle River City Council and the Town of Lincoln Board to voice their support for development of the River Trail. Van Dusen reported that, after speaking with representatives from the Town of Lincoln, the Board is currently opposed to the bike trail for several stated reasons. It was noted that progress on the project is unlikely without future changes in leadership or position within the Town of Lincoln.
- h) Acceptance of Justin Behling's resignation from the Commission – **Motion/Second, Van Dusen/Saxhaug, to accept Behling's resignation from the Room Tax Commission. Motion carried.**
- i) Replacement of Member-At-Large position on the Room Tax Commission. Justin Behling previously served on both the Ad & Promo and Grant Committees. Kim will contact the new manager at Wild Eagle to determine interest in filling Justin's vacant Member-at-Large seat on the Room Tax Commission, as the new manager is expected to assume Justin's role on the Ad & Promo Committee.
- j) Dates for 2026 Commission meetings. All dates scheduled for 9:30 am:
- March 11, 2026
  - April 8, 2026 – if needed for grant
  - June 10, 2026
  - October 14, 2026
  - December 9, 2026
- 5) **Motion/Second, Loppnow/Saxhaug, to adjourn at 9:53 am. Motion carried.**

Next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2026 at 9:30 am.