

TUSCOLA TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

June 17, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present were Board Members: Devon Flesor-Story, Randy Hastings, Ainslie Heilich, Bill Hill, Drew Hoel, Jennifer Reifsteck and staff Alta Long and Stepheny McMahon.

Drew called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

The minutes of the April 15th meeting were presented. Randy made a motion to approve and Jennifer seconded. The motion passed.

Drew presented the financials from April and May 2025. Randy made a motion to approve, Drew seconded, and the motion passed.

Stepheny welcomed the two new board members who were appointed on 4/28: Jennifer Reifsteck and Ainslie Heilich. Teri Barker of Tuscola Hospitality Group was also appointed but unable to attend today's meeting.

Sherri Stewart had submitted a grant request prior to May's meeting which was cancelled. Stepheny emailed the grant application to board members and called for a straw poll, the results of which were reflected in the additional minutes included in this packet. The grant was to support the marketing and entertainment for a Tuscola Family Fun Night-Senior Edition which was held on Friday, June 6th. Sherri requested \$700 in grant funds and submitted receipts for \$2031.47 of marketing expenses. Devon made a motion to award the grant for \$700, Bill seconded, and the motion was approved.

Stepheny reported that Shawna Rogers will be hosting a Tuscola's Farmer's Market on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month from 5:00-7:00 in the new downtown park near the Community Center. Shawna chose the date and time based on her schedule and already has 15 interested vendors. The competition for Saturday vendors is very tight. Devon and Bill suggested that Tourism look for ways to add music to the event.

Bill reported that the auto show on Saturday at the park was very successful with lots in attendance. He said that the tables in the pavilion were quite dirty. All agreed more communication with the park is needed for these type of events.

Steph reported that all is planned for Sparks in the Park 2025. She brought up Sparks 2026 and that July 4th will fall on a Saturday. Sparks could be held on 4/5 or 4/11. Steph reached out to our fireworks and inflatable vendors. Fireworks can accommodate either date but the inflatables are not available on 4/11. Tourism is in favor of hosting on Saturday, July 4, 2026 next year. Steph will book the major vendors. Michelle will let this year's food vendors know about next year's date too. Bill reminded the group that it is also the 250th birthday for

Illinois next year(semi-quincentennial or sester-centennial). The group discussed some possible additions to the celebration such as a drone show, golf cart parade, historical characters, etc. The events committee will start exploring availability of options right after this year's event.

Michelle and Steph met with Jennifer and Taylor Reifsteck and the four agreed to take over the vendor fair at Christmastown. They shared that there will be some changes and they would like to include some hands-on activities, etc. Steph mentioned maybe even serving wine on Friday night to make it more of a "ladies" shopping night.

Drew brought up that he is working on an Entertainment District per the mayor's request which allow for open carry of alcohol in specific area of the downtown as approved by permit.

Steph shared that she is tracking all live entertainment in the downtown to log if we have more than 100 shows and would therefore, qualify for IDOT signage to be a downtown shopping and entertainment district. It's looking good thanks to Cast Iron Pub, Bookies and the Vault.

Steph shared that Clanin has completed two full days of shooting videos to use in tourism promotion. Several retail, restaurant and hotels were included in the shoot which Steph will share with the committee when they are available.

Steph also reported that she has had increased questions about the tourism grant opportunity since she started marketing it more. Steph is expecting applications for Homecoming and for signage for Sweet Petunias.

The event for the Starry Night Mural in May was a nice event and received great press. Everyone loves the mural and Paul Nau did a great job providing live entertainment.

Homcoming 2025 – Devon stated that the planners would like to have Sale Street closed for the street fest. There are weddings at the community center the weekend of Homecoming which causes conflict with live music in the new park. It's also more difficult for Cast Iron to accommodate the attendees. Plus trains are louder in the new park. Kenny and the alumni committee need to apply to close the road with the city council.

Devon shared an application for the 2025 Family Fun night scheduled for Labor Day weekend for \$6800. The group discussed the event and the grant application but could not vote on it because it wasn't submitted in time to be noticed. The City had budgeted \$3000 for the event. One item listed for \$700 was port-o-potties which the City will cover automatically. Jennifer shared that last year's event was huge for Shimmer & Sheek. Others said that people came and stayed all day and came from outside of Tuscola. Multiple

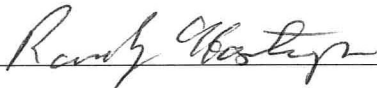
businesses benefitted from the event. Drew brought up that if we grant more to Family Fun Day it could set a new precedent for other events to ask for more money. Drew stated that he would like to see the numbers for marketing reduced to get the request closer to \$5000. Devon will bring back the revised application for official vote at the July meeting.

Steph asked if the next meeting could be rescheduled to July 8th. Everyone agreed that was doable.

Jennifer made a motion to adjourn. Bill seconded and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Stepheny McMahon
Tuscola Tourism Director

Approved  Date 2-17-26