

TUSCOLA TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 21, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present were Board Members: Randy Hastings, Ainslie Heilich, Bill Hill, Drew Hoel, Amanda Hogue, Jennifer Reifsteck, and staff Alta Long and Stepheny McMahon.

Stepheny called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

The minutes of the February 17, 2026 meeting were presented. Bill made a motion to approve the minutes and Jennifer seconded. The motion passed.

Drew presented the financials from February and March 2026. Randy made a motion to approve, Drew seconded, and the motion passed.

Steph shared a sample of the new red, white and blue "Open" flags which will be distributed to businesses prior to Memorial Day to start hanging downtown through Memorial Day.

Steph shared a copy of the 2027 proposed tourism budget and opened the floor for questions of which there were none.

Steph presented a grant application from the Odd Market asking for \$8480 to help fund the event scheduled for September 19, 2026 from 10:00am-7:00pm. This is the 8th year for the event and each year it has grown. The total budget for this event is \$20,654. Renee, a representative of the Odd Market was present and shared that the Odd Market is moving to Sale Street because of pending construction on Southline Road. Tattooing will take place inside of Vintage Karma and upstairs at the Lodge. Food trucks will not be invited this year as the emphasis will be focusing on downtown restaurants. Live entertainment will be offered in the Dotson Lot on a stage and will include live music, a freak show, and steel drum. Vendors are invited to attend and will be set up back to back down the center of Sale Street so that sidewalks nor businesses will be blocked. Randy made the motion to grant \$7980 for all but the staff t-shirts. Bill seconded and the motion passed.

Steph presented a grant from the Douglas County Museum asking for \$187.50 for commemorative buttons. Steph shared that she is working with the museum to plan several events including the Flags of our Fathers on May 27th and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8th. Steph has already ordered small flags and commemorative Tuscola buttons to display and give away at local businesses. The buttons the Museum is asking for will look similar to what Steph ordered but will say "Douglas County Museum" on them. Randy made the motion to approve, Drew seconded and the motion passed.

Steph gave her report on the following:

1. Rural Life Antique Show and Country Spirit Antique Show seemed like a success again this year.
2. Small Shop Stroll was cancelled for lack of sign-ups. Shimmer & Sheek hosted a weekend event instead. Thanks to them.
3. Steph shared the IHSA marketing data from ExperienceCU

4. Steph hosted ExperienceCU to a FAM tour of Tuscola and Arcola in March
5. Two new downtown shopping events are being scheduled for June 5 and October 16 called Sunset Stroll which will be similar to Galentines.
6. IL250 projects in the works and if city budget is approved, will have Libby Neatherly paint downtown windows. Also working with DAR on the public reading of the Declaration.
7. Sparks in the Park is in the works for July 4th. Am now uncertain if the Bourbon, BBQ and Blues festival will take place.
8. Steph is working with 12 counties as part of ECIDC to create a new tourism promotion called "Small Town Illinois Awaits, 12 Counties Endless Possibilities."
9. Canvas Douglas County is a new county-wide initiative to create an art-walk and support artists.
10. Plans are in the works with Clanin Creative to take new photos of Tuscola to use in marketing. Also we plan to roll out a new Digital-First Tourism Activation Proposal and Steph has invited Clanin to attend our tourism meeting on May 19th to facilitate a planning discussion.

Bill asked if the IDOT signage for Sweet Petunia had been installed. We approved a grant last year for up to \$3000 to support. Steph will check with Zena Onstott. Bill also asked about Entertainment District signage which Steph still needs to look into.

Jennifer reported that Shimmer & Sheek is now advertising with Stevie J and is already reaping the benefits. They purchased a 3-month contract and the audience is responding.

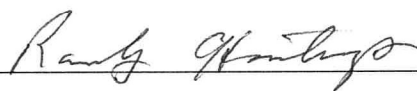
Amanda asked if it was possible to install a sign on Main Street half way between Rte 36 and Sale directing people that the downtown was ahead. Steph will check the sign ordinance and also the maintenance of any "Historic Downtown" signage that already exists.

Ainslie shared that there have been more frequent issues of broken glass on Sale Street and one of the windows of Vintage Karma was broken by a beer bottle thrown at it. There also is more garbage and fighting on the street. Per Drew, the City is aware of these concerns.

Randy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35. Drew seconded and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Stepheny McMahon
Tuscola Tourism Director

Approved:  Randy Hastings, President