



**FESTUS TOURISM COMMISSION**  
MEETING MINUTES  
June 17, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Pat Parsons at 3:00 p.m. at Festus City Hall.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pat Parsons, Melody Yesberg, Rhonda Gerstner, Mike Cage, and Rick Fischer.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion was made by Rick Fischer and seconded by Melody Yesberg to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion was made by Rick Fischer and seconded by Melody Yesberg to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2024, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**FUNDING REQUEST APPROVALS:**

**Item Funding No. 1 (Shelley Otec “Thanksgiving Day Workout” – \$2,000)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$2,000

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Discussion held included talks of the increase in costs including the shirts and timekeeping system. All members agreed that the event was very successful and represented the Tourism Commission well. All items were funded at the full amount. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 2 (Jim Berger – “6 Pickleball Tournament Events” – \$10,000)**

**MOTION:** Mike Cage

**SECONDED:** Rick Fischer

**AWARDED:** \$10,000

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Rhonda Gerstner stated that she knows that this event does generate tourism dollars as she has seen patrons in her hotel. All items were funded at the full amount. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 3 (Justin Lenhard – “Lenhard Family Light Show” – \$6,800)**

**MOTION:** Melody Yesberg

**SECONDED:** Rhonda Gerstner

**AWARDED:** \$6,800

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Rhonda Gerstner stated that she is happy that more lights will be out, and that there will be more to mark the entrance. There were general questions as to how much tourism activity the events generate or if it is confined to just people seeing the lights then leaving. The commission would like additional information in the future to see the impact on the community including restaurant information to see if people only come for the lights, or if they are also patronizing other businesses in the city. All items were funded at the full amount. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 4 (Jason Portz - “George Portz’s Festus Traditional Music Festival – \$20,000)**

**MOTION:** Rhonda Gerstner

**SECONDED:** Rick Fischer

**AWARDED:** \$20,000

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Rhonda stated that she has seen the impact of this event in her business. All items were funded at the full amount. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 5 (Courtney Wisely – Spotlight Community Theatre 2024 - \$12,000)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Melody Yesberg

**AWARDED:** \$12,000

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

The commissioners noted the presentation answered most of the questions that they had, and that the group is getting a lot of community involvement. The Spotlight Community Theatre has been successful in

their endeavors so far, and as such the commissioners want to evaluate in the future what the needs of the SCT truly are. As they continue to grow and make more money off ticket sales and advertising, they would expect that the amount requested in the future would be less as they become more self-sufficient. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 6 (Michelle Hohmeier – Ladies Night Out – \$8,050)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Melody Yesberg

**AWARDED:** \$8,050

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Advertising has increased as they are trying to reach a further audience. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 7 (Jean Scott/Michelle Hohmeier – Adult Stocking Stroll - \$7,250)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$7,250

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Has been a very successful event, and they are trying to reach more people. They have also cut singers to help save some money so as not to have to request more from the Tourism Commission. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by the organizer. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 8 (Barb Lowry – Swingin’ Under the Stars \$5,550)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$5,550

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 9 (Barb Lowry – Mayor’s Summer Cruise - \$4,050)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** **4,050**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 10 (Barb Lowry – Firecracker Festival Entertainment - \$30,000)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** **\$30,000**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 11 (Barb Lowry – Mayor’s Fall Cruise - \$4,050)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** **\$4,050**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 12 (Barb Lowry – Sundays at Sunset Concert Series - \$17,500)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$17,500

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 13 (Santa House 2025 - \$5,950)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$5,950

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 14 (Michelle Vaughn – Estimated Budget 2024-2025 - \$55,313)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$55,313

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 15 (Christopher Schulte – Mead on Main Viking Festival - \$13,500)**

**MOTION:** Melody Yesberg

**SECONDED:** Rhonda Gerstner

**AWARDED:** \$6,855

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Representatives from Four Brothers Mead did not attend the Tourism Commission meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and as such were not able to answer questions that the commission had for them. As such, the commission noted that the events are successful, however, since no questions could be answered, they were not inclined to provide the full amount of funding requested. Melody Yesberg stated that she was in favor of reducing funding to \$6,000. Pat Parsons stated that she would be in favor of funding the \$5,355 requested in advertising. Mike Cage noted that if part of the duties of the Tourism Commission is to also promote sanitary events in the community it would be a good idea to also fund the porta potties in the amount of \$1,500. Funding approved in the amount of \$6,855 for advertising and porta potties only.

**Item Funding No. 16 (Christopher Schulte – Veteran’s Day Fun Run - \$4,000)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Melody Yesberg

**AWARDED:** \$2,000

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Similar discussion was held for this event as well as it is the same organization requesting the funding. No one was available to answer questions. Line items were not specific on what each cost includes. For example, the Merchandise line includes t-shirts, and medals, but does not break out what each item will cost. The commission agreed that the full amount should not be awarded since no one was available to answer any questions. Pat Parsons suggested that they fund \$2,000 towards the merchandise line item. The commission agreed and a motion was made for the funding of \$2,000.

**Item Funding No. 17 (Lucas Tetrault – Twin City Mardi Gra Parade - \$15,000)**

**MOTION:** Melody Yesberg

**SECONDED:** Rhonda Gerstner

**AWARDED:** \$0

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

The commission noted that while this seems like a good idea, there wasn’t enough information or appearance that enough work had been done to ensure the event would be a success. Specifically, issues noted included:

- How much community involvement would there be? The parade is slated to be on Main Street, but there is no evidence to say that other businesses are going to want to participate or would sponsor floats or prizes.
- Lack of planning – no requests have been made to the City of Festus to shut down Main Street for a parade. Additionally, on the June 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Tourism Commission, the organizer didn't know that route they are wanting to use starts in Crystal City and that they would have to get permission from Crystal City for that.
- The event being requested is a parade in the morning/afternoon, however part of what is being requested is for shuttles from main street to the organizer's restaurant. This does not appear to benefit the community if they are not planning to do more things on Main Street.
- Are there any interested parties in making floats or participating in the parade? Melody Yesberg stated as a business owner, she would not have the time or resources to participate. Mike Cage brought up the question of if there would be school bands that would participate. He also stated that it could be a good idea to have the schools come up with a float and compete against other schools for which one can have the best float.

The commission agreed that there is not enough information being presented to them to make sure that this event would benefit the entire community. As such, they were in an agreement to table the decision of this event until the next meeting with an invitation to the organizer to bring more information to that meeting for further discussion and evaluation. Additionally, the commission would like the above issues communicated to the organizer so that he knows exactly what information they would like to be able to make a more informed decision.

The commission discussed the idea of tabling the decision for this event until the next meeting to ensure all questions can be answered and any additional information needed from the organizer can be obtained. Pat Parson stated she would entertain a motion to table any decision on the Madri Gras Parade decision until additional information could be obtained. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 18 (Barb Lowry – Canvas Drop with Christmas Theme for Winterfest - \$3,300)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$3,300

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**Item Funding No. 19 (Barb Lowry – 3 Winterfest Banner’s 4x8 - \$740)**

**MOTION:** Rick Fischer

**SECONDED:** Mike Cage

**AWARDED:** \$740

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All items from Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the canvas and signs were voted on together in one block. All items were funded at the full amount. The only discussion that was noted was stating that some increases were made due to the need for porta potties. Motion made to approve the entire amount requested by Barb Lowry and Michelle Vaughn including the sign and canvas painting. Motion seconded and carried unanimously.

**RECAP:**

Erin Leeker informed the board that the total funding approved amounted to \$201,408.00.

	<b>Requester</b>	<b>Funding Application Request Description</b>	<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Approved Funding</b>
1	Shelley Otec	YMCA Thanksgiving Day Workout	11/21/24	2,000	2,000
2	Jim Berger	(6) Pickleball Tournament Events 2025	2025	10,000	10,000
3	Justin Lenhard	Lenhard Family Light Show	10/3/24	6,800	6,800
4	Jason Portz	George Portz’s Festus Traditional Music Festival	9/27/25	20,000	20,000
5	Courtney Wisely	Spotlight Community Theatre 2024 Summer	7/19/24	12,000	12,000
6	Michelle Hohmeier	Historic Tanglefoot Association – Ladies Night	11/2/24	8,050	8,050
7	Jean Scott	Historic Tanglefoot Association – Small Business Saturday Adult Stocking Stroll	11/30/24	7,250	7,250
8	Barb Lowry	Swingin’ Under the Stars	5/11/25	5,550	5,550
9	Barb Lowry	Mayor’s Summer Cruise	6/7/25	4,050	4,050
10	Barb Lowry	Firecracker Festival Entertainment	6/2025	30,000	30,000
11	Barb Lowry	Mayor’s Fall Cruise	9/20/25	4,050	4,050
12	Barb Lowry	Sundays at Sunset Concert Series	Fall 2025	17,500	17,500
13	Barb Lowry	Santa House	12/2025	5,950	5,950
14	Michelle Vaughnn	2024-2025 Operating Budget	10/1/24	55,313	55,313
15	Christopher Schulte	Four Brothers Mead – Mead on Main Viking Fest	10/5/24	13,500	6,855
16	Christopher Schulte	Four Brothers Mead – Veteran’s Day Fun Run	11/9/24	4,000	2,000
17	Lucas Tetrault	Taytro’s – Twin City Mardi Gra Parade	3/1/25	15,000	-
18	Barb Lowry	Winterfest Canvas Drop – Christmas Theme	12/2024	3,300	3,300
19	Barb Lowry	Winterfest (3) 4x8 Banners	12/2024	740	740
		<b>TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTS</b>		225,053	201,408

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm. A decision meeting will be held November 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The motion to adjourn made by Rhonda Gerstner and seconded by Melody Yesberg, motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:59pm.