



OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Business Improvement District Board
DATE/TIME: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 8:00 AM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall — Maple Room
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Mark Craig (C) Laura Spaeth
Robb Shepherd Owen Jones
Mark McKinley Hannah Dusso
Sarah Bangs Rylie Hutchinson
Matt Brewer Maryanne Groat

1 Discussion.

- a. Executive Director Report and update.

2 Adjournment.

Mark Craig, Chair

NOTICE POSTED AT CITY HALL (407 GRANT STREET) AND TRANSMITTED TO THE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED NEWSPAPER

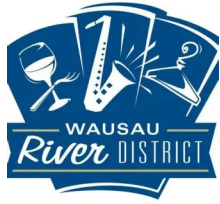
DATE: 04/10/2026
TIME: 3:30 PM
POSTED BY: Kody Hart

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6622 or ADAServices@wausauwi.gov to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.



City of Wausau
(715) 261-6500 | clerk@wausauwi.gov
wausauwi.gov





Wausau River District
Executive Director Report
April 2026 Board Meeting

I. Meetings

- A. Board Members
- B. Sponsors:
 - 1. Have secured the following sponsorships:
 - a) Solidified:
 - (1) Night Market- Stage Sponsor, Presenting Sponsor, Community Sponsor
 - (2) Community Workshop - Festival Foods: May or July
 - (3) Media Sponsorship - Midwest Communications and NRG
 - b) Verbal Confirmations:
 - (1) Night Market - Community sponsors
 - (a) Game of skate with Central board shop
 - (2) Balloons Initiative - Roastar
 - (3) Community Workshop - Festival Foods, Aspirus, Thrivent

II. Events and Updates

- ~~A. Main Street Awards Reminder: March 19th~~
- ~~B. Children's Imaginarium Announcement~~
 - ~~1. March 26th, 4:00 with snacks and light refreshments~~
- C. State of the River District
 - 1. April 20th, 4:00-6:00 at the Milk Merchant
 - 2. Menu of Services being presented
- D. Earth Day Clean Up
 - 1. April 22nd 4:00-6:30 meet at the 400 block, partnering with Aspirus
- E. Accreditation - Complete & Accepted
- F. Monthly Report
- G. FORD Program - Have our first member and will be launching in April
- H. Committees had our first meetings this month

III. Executive/Organizational

- A. Goal: Strengthen organizational effectiveness and community presence through strategic growth and engagement.
 - 1. Strategy 1: Manage & Diversify Organizational Funding
 - a) Pursuing sponsorships
 - b) Pursue Grant Opportunities
 - (1) Met with Community Foundation. Applying for Community Arts Fund - Due April 15
 - 2. Strategy 2: Engage in Community Outreach
 - a) Operate FORD Program

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14th, 2026 at the Dudley Tower 8th Floor Conference Room

- (1) Launching Mid April
- b) Reaching out to Optimist, Golden K, and Rotary
- c) City Update
- 3. Strategy 3: Develop, Recruit, & Engage New Board and Team Members
 - a) New Board Members
 - b) Next Generation Board Member Program
 - c) Team Members: Job Descriptions being created & looking into partnering with UWSP for a summer intern.

IV. Placemaking/Design

- A. Goal: Enhance the sense of place through thoughtful design, creative initiatives, and vibrant public events.
 - 1. Strategy 1: Strengthen the Sense of Place & Experience Through Design & Placement of Signage
 - a) Signage on the 300 block pointing down Washington needs to be updated
 - b) 400 block sign is being repaired this month
 - c) 300/500 block sign needs to be updated. Planning on a vinyl wrap or plastic map for ~2 year remedy while we work on app.
 - 2. Strategy 2: Promote Sense of Place within the District Through Creative Means
 - a) Sky art: Balloons Initiative
 - b) Painted Crosswalks: Aspirus sponsored and City is aware and awaiting proposals that we are constructing via committees
 - c) Rain Stencils - Moving forward via placemaking committee. Exploring the idea of an Art map that includes them.
 - d) Lights on the Trees will be coming down.
 - (1) Any construction company connections?
 - 3. Strategy 3: Promote Sense of Place Through Events That Activate Public Spaces
 - a) First event is Thursday, June 18th
 - (1) Looking for volunteers for this event and the rest of the Night Market series - Aspirus' Joy Team is interested, so is BMO Bank

V. Promotion/Marketing

- A. Goal: Implement initiatives that celebrate local culture, while strengthening the district's branding and identity.
 - 1. Strategy 1: Host Events & Use Marketing Tools to Increase District Engagement & Visibility.
 - a) State of the River District Stakeholder Cocktail Mixer - Happening April 20th at the Milk Merchant
 - b) Hot Happenings Weekly Newsletter
 - (1) Re-vamped and updated to highlight more current events/promotions.

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- c) 12 Months CWA Video Ads
 - (1) Canceled our monthly payment for a still board
 - (2) Need an updated ad for video board
 - (a) Working with the City's videographer on that project. We created a strategic plan for this year and years to come via the Marketing Committee
 - (3) Signage Stick in our window display set up and is a possible opportunity for sponsorship.
- 2. Strategy 2: Develop Content to Promote & Clarify the District's Brand & Identity to the Community
 - a) "Meet Your Main Street: Wausau River District" Marketing Campaign
 - (1) Need to restart this campaign in 2026
 - b) Take Professional Photos of the District/Events for Marketing Use
 - (1) Alex has been taking photos.
 - c) Recreated our sponsorship offerings for 2026 and sent out to sponsors.
- 3. Strategy 3: Create & Promote Campaigns to Highlight the District's Unique Offerings & Accomplishments
 - ~~a) Wisconsin Main Street Awards Submissions~~
 - (1) WEDC has pinned down March 19th 2026 at the Grand Theater for the 36th annual main street awards ceremony.
 - (2) The Night Market Series won "Best Special Event" - not to be shared with the public yet.
 - (3) Meal/retail options within the district will be shared with all attendees. Additionally, some restaurants have provided discounts for attendees. We will send that out the week of the event.

VI. Community Development/Economic Vitality

- A. Goal: Foster community growth and economic vitality through strategic support, development, and engagement.
 - 1. Strategy 1: Support River District Businesses with Targeted Education & Resources.
 - a) Business Workshop Series:
 - (1) Festival Foods is interested in hosting on Culture. Date TBD
 - (2) Thrivent Financial: Best Practices for Taxes and Finances in October. Date TBD
 - (3) Roundtable: May 6th on event optimization
 - b) Updated Business Resource Guide - Phase one complete at SORD
 - c) Operate the Sign Grant Program
 - d) Update the Website

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- (1) The website is still in the process of being updated. We are also doing research into launching an accessible app. This would hold Hot Happenings and be linked via our signs on the 300/500 block. This is a long term project.
- 2. Strategy 2: Advocate For Growth Through Targeted Development & Revitalization Efforts.
 - a) Advocate For Residential Development in and Around the District
 - b) Swag bags for the Foundry's new tenants
- 3. Strategy 3: Implement Events That Have a Direct Economic Impact in the District as a Destination
 - a) Night Market
 - (1) Making larger purchases for the night market that will be with us long term. The upfront cost will be about \$10,000, but will be sold to make money back. Alcohol sales, merch, etc.
 - (2) Projected vendor fees will be about \$13,000 in income.
 - b) River West Fest
 - (1) Any connections with car dealerships?
 - c) Holiday Makers Market
 - (1) Working with Lokre to have an expanded Holiday Makers Market
 - d) Galentine's Brunch Hop

VII. Adjourn