Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order on September 1, 2026, at 5:01 PM

Roll Call
Present: Scott Feraro, Chris Williamson, Mike Adank

Others Present:
Mayor Ben Adank, Deputy Clerk Michele Klein

Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Citizen Appearance and Public Comment
None.

Approval of Minutes
Motion C. Williamson second M. Adank to Approval the Minutes of August 4, 2026, Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes Motion Carried 3-0

Old Business:
Street Dance
Mike shared positive feedback regarding the recent Street Dance, noting good attendance and participation from various age groups. He suggested additional advertising through the Winona County community Facebook page and website for future events. He also suggested having food available at future events.

Auditorium Grand Opening and Halloween Masquerade Ball
The Committee has given final approval to mail the printed invitations for the Auditorium Grand Opening and Halloween Masquerade Ball. Invitations will be distributed through Every Door Direct Mail campaign to residences and post office boxes in the Fountain City and Cochrane areas, along with selected surrounding areas.
Additional promotion will include the City website, social media, Visit Winona, Visit Fountain City, the Winona County community Facebook page, posters at local businesses and City Hall, and an online event.

Serving liquor was a topic that Michele will be checking with the DOR.

The Committee began discussing the overall experience for the Grand Opening and Masquerade Ball. Topics included decorations, food, entertainment, building tours, and historical displays. Members agreed that decorations should be limited so the focus remains on the attendees, costumes, and the newly renovated auditorium. A 1920s/Roaring Twenties theme was discussed to highlight the auditorium's history.
The Committee discussed opening the building for tours and having historical information, photographs, and displays throughout the building. The Historical Society may be invited to participate. Further planning will continue**.**

New Business:

Tourism & Economic Development Plan

- Dedicated Leadership Structure: Discussion highlighted that sustained tourism and economic development efforts require a dedicated, paid tourism director and formal office rather than relying solely on volunteer-driven initiatives.
- Funding Model: The proposed initiative is intended to be a self-funding effort, similar to the library's structure.
- Case Study (Cassville Research): Research was presented on Cassville's model, focusing on true destination marketing. Their model utilizes a room tax managed with financial oversight from a Room Tax Commission and strategic input from a Tourism Council.
- Next Steps: A motion will be brought to the full Council/Commission to approve further exploration of this model and present best-practice examples at the next meeting.
- Need to have a budget number to send to Finance for October before the budget.

UW-Eau Claire Update

- Scott will be meeting with them to talk about the placement of the ten fountains in the city, and bandshell progression. First conversation of many.
- Walking trail was brought up for future conversation.
- Freelance Grant Writing Support:

The Council discussed utilizing Austin Klein as a freelance grant-writing resource on an as-needed basis at a rate of $36.25 per hour. It was noted that grant writing is a specialized skill and that funding opportunities should be pursued based on identified community needs and projects rather than seeking grants without a specific purpose. Finance may review the funding and budget implications. Motion M. Adank, second C. Williamson to recommend to council to use Austin Klein for freelance grant writing. Motion carried 3-0.

Fountain Area Landscaping

- Discussion of just putting rock or woodchips in the fountain area to clean it up.

Public Space Planning

- Flex Court Instillation discussion on the nets for pickleball, volleyball, and basketball hoops. Purchasing of basketball hoops on sale with warranty and shatter proof, Labor Day Sale. Already approved through the budget. Can go ahead and order this. Look into a fence improvement as well as the fence is in poor shape.

- **Pig Island Overlook**
  Considered a park; Scott will look into cost of replacement of the deck.
- **Wayfinding Signage**
  Chris would like to cut the boards and get the businesses together to design their signs, if they cannot make it then they can do it in their own time.
- **Flyaway Trail**
  Bike trail that, discussed renting out or service for cutting brush for this project, will be talking with public works about this. Donation boxes along where the trail will go in anticipation of the trail going through Fountain City.

Volunteer Opportunity 1-Pager

- C. Williamson composed a form to send to HeyGov to put on our website.

Pumpkin and Pistons

- Confirmation of Cancellation

Library Board Update

- Annie Sullivan has been hired as the new Librarian.

Cremation Vaults and Protocol Update

- Cremation policy and procedures rough draft, record keeping, durable urn, QR-code, discussion of the CIMS program capabilities. Chris researched to see if this needs to be an ordinance or policy.

Public Space Maintenance Punchlist

- Follow-up with Ben and Michele for Public Works

Fountain City Street Dane

- Main Street Dance in conjunction with the Lion's Festival with Midwest Family Entertainment estimated 150-175 people in attendance, majority was local but there were

some that were vacationing in the area, the age group varied. Completely Supported through sponsorships received $1,050 from sponsorship revenue was $972 in expenses and a $77 surplus because Buffalo County Journal donated their $75 ad. Sponsors were: Fountain City Rod & Gun Club, Fountain City Lion's Club, Cat-Tail, Corner Store, Golden Frog, JP's, The Landing, The Monarch, and Talent Enthusiasts. All promoted on social media and the DJ promoted the businesses as well.

- Discussion of future more events like the Main Street Dance.

Auditorium Steps Inquiry Discussion

- Cleaning of the steps complaint, we need to research before the masquerade ball to deter the bird, so they do not continue to defecate on the main entry of the auditorium.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by C. Williamson, second S. Feraro Motion Carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.