



August 8, 2025

To: Eau Claire City Council  
cc: City Manager Stephanie Hirsch, Deputy City Manager Dave Solberg

From: Scott Rogers, Vice President Governmental Affairs

Re: Contract renewal with Visit Eau Claire

The purpose of this letter is to encourage the City Council to renew its contract with Visit Eau Claire (VEC) along the lines of the terms proposed in VEC's communication earlier this week. Looking at the big picture for our community, we strongly believe this would be in the best interests of the local economy, the area hospitality industry, talent recruitment efforts, Chippewa Valley community partners, and the city itself.

- We are fortunate to have with VEC a highly-competent destination marketing organization (DMO) that has a strong track record in delivering an effective return on investment, resulting in increasing room tax revenues and positive financial impact to the local economy.
- VEC represents an important partnership among other local municipalities who voluntarily participate in its work, as well as its positive working relationship with nearby DMOs in Chippewa Falls and Menomonie. It's also recognized as one of the most effective organizations of its kind in the state for its regional leadership and its ability to access competitive grants that benefit tourism in our region.
- Strong tourism promotion provides employers in our region with an effective avenue for recruiting talent to help address our workforce shortages. There are many stories of residents who came as tourists and were motivated to move to the community. VEC has been an important part of driving state and national earned media focusing on the positive attributes of visiting our community.
- VEC has taken seriously the questions and concerns raised by the City of Eau Claire over recent months and has developed thoughtful, reasonable proposals to ensure a positive, win-win relationship going forward. It has also engaged expert legal counsel in the DMO field to ensure its governance complies with best practices for the industry.
- The proposed Destination Development Fund and Destination Master Plan represent an innovative and effective approach to collaboratively work with the city to deploy future investments. It establishes credible tourism growth priorities to inform the deployment of funds, ensuring they align with investments that will increase tourism activity, spending, and tax receipts.
- The proposed contract arrangement with VEC is in the city's financial best interests because it represents the best arrangement to continue growth in room tax revenues - including the unrestricted 30% city share - grow the tourism sector of the local economy, and ensure that decisions deploying marketing dollars are made by professionals outside of political considerations.

It has been mentioned that the city might consider implementing a tourism commission to assert more direct control over room tax revenues collected and deployed for the city. We believe this would be a serious mistake and the Chamber would vigorously oppose it. It would not only be a poor business decision; it would send a negative signal to community partners about the city's attitude towards our shared community values of collaboration and partnership. It would also potentially inject politics into decision-making that should be made based on industry best practices for promoting tourism spending and resulting room tax revenue.

VEC's proposed contract terms represent a thoughtful, positive approach to its continued relationship with the City of Eau Claire. With it, the City Council has the opportunity to set the stage for continued growth in tourism for our community and the resulting economic activity and room tax revenues. We urge the Council to affirmatively move forward with a contract as proposed by VEC.

Sincerely,



Scott Rogers  
Vice President Governmental Affairs  
rogers@eauclaيرهamber.org  
715-858-0616