

**Webster County Visitor Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 1, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.**  
**Location: Commissioner Room, Webster County Courthouse**

**Committee Members Present:** John Capps, Jill Coffey (Vice Chair), Wade Gibson, Linda Hitchler, Ashley Olson (Chair), and Teresa Young.

**Committee Members Absent:** Rod Ely

**Others Present:** Liz Petsch, County Clerk

- 1. Approval of Minutes from August 2019 Meeting.** The committee did not meet in 2020 due to distractions relating to the pandemic, but Chair Olson processed claims for grants awarded and submitted them to Clerk Petsch. Minutes of the August 2019 were read. Motion by Linda Hitchler and second by Jill Coffey to approve the minutes. Motion carried.
- 2. Committee Membership.** Chair Olson recommended adding Wade Gibson to the committee to the seat vacated by TJ Vance. Motion by Teresa Young and second by Jon Capps. Motion carried.

Upon review of the County Board Appointments document provided by Clerk Petsch, it was discovered that Jon Capps and Teresa Young need to be appointed or reappointed. Both have served on the committee for some time. Olson will attend the County Commissioner meeting to provide updates and ask for these appointments.

- 3. Financial Reports.** The financial reports provided by Clerk Petsch were reviewed. The promotion budget for 2020-21 is \$10,286.39 with \$2,500 expended to date. The improvement budget for 2020-21 is \$11,440.38 with \$0 expended to date. Chair Olson will check with the County Treasurer regarding the balance carried forward from 2019-20, which is required to carry over for promotion and improvement per Nebraska Statute.
- 4. Review of Revised Grant Application Form for Distribution.** Chair Olson reviewed the modifications to the grant application form that were discussed at the prior meeting. The application was amended to require a 25% match from the applicant when requesting an improvement grant and to specify that applications for promotion funds must use an advertising method that targets an audience outside of Webster County. The intent is to ensure that promotion funds are targeting ads to out-of-county residents in order to encourage more overnight stays and generate more lodging tax revenue to replenish the fund. Chair Olson will provide the amended grant form to the Clerk's office for posting to the County website. Members were encouraged to encourage applications from organizations in their communities.
- 5. Review of Grant Applications.** Two grant applications were discussed and reviewed. Motion by Teresa Young and second by Wade Gibson to approve a \$2,000 grant to Red Cloud Tourism & Commerce for promotion funds that would allow placement in the Nebraska Travel Guide and for social media advertising. Motion carried. Motion by Jon Capps, second by Linda Hitchler to approve a \$1,650 grant for the Webster County Museum for a new wedding dress exhibit. Motion carried.

County-wide advertising was discussed, and the committee does have a budget for this purpose. Jon Capps volunteered to look into layout and pricing for Webster County rack cards to promote attractions and businesses.

- 6. Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m. **The next meeting will be May 17, at 4:00 p.m.**

## **Webster County Visitors Committee Grant Funding Guidelines**

**Please read these directions in their entirety and complete the application form thoroughly.**

**Overview:** The purpose of this grant is to promote, encourage, and attract an increased number of out-of-region visitors to Webster County and to improve visitor attractions and facilities within the county.

Funds available through this grant program are provided from the lodging revenues collected by motels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses, cabins, and campgrounds.

The Webster County Visitors Committee is a 7-member advisory board to the Webster County Board of Commissioners, and oversees the spending of the promotion and improvement funds.

**Grant funding is available in two different categories:**

- 1. Promotion Fund:** Used generally to promote, encourage, and attract out-of-region visitors to come to the county and use the travel and tourism facilities within the county.
- 2. Improvement Fund:** Used to make grants for expanding and improving facilities at any existing visitor attraction, acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing visitor attractions, constructing visitor attractions, or planning or developing such expansions, improvements, or construction.

*A grant is valid for one year from the date of approval. An extension may be requested and will be approved on a case by case basis.*

This is a **reimbursement** grant program. **Funds will be available after project or event completion.** Copies of paid receipts, advertisements, mailings and a final project report must be turned in to the Webster County Clerk.

This grant program is administered under the guidance of the Visitors Development Act, found in Nebraska Revised State Statutes Chapter 81, sections 81-1255 through 81-1258.

**Criteria for Assistance:**

1. Grants are available only to public or not-for-profit organizations. Proof of public ownership or not-for-profit status may be requested.
2. The Grantee is responsible for obtaining any required local and state licenses and permits.
3. To facilitate payment following grant approval, a final project report and reimbursement request must be submitted to the Visitors Committee no later than 60 days after the event or project completion.
4. A complete project budget must be included in the grant application.
5. Grants are discretionary, based on available funds, anticipated uses, appropriateness, and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use. Higher consideration may be given to new events or projects over repeat projects.

6. All print materials, tv commercials, radio advertising, websites, posters, and other forms of advertisements must use the official credit line: “Produced in part by a grant from the Webster County Visitors Committee.” Failure to comply with this guideline will result in partial or complete withdrawal of funding.
7. **Promotion fund grants** should focus on bringing people from **outside** the area to Webster County. Higher consideration will be given to grants that use innovative outreach and advertising to accomplish that goal. Grants utilizing promotion funds for advertising must use an ad mechanism that targets an audience **outside** of Webster County.
8. **Improvement fund grants** require a 25% match, half of which must be in cash. For grants made over \$5,000, a permanent acknowledgement will be placed somewhere within the facility recognizing the Webster County Visitors Committee for assisting with the project.

**Allowable expenses for Promotions Fund Grants:**

- Event advertising
- Brochure and website creation
- Signage
- Brochure racks and displays

**Allowable expenses for Improvement Fund Grants:**

- Expansion of existing attractions
- New construction of visitor attractions
- Improvements to existing attractions
- Creating exhibits
- Planning or development

**Expenses Not Eligible for Grant Funding:**

- General operating expenses
- Food and lodging
- Mileage and transportation costs
- Purchase or rental of computers
- Projectors or equipment
- Telephone expense
- Membership dues
- Talent/dignitary honorariums
- Items for resale

**Review Process:** Grant applicants must complete the application form that can be obtained from the Webster County Clerk. Applications will be accepted year round and the Webster County Visitors Committee will review each grant application at its biannual meetings, generally held in April and August.



## Webster County Visitors Committee Grant Application, cont.

**Budget Worksheet:**

| Activity   | Grant Amt Requested | Match (cash) | Match (in-kind) | Source and description of match | Total Funds to be Spent |
|--|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Example:<br>Advertising in<br><i>Nebraska Life</i> | \$500               | \$500        | \$250           | ad design<br>time               | \$1,250                 |
|  |                     |              |                 |                                 |                         |
|  |                     |              |                 |                                 |                         |
|  |                     |              |                 |                                 |                         |
|  |                     |              |                 |                                 |                         |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                                      |                     |              |                 |                                 |                         |

*(Totals of first three columns must equal the fifth column total)*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Applicant*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

**For each grant application, you must include the two-page completed application, contractor bids (if applicable) and proof of public ownership or not-for-profit status.**

**Return to:** Liz Petsch  
 Webster County Clerk  
 621 North Cedar Street  
 Red Cloud, NE 68970

**Following notification of award:** This is a reimbursement grant program. Grant applicants should apply in advance of the event or project. Reimbursement funds will be available after project or event completion. A brief one-page final project report with copies of paid invoices, samples of advertisements or marketing materials, or photos of improvement projects must be turned in to the Webster County Clerk to facilitate payment of grant funds.