

A group of stakeholders representing the tourism industry are requesting to give a short presentation at the December 13th in-depth city council meeting concerning the city's investment in tourism and the spending of hotel motel tax.

Why are we asking to talk about this outside of the normal budget process. This funding is unique in the fact that it is done by formula based on the hotel motel tax rather than the staff requesting a variable budget year by year. As they submit their budget to the city council in January, it would make sense to have this discussion at this time instead of waiting for budget hearings. This avoids the staff submitting multiple budgets during the budget hearing, guessing on what they might get.

Also, this is really a philosophical discussion of how we fund tourism in our community compared to how we invest in other businesses. That is why it's good timing to review this policy in December.

What are the issues:

First, what this conversation is not:

It's not a debate about the city logo

It's not a debate about how the Convention and Visitor's Bureau is staffed under GMC CI

It's not a performance review of staff.

What the presentation is about:

Funding of our Muscatine Convention & Visitors Bureau:

How we got where we're at today

Current funding

CVB funding in comparable size communities

Concerns and limitations:

Staff turnover and staff continuity

Negative retail climate

Benefit of tourism industry sales tax

City livability

Specific job list of additional things to build on what staff is doing right now

Broader view of our tourism attractions

Relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan

Expectations for the council by the stakeholders: Have a informed discussion at the December 20th city council meeting and determine if any changes should be made.

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